

**What's in a Word? No. 2**

**THE  
SONG OF SONGS**

**A Spiritual Consideration**

**by**

**Arthur Hall**



PREFACE

For over thirty years THE SONG has thrilled us and held us in its mystical grip, not only for its beauty and style, but also because of its possibilities in making known to those who will hear "The Way of THE MAN (Christ Jesus) with THE MAID (The Multitudinous Bride)" - Proverbs 30 : 19.

We present our studies over these years in a form which may well be considered to be old-fashioned - a word-by-word commentary.

The set pattern is Christ and His Bride, with a three-fold application of past, present and future.

The scene set is that of the Wedding Feast of the Lamb and His Bride.

The atmosphere is largely nostalgic and at times prophetic of yet future events. The whole aspect is one of the greatest importance, presenting the way in which it is thought the Bridal Pair will converse in the Kingdom. Furthermore, certain particulars of their combined efforts in the work still ahead are included.

The presentation is suggestive, at the most "tentatively dogmatic". We are only too aware of the wide variety of theories based on this book ! "Let everyone be persuaded in his own mind".

Finally, the whole work is entirely based on Scripture. The author has had to search all the other Books of the Bible for the answers. These set before you in this book are his own conclusions.

We pray that, as the Lord shows visible signs of His coming, the Bride will make herself ready against that day.

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Also the odds and ends from various sources, whose words remain fresh, but names  
long since vanished; for all of which we are profoundly grateful, and particularly to  
Tom Griffiths of Llanelli, whose thoughts, in our opinion, deserve a wider circulation.

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The following Books and Charts are available from The Debir Press (A.Hall),  
617 Foleshill Road, Coventry, Warwickshire, England:

### Books

What's in a Name? No. 1, Numbers 33.  
The Epistles to the Thessalonians, 1 and 2.  
The Significance of BLUE in Scripture.

### Charts

The Institution of Mosaic Sacrifice.  
The Calendar of Redemption, Lev. 23 (The Feasts).  
The Beginnings of Redemption, Gen. 1:1.  
The Day of Atonement.  
A Symposium of Prayer.

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THE SONG OF SONGS THAT IS SOLOMON'S

INTRODUCTION

The Author and Inspiration

From the earliest times the Song has been attributed to Solomon, son of David and King of Israel, by the Jews and the early fathers. Of its inspiration they had no doubt whatsoever, which is more than can be said of the present day.

This question, for our purpose, can be dismissed quite summarily, as the Song's own peculiar brand of inspiration will be demonstrated as it opens up to us in exposition.

(a) The Jews

They revered it as amongst the holiest of the sacred books of the Bible. Three books they likened to Solomon's Temple: they compared

1. Proverbs to the Outer Courts
2. Ecclesiastes to the Holy Place
3. Song of Songs to the Holy of Holies - the innermost Sanctuary of God.

(b) Early Christian Fathers

They placed the whole teaching of Solomon again in three stages, a ladder consisting of three steps: moral, natural and mystical:

1. Proverbs embracing instruction in morals
2. Ecclesiastes indicating the nature of things sensible and the vanity of the present life, and that by despising these things as transient we may desire the future as firm and eternal
3. The Song they thought contains the mystical relationship and union of Christ with His church, that we might fly upwards in our aspirations to the great Bridegroom, to love and to embrace Him as promising everlasting blessedness.

With such thoughts we heartily agree and it is to this end that our labours are directed.

(c) The Chaldee Targum

This is the oldest Jewish commentary on our book; the title being, "The Songs and Hymns which Solomon the prophet, King of Israel, delivered by the Spirit of prophecy before Jehovah the Lord of the whole earth". It explains it throughout as a Divine allegory representing the dealing of God with His people Israel.

Attempts to Identify the Bride

(a) The earliest recognised attempt was not made until the 17th century, when we had Pharaoh's daughter placed before us.

1. It would appear that considerable straining would have to be applied to the material and principles underlying the Song and other Scriptures before we could reasonably accept this viewpoint; particularly in view of Solomon's own statement in 2 Chronicles 8:11, "My wife shall not dwell in the house of David, King of Israel, because the places are holy, whereunto the ark of the Lord hath come!" This aspect is entirely foreign to the sentiments of the Song: compare Song 6:9-10 R.V., 8:9, the last quotation being based on the Temple itself.

2. Who could imagine Pharaoh's daughter working as a slave girl in a vineyard, as the Bride herself admits in Song 1:6, 8, 12, etc.?

3. Previously living in the Lebanon, which can be identified as the home of the Bride.

## (b) Abishag the Shulamite.

Some have thought that Abishag, the youngest wife of David, and who by traditional rite would become the wife of Solomon (in this way in eastern eyes the King lived on after his death - "The King is dead, long live the King!" - and so the continuity of the throne was established: compare 2 Kings 9:30-31, etc., Jezebel's attempt to impress Jehu on this score so as to keep alive the throne for her house), could have been the object of the Song.

Note the trouble that ensued with Adonijah, 1 Kings 2:13-25. As in the case of Pharaoh's daughter, the application could only be strained and rather weird, as we can imagine.

As far as we know, these are the only two women to whom the application has been made. No doubt there have been many more, but they need not delay us personally in this exposition. We are not seriously interested in them.

## Personal Viewpoint:

The Song of Songs, like its counterpart or complement, Psalm 45 - "The Song of Loves" or "The Nuptial Ode" - is in reality, we believe, an allegory, and what allusions there may be in the two Scriptures can be and have been applied to many brides in Scripture - in other words, it is a prophecy concerning Christ and His Bride.

A similar viewpoint is demonstrable in the Virtuous Woman of Proverbs 31, a picture, we believe of the multitudinous bride and wife of Messiah. If space permitted, it would be possible to trace out the types from Eve, Rebekah, Leah, Rahab, Ruth, Abigail, Hephzibah and the Lamb's Bride to get a full application of this principle in Bible exposition. Each has her own contribution to the finished whole and will come before us as we proceed. They find their "lot" in the glorified Shulamite bride of the Greater Solomon.

"The Shulamite" or "Shulamith" is the feminine of "Solomon", from "shalom", "to be complete, to have peace". As we have indicated, it is written with the article - "the Shulamite" - the construction revealing a man and wife in perfect harmony. "Peaceable Solomon" and "At peace Shulamite", and the church is so called as being perfect and complete in Christ. Not only so but their future residence in the Kingdom is to be Jerusalem, "The foundation of peace". All three definitions are construed from the one basic Hebrew root "shalom", meaning "peace, perfect, whole" (Nahum 1:12, Deuteronomy 25:15, etc.). This threefold cord is unbreakable and is the foundation of the book itself, as we hope to prove.

The Song, we believe, emphasizes the most intimate, confidential and loving union between Christ and His Bride. We have seen from this "threefold cord" that only two persons are really involved, but in reality "the Bride" is a "multitudinous unity", so to speak, and not just one person. Compare Song 6:7 as a figure of a multitudinous unity in the fruit species, a pomegranate, yet 6:9 says "she is but one". This is the sort of thing or, rather, sort of reasoning we can expect to find. Compare 4:3, "Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet". This quotation applies to the future. And so on. They will all fit in place in our exposition (or so we hope to show).

We do not subscribe to the "three person" theory, then, as some commentators do. It is not our view that the Song depicts the heart-searchings of a young shepherdess as she contemplates the glory of Solomon's harem and the love of what has been termed "a sensuous king" and contrasts it with the love of a shepherd, her former lover, and, of course, with the shepherd triumphing in the end. In ordinary lay thought it appears to give the Song a part in the struggle between the poor lover and the wicked squire for the destitute maiden's hand. However we may view the situation, one thing is certain: the types are all astray in the three person theory.

You may or may not agree with my findings. One thing, however, is certain: the names of Solomon, Shulamite and Jerusalem all agree, and this cord cannot be broken. Whenever two people marry in name, as we have here, and are further linked by name with their future residing place, then one would think that it should be beyond reasonable doubt that the premises of the proposition are

verified.

**Personal Conviction :**

We have before us in this book *The Bridal Picture Album of Christ and His Bride* - a word picture album containing the secrets and experiences that we should expect to find in such a collection. We have, for instance,

1. The Wedding Day
2. The Meeting Time
3. The enforced absence of the Lover
4. The Shulamite's longing for His return, and so forth.

The Song and Psalm 45

These words contained in the Song and in Psalm 45 we believe are very precious to us and should be regarded as the very sweetness of the Word.

We often think upon the aspects of Christ's Return, the Resurrection, the Judgment upon the Nations, and individual rewards to the faithful, and the destruction of the wicked, and ruling in the Kingdom of God.

How often have we dwelt on the personal and individual relationship between Christ and His Bride at that time? We believe that the Song puts it before us in cameo, and that it can be understood today only in shadow and in part. May we press on, then, in the hope that in that day we shall know fully, as now we only know in part.

As we view it, it is of the utmost importance in the understanding of this book that we realise the True Relationship existing between Christ and His Bride as portrayed there, set out in brief outline thus :

(a) The Relationship between Christ and His Bride

His love for the Bride, which has withstood

- |   |   |              |
|---|---|--------------|
| 1. The cosmic elements                    | ) |              |
| 2. The cruelty and jealousy of men        | ) | Song 8 : 6-7 |
| 3. Even the relentless grasp of the grave | ) |              |

(b) His description of her appearance

His opinion of her character Song 1 : 9-12, 4, 7 : 1-9, etc.

(c) The Bride's attitude towards her Bridegroom

1. Her opinion of His Godly character and charm
2. Her deportment revealed towards Him as (a) Slave Girl (Song 1 : 5-8)  
(b) Shulamite (Song 6) (c) Wife (Song 5)

(d) Her opinion of herself

1. Her dreams
  2. Her hopes
  3. Her fears
- These things are implicit in the Song (Song 5, 5 : 8, 8 : 1-4, 1 : 5-8)

(e) The attitude of the People towards her

1. Their query as to why her beloved is more to be desired than others (5 : 9)
2. Their affliction of her, mockery and humiliation of taking away her veil
3. Others show their approbation of her (The Court. 6 : 3) (1 : 6, 5 : 7)
4. Very important (6 : 1) - after her confession of the personal loveliness of the Lover, others are led to seek Him also (6 : 1)
5. Finally, she recalls her brothers' musing over her in childhood before puberty (8 : 2 - 9) - what would she be like? how would she grow up?

Shall we not drink deeply of these spiritual truths to be found in The Song of Songs and hope that one day we may savour them in reality at the coming of the Lord ?

THE SONG. Inspiration: Objections considered

The only objections worthy of note regarding inspiration are as follow :

(a) Not once do we find the Name of God mentioned.

This is similar in a way to the Book of Esther, and yet unlike that book because "Yahweh" is found in two versions of acrostic formation in the Hebrew text of Esther, as Bullinger and other authorities prove. We have no acrostic formation discernible in the Song, but the Name of Yah is contained in the Hebrew text of

Song 8:6, in English "most vehement flame" reads literally in Hebrew "a flame of Yah". The Name, then, is found in the Song, and it has been truly said by Stuart that "the whole Song is full of God, His grace, His purpose and His workings". This fact will be amply borne out in future exposition.

(b) The second and last objection we have to face is that it is alleged that nowhere in the New Testament do we find a direct quotation from the Song.

We can advance at least three passages that would appear to be either direct quotations or in fact very strong allusions to the Song:

1. Matthew 13:52 "Things new and old" = Song 7:13 "All manner of fruits new and old"
2. Ephesians 5:27 "No wrinkle or spot" = Song 4:7 "There is no spot in thee"
3. Revelation 3:20 "Stand at the door and knock" = Song 5:2-6 "It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh"

It would appear, then, that both criticisms are groundless: the Name is found and there is direct contact between Old and New Testaments regarding the Song. We shall see that these parallels are truly demonstrable beyond doubt, the context being so intricately interwoven, possible only through the miracle of Divine inspiration.

Finally, the Setting and Framework of the Song.

The one we favour is found in Moulton's *Modern Readers' Bible*, the idea being that the Song is a series of Idyls or Little Word Pictures. Though complete in themselves they tend to form, as we have suggested, this *Word Album of Reminiscences of both Bride and Bridegroom*, set out in homely form.

#### A Suite of Seven Idyls

- Idyl 1 The Wedding Day
- " 2 The Bride's Reminiscences of the Courtship
- " 3 The Day of Betrothal
- " 4 The Bride's Troubled Dream
- " 5 The Meditation of His Bride
- " 6 The Bride's Longing for her Home on Lebanon
- " 7 The Renewal of Love in the Vineyard of Lebanon

This is Moulton's setting. Scroggie's is quite good and something similar. This setting is only one of many; we believe it to be the best and hope to follow it roughly in our studies. Those who would like to follow Moulton's thoughts will find them in his *Modern Readers' Bible*, Idyl setting on pages 886 - 897 and Notes on pages 1445 and 1446. Briefly we append a few of his thoughts for our general readers:

#### Modern Readers' Bible

Page 1445 "Those who hold that 'Solomon's Song' is a drama find the plot of that drama to consist in a struggle between King Solomon and a humble shepherd wooer for the love of the fair Shulamite woman, Solomon in the end giving way, and the heroine and her humble wooer becoming united. To me this result seems to be wrung out of the words of the poem with a good deal of straining. On the other hand, if we allow the work the wider range of lyric idyls, there needs no straining of interpretation to arrive at a story which is certainly not less interesting than the other. For by this interpretation we are able to identify the humble lover with Solomon himself. The story becomes this. King Solomon with a courtly retinue, visiting the royal vineyards upon Mount Lebanon, comes by surprise upon the fair Shulamite. She flies from them. Solomon visits her in the disguise of a shepherd, and so wins her love. He then comes in all his royal state, and calls upon her to leave Lebanon and become his queen. They are in the act of being wedded in the royal palace when the poem opens."

Then follows Moulton's structural idea regarding the Seven Idyls, which we personally view to be the "Bridal Wedding Album in word sequence". Moulton's next few words are of equal importance, so we quote him again:



"This, which is the story as a whole, is brought out for us in seven idyls, each independent, all founded on the one story, but making their reference to different parts of it as these occur to the minds of the speakers, without the limitation to order of succession that would be implied in dramatic presentation."

These indeed are weighty words of wisdom and the key from a literary angle to the time perspective, we believe, of the Song, and should receive due attention as a background for our following thoughts, generally speaking.

Without going into further details of the seven idyls structurally, we feel that what has been advanced will be sufficient to reveal the train of our intended thought. Really the poetical value of the Song, which is of exquisite form and rare beauty, is secondary for our purpose. What we hope to uncover is the priceless typical value, which lies a little under the surface and is currently available for every humble searcher of the Word who has the "pegs" to hang it on - a mixture of metaphors you no doubt think ? but they are all understood in the Bible student's vocabulary.

On page 1448 Moulton himself acknowledges the types in these words, rather slightly different from the present writer's viewpoint. Moulton again gives the literary point of view, saying, "In all these cases nothing is painted; there is simply a reference to supreme types of excellence. These are, of course, simply supreme symbols hallowed by associations of Holy Writ: they seem material only to those who read with a defective sense of the symbolic". Not only are they "supreme types of excellence", they are also types of the "particular" and are not used in a looser sense of "poetic licence", to which he appears to allude, but are accurately drawn and most precisely applied in each case, in the truly wondrous mode of Holy Writ, and as such urgently require our attention and practice.

If this can be advanced regarding the literary beauty of the Song, how far above this value is the transcendent loveliness yet practical value of the typical worth: "It is far above the price of rubies", it is in reality the quintessence of the Spirit. Lessons which flow from them are of salvation value to the devout searcher, who will approach their confines not as Herod and his brood, as forces to rend and tear the tender shoots of this Divine Wisdom Song. Rather in the character of the goodly householder who would provide for his household "things new and old" (Matthew 13: 52, Song 7: 13) we can be assured that such an attitude will be able to extract "food" in abundance and at the same time provide for himself many hours of surpassing experience and joy. The Queen of Sheba will be born again in his personal experience, who "had no spirit left within her" when she experienced the glory and delights of Solomon's kingdom (1 Kings 10: 5) - an earnest of the reality of the intimacy of the Spirit as it will be found in glorious fulfilment at that day (Song 4: 16, 5: 1).

#### PSALM 45

We indicated earlier that Psalm 45 had a decisive part to play in the understanding of the Song. It would be as well to take up this link now, before we commence the actual exposition of the Song itself.

A brief estimate of the structure of this Psalm will reveal that it is The Wedding Ode of the King, of which the Song is an extension. It is simply divided as follows:

- |                        |                |
|------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Concerning the King | Verses 1 - 9   |
| 2. The King's Daughter | Verses 10 - 17 |

There are four sub-divisions:

- a. The Incomparable Beauty and Majesty of Messiah
- b. His Irresistible Power and Eternal Sovereignty
- c. The Espousal of the Ecclesia or the Christ-Bride
- d. Her Glory and Duty

The sort of material to expect to be gathered from Psalm 45 is even to be had in the instructions surrounding this Psalm, which are as follow:

Psalm 45. The Superscription "For the sons of Korah" - "Maschil"

- whereby hangs a tale! The sons of Korah were the descendants of Korah of ill fame, who, along with others of like favour, sought to leave his first estate (Numbers 16. Jude 6 - 11). For further information on the general teaching and

suggested place of happening, see "What's in a Name? - Numbers 33" by the present writer. The details that occupy us at the moment are those that have to do with Korah's sons. Numbers 26:10 - 11 repeats the information of Numbers 16:31 - 33 but with the additional comment (26:11), "But the sons of Korah died not". Hence our superscription!

Under the law it was specified that "no man should die for his father's sin" (Deuteronomy 24:16). How fitting, then, does the future work of these sons of Korah illustrate the wisdom of these words and the foreknowledge of God in such matters. Let us briefly note the tasks that were allotted to them.

Their position around the Tabernacle: first of all see Numbers 16:1, where we find that Korah was the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath. Korah, then, was the grandson of Kohath and cousin of Moses and Aaron. Family jealousy again (Numbers 3:19). Numbers 3:29 - 31 outlines their position on the south side of the Tabernacle along with the Reubenite block of tribes (Numbers 2:10 - 16) - what a feast of names we have in this collection, but we must not allow ourselves to be side-tracked.

They were to carry the Holy Things, the Ark of the Testimony, etc., personally on their shoulders, and not use wagons like the rest of the Levites (Numbers 4:15, 7:3-9, this last verse in particular). Many things today can be conveyed in the Ecclesial Wagon! but the most intimate things of God, as revealed in the Kohathites' charge, are our personal responsibility and must be borne upon our shoulders. Galatians 6:2-5 puts them in their relative proportion today: verse 2, "Bear ye one another's burdens" (the Ecclesial Wagon), and verse 5, "Every man shall bear his own burden" (our personal responsibilities).

Psalm 45, then, is dedicated to these men of honourable but heavy personal charge, "the sons of Korah". 1 Chronicles 9:19-23, 29-34 outlines their tasks in Israel. They became the Keepers of the Temple Doors, etc., and were over the work of the service (verse 19); also they had charge over the shewbread, frankincense, and so on. They were also Singers and employed in the service of the Lord day and night (verses 29-34). What a wonderful catalogue of achievement in the Lord's service, and what a talented family the House of Kohath in its various branches was: Moses, Aaron, Phineas, Eleazar, Samuel, Herman were all of the House of Kohath. Finally we add another emphasis for the sons of Korah. Note Psalm 84:10 - again the superscription "For the sons of Korah". Psalm 84:10 gives us, "I had rather be a doorkeeper (the present occupation of the sons of Korah) in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (as did their ancestors, Korah, Dathan, etc.).

Psalm 45, then, is dedicated to these men, and is for their careful consideration and deep instruction; hence the word "Maschil" = Hebrew "Sakal" = to look at, scrutinise, to look well into anything. In 1 Samuel 18:30 the same word is used of David's prudent behaviour towards Saul, because he had ("sakal") carefully looked into, scrutinised, Saul's jealousy towards himself. The same concern had to be applied by the sons of Korah towards Psalm 45. Compare Proverbs 13:15 and Nehemiah 8:8. The reason is that Psalm 45 is a Song of Loves: Hebrew "Yedidoth" (Kay, "Lovely things") - the same word as in Psalm 84, "How lovely are Thy dwellings". Henceforth we shall use Kay's abbreviation s.w.a. for "same word as". Deuteronomy 33:12, "The beloved of Yah (Jesus) shall dwell by Benjamin", and 2 Samuel 12:15, "The Yedidaiah" beloved Solomon - these are types of Jesus. Psalm 60:5, "That Thy beloved may be delivered", Kay translates "Thy beloved ones might be saved". Jeremiah 11:15 is connected, as verses 18 and 19 prove, antitypically with the cutting off of Messiah for the iniquity of the people. Psalm 127:2, the beloved giving His people rest.

In this Wedding Ode to Messiah and His Bride, then, we should expect to find deep instruction on the following points:

- a. The throne of Yahweh
- b. The well-beloved Son
- c. His cutting off for iniquity
- d. His resurrection
- e. The rest obtained for the Bride

- f. Deep things concerning the King and His Bride as they are found in the Tabernacle (Psalm 84) and the Temple
- g. In the Song itself, because these are the true sentiments found in it.

The Postscript to Psalm 45: "To the chief Musician upon . . . Alamoth" (using brother Thirtle's theory regarding the Psalm titles).

"Alamoth" = Hebrew root word in the plural feminine, meaning "to be hidden or concealed" - compare the Septuagint "A Song of Secret Ones, of Hidden Things", which just about fits the book. Using "Maschil" once more, we are to scrutinise this psalm very carefully because of the hidden things it contains ("Alamoth").

Who, then, are these "hidden ones" ? Compare the name of Zephaniah = "Hidden of God (Yah)". Zephaniah 2:3, "it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger", and Colossians 3:3, "your life is hid with Christ in God". These who are hidden are the true Zephaniahs. Having sought righteousness (Zeph. 2:3) in the days of their probation, their lives are hidden with Christ in God and in the day of their manifestation will sparkle as the dew upon herbs (Isaiah 26:9) in the glorious light of the Sun of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2). It would appear, then, that "Alamoth" or "the hidden ones" represent the constituents of the glorious Bride still in process prior to their unification and assembly in glory. Perhaps in the mercy of God there may be reference to us here! Who knows? God knoweth! We can leave it with Him.

Psalm 45 also carries the Musical Title, "A Song set to Virgins' Voices" (Heb. "Almah"). It was fittingly sung by the Choir of Virgins (1 Chronicles 15:20 and 25:5), all these men and women, from which we construe "the virgin choir" according to Jewish authorities. Accordingly, and in conformity with eastern custom, the maidens of Israel were modestly hidden, or treasured within the veil of their father's tent or house. Heb. "almah" is the singular for "virgin" in Isaiah 7:14 (quoted Matthew 1:23), the mother of Jesus = Emmanuel, "God with us".

It has to do with the Spiritual Virgins of Israel after the flesh, and those after the spirit, who are now "kept" in the Father's House until the Day of the Wedding Feast of the Song.

Final Instructions: "To the Chief Musician"

(1) The obvious meaning is The Choir Master

(2) Hidden thoughts: "L'menatzzeath" from Heb. "netzeath" - not only do we get the idea of "shining, excellent or excelling", but it also means "strength, victory, stability, faithfulness" - "The Unchangeable", by obvious drift of thought, the Name of God Himself ("Netzeath", "The Strength of Israel", 1 Samuel 15:29).

The psalm, then, really finds its focal point in the purpose of Him who "inhabitest the praises of Israel", whose strength is now exhibited in this glorious King and Warrior, Jesus, and reflected from Him in the Bride herself, who is "all glorious within" (Psalm 45:13).

This nuptial ode, whilst written for the instruction of the sons of Korah, equally applies to the "Almah", the "Hidden Virgins", in an attempt to deepen their studies and consideration of the hidden glories of Messiah, and finds its height and highest praise in the Strength of Israel, whose purpose it is, and wisdom and might, that made these things possible.

So much to highlight the vast amount of spiritual material contained in a survey of the background and instructions concerning this Psalm 45. The present writer has written a copious exposition of the whole of this psalm, and copies will be available from his present address, God willing.

To conclude this survey, a few relative parallels which are found between Psalm 45 and the Song:

Psalm 45: "I speak of the things which I have made touching the King" or "I utter what I have framed concerning the King" (Kay). The significant words are "have made" (A.V.), "have framed" (Kay). The word in the original has largely to do with the wrought tapestry and the fine art work of the Tabernacle and of Solomon's Temple, and it is not hard to see why the Korahite scrutiny and meditation was instructed in the superscription, because these items were their own particular responsibility.

The Spirit has laid open the door to the typology of both the Tabernacle and the Temple and also of the Song, as they are to be found in Christ and His Bride. S.w.a. (same word as) Exodus 26:1-31 for the framing of the Tabernacle curtains. The veil dividing the holy and most holy places. Exodus 27:16, hangings of the court and gate. Exodus 28:32, ephod of the high priest. 1 Kings 7:17-19, lily work on the door-posts of Solomon's Temple. When these items are viewed in the light of Paul's comments in Hebrews 10:19-20 regarding the veil, which represented Christ's flesh, we have no need to labour their relevance. Briefly, the Bridegroom and His Bride are typified here, faithfully represented in these figures of Divine artistry, and the way in which this union was made possible. The lily work on the brazen pillars of the Temple (1 Kings 7:19-21), s.w.a. the lily of the Song - Hebrew "shoshanira" - always associated with the Passover (Song 2:10, 13, 15) and therefore with the redemption of Israel after the spirit.

Psalms 45:2 gives a different setting, far away from the suffering servant of Yahweh of Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. Kay translates, "Beauteous art thou, Beyond the sons of men, Grace is poured forth on thy lips"; Psalm 50:2 having reference to the same time, "out of Zion, the perfection of beauty" (same word) "God hath shined". We are informed that the phrase in Psalm 45:2 is even stronger than in Psalm 50:2 and appears in no other passage of Scripture and means "the absolute transcendence of beauty". Experts say that it is nearly impossible to convey the idea of beauty and perfection as seen in the original and as conveyed to the Hebrew mind.

"Beauteous beyond the sons of men". As beauty was regarded by the Hebrews as the outward sign of nobleness, or of a nature akin to the Divine (compare Acts 12:21-23, and Herod playing upon this well-known fancy of the Jews), we are informed that Messiah alone is portrayed in Psalm 45:2. Messiah's beauty is that of the inwrought Spirit of God, an epiphany of God, in fact. As Psalm 50:2 has it, "Out of Zion the perfection of beauty hath shined Emmanuel (God with us)".

Song 5:10-16 lends its praise with the viewpoint of the Bride herself: "the altogether lovely", "the chiefest among ten thousand", echoed further in Jude 14, "the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints". Even lovelier than the Bride herself in her complete manifestation: number 10 taken to its 4th power, world-wide in extent,  $10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 = 10,000$ . There can be no greater commendation than this in her eyes - "the absolutely lovely".

Song 5:16 "His mouth ("palate", R.V., consequently "speech", R.V. margin) is most sweet" - connecting with Psalm 45:2, "Grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever". Natural and spiritual combine here most happily. The human palate, most delicate and sensitive in the act of tasting food, wine, etc., soon begins to lose its keenest edge as one advances from childhood. In a child the palate functions at its best, but usually in adolescence adulterated and highly seasoned foods and such like quickly blunt its sensitivity and natural function. The most exemplary habits of moderation must be kept by those whose livelihood depends upon a lively palate, such as wine samplers and tea tasters. If this is so in a natural occupation, how much more so in a spiritual sense! This gives us a further viewpoint on the comments of Jesus upon "little children" - "except ye become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Spiritual application: "O taste and see how gracious the Lord is" (Psalm 34:7) - "How sweet are Thy words to my taste (palate); yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Psalm 119:103) - "Cannot my taste (palate) discern perverse things?" (Job 6:30).

"Palate", "mouth" and "lips" in the following quotations mean spiritual discernment: 1 Peter 2:22-23, 3:10-11 and Revelation 14:5.

It was Jesus Himself who advised us to become "as little children", consequently retaining a childlike palate in our approach to the things of the Kingdom. The combined references to Psalm 45:2 and Song 5:16 have revealed to us "the secret things of God" and why grace in profusion was poured on to Messiah's palate. In short, because Christ alone had the spiritual capacity to discern it, retain it and merit it, His spiritual discernment was so acute, His life and habit so delicately poised, and His perception of His Father's will so keen, that it was prophesied of Him in Isaiah 11:2 that He would be "quick in the fear of the Lord".

Psalm 45:7 portrays a balance - absolutely out of this world, so far as we are concerned: "He loved righteousness and hated iniquity". As the tenses are in

the perfect, that means at all times.

John 1:14, and consequently John 1:16, gives a glimpse of our glorious inheritance in Him: "And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" - confirming Psalm 45:7 and connecting with Psalm 133:2, just as the anointing oil ran down Aaron's beard even to the skirts of his garments and then on to the pomegranates or tassels, speaking of the Bride, the multitudinous seed. It is established, therefore, on the basis of these truths that (1) not only shall "a King reign in righteousness", but (2), as Psalm 45:6 emphasises, "the throne of Christ is for ever", and (3) Psalm 45:17, "His Name will be remembered in all generations" - yes, remembered in love of past events and with hope of future attainment to that Age.

As the Song puts it, this will be so because of "the savour of thy good ointments" - "Thy name is as ointments poured forth". Its aromatic scent is diffused down the ages. Psalm 133:2 once again, "Therefore do the virgins love thee" - found in the "Almah" name of Psalm 45. The harvest of the ages from Eve to the last believer who in truth accepts the alluring influence of the drawing of the Father, in that Name poured forth in evident splendour in the Bridegroom and His glorified Spouse.

So much for a brief glimpse into the Secret Things of God and the undeniable link-up of Psalm 45 with our Song. The real evidence will be produced undesignedly in the course of exposition, God willing.

### THE SONG OF SONGS

Song 1, verse 1 "The Song of Songs which is Solomon's"

1,005 Songs were written by Solomon (1 Kings 4:32) but only this Song has survived. WHY? Because our Song is THE Song, the preeminent Song, the most excellent of Songs. In all translations of the Bible it has this sense. This we find suggested very forcibly by the Hebrew idiom used here: for example, it has the definite article, and must be placed along with "The Altar" (Exodus 29:37), "The Brazen Altar" and "The Heavens and The Earth" which belong only to God (Deuteronomy 10:14) and the immense Power resident in "The Lamb" as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (Revelation 17:14). Such is the emphasis placed by Inspiration upon "The Song". Indeed, it is -

- A. The Best of Songs. Because we find more of Christ in this Song than in any other part of the OLD Testament, and particularly as this Song contains only eight short chapters.
- B. The Subject is the Best. The love of Christ to the Father and His people, His union and communion with the Bride.
- C. She is called by His own Name. "The Shulamite", indeed, which, as we have seen, is the feminine of "Sholomon". Christ is the true Solomon - "Peaceable" - and He said to the components of the erstwhile Bride in the days of His flesh, "My peace I give unto you". The peace which Christ left with His disciples was indeed not as the world giveth: it can quieten trouble and overcome fear - "the peace of God that passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). "The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). Even the natural elements obeyed His command on Gaililee: "Peace! be still!" And when the storm of God's wrath has subsided in the near future, after He has arisen to shake terribly the earth, the sea of nations now turbulent and angry in our days, casting up mire and dirt - for "there is no peace to the wicked" -, after this, we say, the Prince of Peace shall once again say, "Peace! be still!", and the sea of nations will become as glass, and "peace shall flow like a river unto the utmost ends of the earth".

The coming Bride, in her many components and parts, should reflect, as the would-be consort, these elements of peace. Peaceableness as will befit her exalted status in that glad day, though troubled by her many failings and sometimes getting distracted as she views her natural weaknesses, weakened and humiliated by the affliction which has turned her outward appearance to black (Song 1, verse 6). She is still comely to her Lord, as the curtains of Solomon, the beautiful veil - wherein is outlined the glorious fact that Christ will see the travail of His soul and be

satisfied (Isaiah 53:10-11). In this wonderful aspect she is indeed peaceable, at peace, the feminine complement of her Lord, the absolute transcendence of the Wedded State.

Her peace today from a practical angle is intermittent, as Romans 7 testifies, but as she remains faithful her joy remains; she is at one with her Lord. This unity prevails throughout her experience -

- (1) If we belong to Christ, then we are Christians (Acts 11:26)
- (2) If He is the Lord our Righteousness (Jeremiah 23:5-6), then it must follow, as Jeremiah 33:16 adds, that "she shall be called the Lord our Righteousness"
- (3) Just as a bride today normally takes the bridegroom's name in marriage, so we have witnessed her name in Solomon's Song as "The Shulammite".

As songs are normally expressions and utterances of joy and gladness in those that sing, and of their praises whom the songs concern - and undoubtedly this is the "chief song" as the Hebrew idiom has proved - then we should logically conclude that, if the Bible is the world's greatest book, then our Song must be the world's sweetest song:

- (a) because it speaks of Christ in His most attractive aspect
- (b) because the mystery of Divine Love, the unspeakable love of Christ, is here set forth in gracious condescension to our human weakness, to the end that we may aspire to be like Him (1 John 3:1-3).
- (c) because the Spirit endeavours to make us catch hold of spiritual things - Divine thoughts and intentions speaking in human language, and presenting the most intimate relationships of Christ and His Bride, under the figure and emblem of marriage - under the emblem of Love, the love of Christ for His people - and by the sweetest expression of it, a song. All this, no doubt, so that we may lift up our thoughts beyond this mundane existence and surroundings, that we may die (at least ideally) to all earthly loves and things and be enabled to exult with Asaph of old, saying, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee" (Psalm 73:25)
- (d) because it is the best of songs - because it is a New Song: in fact its subject is "the length and breadth and depth and height" of the Love that passeth knowledge (Romans 8:35-39, Ephesians 3:18-19). We believe that, unless we as individuals are able to learn its lessons in spirit today, it may well prove impossible for us to sing The New Song of Tomorrow in the Kingdom we pray for today (compare the singers of the New Song in Revelation 14:3-4)
- (e) This Song, therefore, is a test song, a challenge to us. The enjoyment we have or have not in the study of it is a real and true test of the state of our hearts and aspirations towards God and Christ. By study and enjoyment we are not thinking of academic attainment but rather the spiritual conception of it that descends a foot lower into the heart after realisation in the brain.

Finally under this heading, it would appear obvious that the other songs in Scripture must first be learned before we can appreciate The Song.

It is, we remember, The Song of Songs, and it is a fundamental principle in the Divine plan that we should commence by occupying the lower seats of status in the ecclesia or of proficiency in the knowledge of Scripture attainment - such as we are trying to outline at the moment - and at the Lord's pleasure obey the summons "Come up higher!" So the melody of our Song is extracted from the other songs in Scripture and they are brought together in this spiritual fugue for the grand finale, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and His Bride.

Putting our thoughts in another way, the various songs of Scripture must first be experienced, then act as mental pegs upon which this Song can be hung and held up for our individual appreciation - after the style of the Inner Veil of the Tabernacle that spoke of Christ's flesh (as we have learned), being hung upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold upon sockets of silver (Exodus 26:32, etc.), meaning briefly for us the four Evangelists, human but inspired, reposing on Redemption, holding up to view God Manifest in the Flesh. These pegs are of the kind necessary for our preliminary experience and they take their part in the central fugue of the very Song itself.

The Song of Moses must first be realised before it can merge into the "New Song" of Moses and the Lamb - and so on. Ideally then, the Songs of Adoption, Justification, Righteousness, Humility are all necessary pedagogues to bring us to Christ and His Bride, as seen in this Song of Songs.

For the reasons advanced, The Song is the Preeminent and Best of Songs, and we do well to learn it. It has been aptly said that "King of Israel" or "Jerusalem" is not added, as in the opening of Proverbs or Ecclesiastes, not because Solomon had not yet ascended the throne, but rather because his personality is hidden under that of Christ, the True Solomon, Prince of Peace. The earthly Solomon is not introduced because this would mar the consistency of the allegory.

Though the Bride becomes a chief part, the Song throughout is not hers, but that of her True Solomon. He animates her. He and She. The Head and Members form but One Christ, and, in keeping with the old poem,

"May each, may all, that master-key of Truth -  
Its reference to Christ - through grace attain,  
And, holding firm the torch of Scripture light,  
Comparing book with book and text with text,  
Enter the precincts, otherwise obscure, of  
Meditation on The Song of Songs".

Song 1, verse 2 "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth"

The tokens of His love are asked for, on the ground that they have unique value for her.

Song 1, verse 2 "For Thy love is better than wine"

As wine primarily in this setting would appear to denote earthly joys - for wine is the symbol of the natural delights of men - the joys are the luxuries of the earth (more later). So, then, when His love is valued more than all earthly and natural joy, no doubt the token will be given according to her desires; and if this is our personal estimate of Christ a similar token of regard will be offered us: compare Ruth 2:14 and the gracious invitation of Boaz to Ruth, "At meal time come thou hither". Investigate this token offer to her of parched corn in the light of Leviticus 2:12, 14, 16. Because of the knowledge of her precious conversation in life and resolute attention to the future, Ruth is offered identity with Boaz, and we likewise are offered the same by the greater Boaz, Christ - identification with Him in suffering "without the gate" (Hebrews 13:12-13). We shall have to refer to this quotation later in Song 5, as it reveals to us that this is one of the facts of identity we have to face when we confess with the Bride, or take our place - within the Bride!

What do we understand by "the kisses of His mouth"?

- (a) We notice His name is omitted - a very significant feature. There is no third person in her reckoning. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth".
- (b) We find her entirely engrossed with the person of her beloved.
- (c) She has no idea of explaining of whom she thus speaks.
- (d) He is the Alpha and Omega in her sight, the first and last.
- (e) There is no one else in her heart from whom to distinguish Him, and there is no one with whom she can compare Him.

Compare Mary Magdalene, a worthy component of this glorious Bride, in John 20, verse 15: "Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away" - a wonderful three-fold cord of comfort, no doubt, to her Risen Lord at that time. He was the only person in her life, eyes and thought; His only identification being "My Lord" to the angels previously, and "Him" to the Master Himself.

Paul asked that his brethren might be granted the power of a "single mind". This we have already seen in action, ideally, in the request of the Bride multiple in Song 1, verse 2, and by individual action in Mary Magdalene, a scintillating part of the Bride herself.

It is superfluous even to imagine that there was a third person in mind, such as an early companion between Solomon and the Shepherd and so forth. We have never been able to detect anything of this idea whatsoever, so far as our own studies have led us. The only defection found in the Shulamite's mind is that caused by a vivid remembrance of her own sinfulness and waywardness. Never do we find her affections leaning towards any other person than her beloved.

These opening words of The Song, then, are far-reaching in importance and set the key to later development.

The Significance of a Kiss in Scripture :

- (a) A token of peace from the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9 : 6, Ephesians 2 : 14).
- (b) A token of pardon from the Father Himself. Compare the prodigal's return (Luke 15 : 20), where it would appear we see in parable the only time that the Father is in a hurry in Scripture - to extend the kiss of pardon, love and grace.
- (c) A token of submission as a suppliant (Psalm 2 : 12).
- (d) A token of a marriage contract (Hosea 2 : 9-10).
- (e) A token of friendship (1 Samuel 20 : 41, David and Jonathan).
- (f) A token of affection (Ruth 1 : 14).

No doubt many other instances will readily come to mind, but these will suffice to show why the Bride should seek these love tokens from Christ and why our hearts should be so inclined. It has been said that the Jews looked upon this passage as a Plea for the Advent of Messiah, and that we see the ancient Church's voice raised in prayer for the personal appearing of Christ in answer to "the Promises of the Fathers", the Hope of Israel, deferred until the heart is sick. Types have come, Moses and the prophets have come, Aaron and the priesthood have come, and David and Solomon have come. Now let Him come, Himself, the True Prophet, Priest and King of His people. God, they thought, had kissed or blessed His people through the mouth of the holy prophets. Now let Him kiss them personally through "The Son" :

What a tremendous honour the Bride asked of the King! For the king to permit kissing his hands, or even his garments, was counted a great honour, but that he himself should kiss another with his mouth is the GREATEST HONOUR! The Bride claimed this high honour on account of the fact that she "valued His love more than wine". She had appreciated that in Jesus "mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psalm 85 : 10). All these she had experienced in His love : "Thy love is better than wine". How sweet this admission must sound in the ears of Jesus! - better than all earthly joy and pleasure.

The word "love" here is in the plural and should read "loves", because no singular word can express the sentiments of what the Bride intimated. As it would appear, the Bride is making her confession at the Wedding Feast, in the hearing of the daughters of Jerusalem (the virgins who will later follow her into the innermost recesses of the King's house, as we have seen). This admission, then, that "His love is better than wine" appears doubly important :

- (1) Apart from an appreciation of the love and work of Christ as seen in her redemption;
- (2) It also forms a testimony to those around her of the preciousness of Christ as it appears to the Bride herself;
- (3) Consequently, as this statement forms the opinion of the mystic Bride as a whole, then it follows that this opinion must be our own.

Can this statement form our personal estimation of the love of Christ - "His love is better than wine"? What does it entail?

Wine, as it is found here, stands for the exhilarating and luxurious pleasures of the world, which is sweet to the lips of the worldly. It is further seen as the subtle influence of that which "maketh glad" the heavy heart of one ready to perish, so that he "remembers his misery no more" (Proverbs 21 : 6-7). How much higher the love of Christ that disclaims all the exhilaration and luxury of this world, reveals and upholds all the Scriptural Beauty of the Spirit, and, apart from granting forgetfulness of position and character and glossing over the obvious conclusion of a life apart from God (death), opens to view the love of the Father centred in the Son: The Bridegroom who loved "to the uttermost", laying down His life for this wonderful Bride when as yet unlovely and unformed, sinful and forgetful in many ways.

It is only upon a realisation of these truths that we can take our place individually within the orbit of the Bride and experience the joyous fact that the love of Christ is better than wine, more gladdening, satisfying, ennobling and abundant.

The love of Christ : it glorifies, it sanctifies, it unites, indeed and infinitely beyond all human pleasure. Taking it a little further, "Thy love is better than wine" brings to mind the lesson of "Hebrews" where the burden of Paul's message was to bring home to the Hebrew mind that the Antitype is always greater than the Type and the substantial



of the shadow. In "Hebrews" Christ is shown to be "better than" angels, Moses, Joshua, Aaron, the Law, sacrifice, the blood of Abel, and so on, and not only so but we are exhorted to follow the "better path" of Christ (Hebrews 6:9). In following the substance rather than the shadow, however significant that shadow or symbol may seem to be, we shall arrive at last with the sentiments of Song 1:2-6, "Thy love is better than wine".

Who would have thought that this vital teaching would have been found in - The Song? It is in keeping with that other quotation from Matthew 13:52 based on Song 7:13, "Like a householder which bringeth out of his treasures things new and old". We are taught in the 2nd verse of our study the basic principle of True Bible Exposition that the actual performance of the love of Christ is far better than all the the type and shadow that symbolised it. Far deeper than the Cup at the Breaking of Bread and infinitely more voluntary than the Wine of the Drink Offering that accompanied every sacrifice, showing the gladness of the offerer in so doing. The Bride will now in immortality fully grasp the significance of wine in her Lord's plan:

(1) The First Miracle (John 2:1-12)

The wine created by Him - the new and better wine pointed to that new and better way of life, and to Life, which could only be found in Him.

(2) The Wine of the Upper Room was a sure and certain pledge of the love Christ, about to be tested to the uttermost, bore towards His Bride, and which would usher in the "way" to the Father. He had promised on this occasion to "no more drink of the fruit of the vine until" He drank it new with her in the Kingdom of God (Luke 22:17-19). This time had now arrived.

(3) The House of Wine (Song 2:4, R.V. - "Banqueting House", A.V.)

She had been brought here by her Lord and we note that "the banner" or token over it is "Love". All her life in the Truth she has been learning the lesson that "His love is better than wine" and in the climax of this Feast of Wine her realisation is complete. She has fully entered into the "joy of her Lord".

Song 1, verse 3 This verse brings out a beautiful study of Cause and Effect:

- (a) The Cause. Obtained by the Name as ointments poured forth and the savour or goodly smell of these good ointments.
- (b) The Desired Effect : "Therefore do the virgins love thee".

In what way has the Bride (who is made up of these virgins) shown her appreciation of this "name poured forth"? All down the ages she has revealed a close identity with and appreciation of these ointments, at least typically as regards their spiritual value.

Nazareth, significant of Vulgate translation, is known as "The Flower Town" (other constructions are of equal value but they need not delay us at the moment). The Bride is seen bringing to the Christ child sweet spices from afar in presents of gold, frankincense and myrrh - the Magi, Persians from Babylon, as the Greek of Matthew 2:1-2 reveals, descendants of the princely order of whom Daniel was made chief at Babylon, and who would be conversant with the times of Daniel and Jeremiah, etc., and upon The Word (Daniel 9:2-27) and Nature coinciding "The Star". They believed, and undertook a two to six months' journey to worship and love their Lord, and future Husband, in the mystical sense of the term. The gold, frankincense, myrrh sequence is well-known to us (see "The Wise Men", T.C. Upham).

The Divine Sonship and perfect life of faith, the consequential raising to the Father's nature, the pleasure of that devout life, and acceptance of Him as Mediator, and of course that submission in sacrifice and the bitterness of death, all are contained in cameo here in these early gifts to our Lord.

These Persian members of that glorious Bride to be, have outlined for us their personal belief and knowledge of the love of their Lord and an identity in character with "the Name poured forth" in that they had appreciated the prophetic Scriptures concerning these wonders of redemption as they are found in Our Lord, in fact The Song itself and the very verses we are now considering. They brought "costly spices rare" to Him whose "character garments" were said to have been of "myrrh, aloes and cassia" (Psalm 45:8).

The Beloved, then scarcely out of swaddling clothes, is found with myrrh - what

a wondrous way for the future Bride to greet His entry into the world, poignant with meaning, pathos and joy in her conception of this Great One, whose raiment even at this time is found with the fragrance of frankincense and myrrh.

How did the Bride show her appreciation during the course of His ministry ?

The Bride, whilst the Bridegroom is with her, is found weeping and loving much, because He has forgiven her sins. His great forbearance finds a kindred spirit within her and, rising to the heights of spiritual appreciation, reveals this in breaking her greatest treasure at His feet, the alabaster box of precious ointment. She realised amongst other things that the substance of this precious heirloom not only stood before her, but had revealed to her in no uncertain manner the truth behind this ointment. Her Lord was greater than all material unctions, no matter how costly they might prove or how ancient their associations may have been. The Son of God is beyond "the price of rubies" and will soon be revealed to us as "The Ancient of Days" !

She had reciprocated His own attitude in "loving much" and had faith to believe that He, as the Son of God, could forgive her sins. He said, "Thy faith hath saved thee". Note carefully "Go in peace" - identity with Himself as the Greater Solomon: if she truly followed the principles of "Shalom", her part in the glorious Bride to be revealed was secure. See the whole of this instructive Lukan sequence, Luke 7:36-50. "Go in peace" may have been and still is an Eastern saying, but when viewed in our context is absolutely pregnant with meaning and promise.

A spiritual exercise of considerable value would be for our readers to trace out the passages where Jesus makes this saying. They will find the context is similar and the Bride apparent addressed - very far removed from, but including, the common courtesies of life, which, like her Lord, Paul and other men and women of God, found within the orbit of this glorious creature, never forgot.

There is an old saying which runs, "Kindness costs nothing". In northern circles it is an everyday courtesy to greet each other, sometimes across the street. Such, of course, were the greetings in Bible lands. It is nice to diffuse kindness in our days of darkness amongst the people, when the common courtesies are largely forgotten. Rudeness has taken their place, and respect in general for older people is only thought to be in the feebler minded in our days.

How tragic it all is ! A relative said only a short time ago, "We are all Unitarians today" and religion was not in his mind at that time. Another very relevant thought was expressed by a Trades Unionist of the writer's acquaintance, who said that "they are not Brothers on the road!" He had to be on the road far earlier than he had actual need to be to get to a certain junction before the mass of traffic really got under way in the morning, otherwise, because no one would give way for him, he would be most certainly late for work: not brothers indeed !

Not a very spiritual thought to be included in The Song, perhaps you are thinking, but always the spiritual and the practical agree in Scripture and conduct - otherwise somewhere we have missed our junction! Let us, then, in timely fashion diffuse kindness to those around us, "who are about to perish", taking with us "the peace of God and of Christ" (passing all understanding at most times to ourselves, and most certainly so to these unfortunate people who know not God) - shall we not reveal Christ to them in brotherly kindness? Who knows? Another old saying goes, "Actions speak louder than words", and when we consider the many parabolic actions of Jesus and the antitype which far outstrips the type, maybe our peace will be demonstrated in action to those around us. "Go in peace", indeed. Compare Mark 5:25-34, the woman with an issue of blood twelve years: her actions spoke louder than words. Jesus said, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace, and be whole of thy plague". This daughter is most surely part of His Shulamite in the near future.

We have, then, in this incident the Bride's appreciation of the Name "poured forth" during the days of His ministry.

When He is about to be taken away.

It was Mary of Bethany (John 12:3) who foresaw the day of Christ's death, and bringing a pound of spikenard, "very costly", anointed the head (and feet?) of Jesus till the house was filled with the odour of the ointment (Song 1:14) in earnest of the

future feast: while the traitor murmurs at its quantity and costliness (John 12:5), for it was worth at the least a man's wages for a whole year! - Social zeal indeed, apparent by exclamation, or so it would seem, but absent from inclination in reality: as John 12:6 puts it, "Thus said he, not caring for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein" - similar kin to Gehazi (2 Kings 5:20-26), Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10), aptly summed up by Paul in 1 Timothy 6:5-10, etc. May this principle never be found in us, because it is absolutely foreign to the spirit of Christ and His Bride. Christ, though rich, became poor (an abject beggar) so that the Bride could be made rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). The true outlook is seen in the poor widow's attitude, a beggar in fact (s.w.a. "poor" in 2 Cor. 8:9). The Name poured forth had captured her heart and imagination. Possessions she had none. The money she had given to the Lord represented her all - very precious in her Lord's eyes. No doubt she had just begged the "two mites only" and this had been given to the Lord. The Name "poured forth" had found lodgment in her and had drawn forth a full demonstration from the Bride. May its persuasive influence fill the Christ Body today so that sacrifices so rich and rare are drawn forth of us in faith and love.

#### After His death.

We find the Bride now bolder than during His life, bringing forth a mixture of myrrh and aloes about 100 pounds weight, and, taking the body of Christ, winding it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury (John 19:38-40). This is characteristic of Scripture that John who wrote of the niggardliness of Judas should also record the lavishness of Joseph and Nicodemus. Their action has called forth the criticism of many present-day murmurers querying the action because of cost, as did Judas at Bethany. "There was enough", they claim, to have embalmed many bodies. Quite so, we are given to understand by Eastern authorities - but NOT enough, says the Bride of Jesus, for the ONE BODY of Him who is "chief among ten thousand" - because she still prepares further spices and ointments wherewith to embalm Him afresh after the rest of the Sabbath is over (Luke 24:1-3).

Ever surrounded with that which made up the unction of the Spirit from birth until death, and after death: Wherever He went, that incense and anointing came out, as it were, to greet Him. The casket could not hold it! The savour of the Name poured forth diffusing to all around its gladdening fragrance:

- (1) It was self-evident that these acts were typical, representing the various persons showing their love and appreciation of Christ.
- (2) Equally and more forcefully do we find Christ portrayed as the Box of Pure Alabaster full of precious ointment, which, when broken, fills all the House of God, the "general assembly of the First-born", with its fragrance.

It has been truly said that "the savour of the good ointments" includes both the anointing spirit and the atoning blood of the Lamb. The spirit was not given by measure unto Him, and full of the Holy Spirit He preaches, "The Spirit of the Lord hath anointed me to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:17-18). Therefore do the virgins love Thee":

- (1) chiefly for the anointing of the Name which they have savoured;
- (2) also because God hath anointed us in Him: we have been given an unction or anointing from the Holy One, particularly as it is seen in Psalm 133:2, where "the precious ointment on the head of Aaron went down to the skirt of his garments, even to the pomegranates, the multiple seed", and so we are called "Christians", even as He is Christ (2 Corinthians 1:21).

Further, the savour of the ointments is the fragrance of the sacrifice of Christ. The very first mention of "fragrance" in the Word is the "sweet savour" of a sacrifice (Genesis 8:21). It has been noted that before this time each of the other senses has had its mention. "The voice entering the ear, pleasantness to the eye, the goodness of food alluring the taste, and "touch it not, lest ye die" - all have had their record (Genesis 3:6, etc.), but there is no mention of fragrance until Noah has built an altar on the renewed earth and offered burnt offerings, whence the Lord smelled a sweet savour (Genesis 8:21). Not indeed from the first of all sacrifices, but from Sacrifice, the first of all savours unto God. Why?, we may ask.

It would appear that the Dispensational aspect is in view here - as prefigured in the number 8.

1 Peter 3 v.20 - Eight people were saved from the flood of destruction and stepped out upon a renewed earth. As Christ was raised from the dead on the first or eighth day. The Name of Jesus construed by Gematria is reckoned as 888 - Eight taken to its third power which means spiritual perfection concerning this number 8. Briefly then it is connected with the New Creation as created in Jesus. Noah ("Rest, Comfort") with his family of seven constituting typically the whole of the New Creation brought about the Sacrifice and obedience of Jesus - the Bridegroom - in other words, this Bride who in her multitudinous aspect has been brought about to glorious unity in spiritual perfection. He has seen the travail of his soul and been satisfied. Jesus = 888 indeed.

No wonder then that this is the first mention of Fragrance or Savour in the Word. It reveals the completion of God's Plan through the Son as found in us (we hope) when the Marriage of the Lamb shall have taken place and beyond this aspect even to the final perfection when "God shall be all and in all". Complete harmony with Himself - (1) In the Son (2) In His Daughter (3) Nature - a "Threefold cord" that never can be broken.

The next mention of Incense is in Ex. 30, v.35, in similar context as the Anointing oil or ointment, Ex.30 v.22, and it will be obvious that Song 1 v.3 is found in direct allusion to this chapter.

The whole subject is one of deep interest in itself, and we can but touch upon it briefly here. We are, however, constantly confronted by it in later exposition.

Ex.30 v.22. Here we have the Holy Anointing Oil, which as we have mentioned, speaks to us of the Name of the Bridegroom or virtually the Yahweh character, and the purpose centred in Him.

#### Ex.30 v.22 - The Holy Anointing Oil

It was composed of four principal spices: Myrrh, Sweet Cinnamon, Calamus, Cassia, and compounded with Oil Olive.

#### A. Pure flowing Myrrh

There was also another kind of myrrh which had to be cut or extracted from the tree, and which meant, we are told, the death of the tree. In other words, because of the incisions into the tree and the removal of the bark of the tree, it died as a result of these injuries.

The pure flowing myrrh, however, reckoned as the finest available, exuded the substance itself, no incision being required. A very important point of doctrine emerges when we consider what the symbology implied. As Jesus said, no one could take his life away from him, rather he laid down his life for his friends or his Bride, amongst other considerations. Likewise this 'Divine liberty' which was his right as Son of God is seen reflected in the word "pure" which is also translated "liberty", and is specially associated with the Year of Jubilee (Lev.25 v.10, Isa.61 v.1, Jer.34 v.8, Ez.46 v.17). An allusion of great beauty between the (free flowing) myrrh and the (free flowing) grace of God coming down to us in the Sacrifice of the Son, and of the free will of the Son in "yielding to the behest from on high".

Because these four spices represented the Divine characteristics in Christ, they are known as "principal spices" and we see this distinction clearly marked by the way that the word for principal is translated in other places of Scripture, such as Psa.23 v.5 - "head", and Psa.141 v.5 "Excellent". By tracing out the remaining occurrences of this word through the concordance we may see why this ointment was forbidden to be compounded or used otherwise than commanded.

The "Excellence" was reserved for those persons whom God had exalted to high position in His purpose, and whom in their official capacity pointed forward to the spiritual excellence of The Son. They represented the Name above every name! - in part, to be later found in full in Christ.

Myrrh, or Heb. "Mor" = to drop or distil, very aptly, we think Myrrh was bitter, purifying, soothing, preventive of corruption, cleansing, and so forth; speaking of the bitterness of death suffered by the Son and the various elements contained in the sacrificial work of Christ (John 1:36, 3:14-16, 12:32-33, Ephesians 5:2, 25-27).

### B. Sweet Cinnamon

Heb. "Quareh" = to stand upright. S.w.a. "sweet odours" in Esther 2:12 (compare Song 4:12-16 for this effect on the Bride herself). This confection alludes to the standard of Christ's life and character, distinctly upright in nature, with the capacity to endure affliction and still remain steadfast; in fact, to welcome this affliction, which is in truth the ninth beatitude (Matthew 5:11), for, of course, the truth's sake (1 Peter 2:19-25), following the way of the Bridegroom, as these verses have indicated.

(1) Should "Quareh" remain in us, then we have within ourselves a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God that we may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which we also suffer (2 Thessalonians 1:5. See Hall, "Thessalonians" for further expansion).

(2) We have learned and appreciated the foundations of the Name above every name (in alignment with our Song, which is The Song above every song), which comes down from God to us via "The Son", in whom alone we may share in this Name.

(3) Should we remain steadfast, there awaits for everyone "the crown of life", the "stephanos", the crown of the victor of the Olympic Games, portrayed in this life by a laurel crown, evergreen, to keep in memory, so to speak, endurance and discipline under trial.

(4) Paul in direction looked forward to the "stephanos" of righteousness "that fadeth not away" (2 Timothy 4:6-8), the inevitable end even of the evergreen crown. Again sound homeopathic principle spiritually outlined - "like cures like", or in this case "life". The "Quareh" is our standard throughout life if we stand upright in Christ wearing with diligence and dignity that robe of righteousness bestowed on us at baptism. If, through the mercy of God, that robe "fadeth not away" in this life, so far as our determined and conscious effort shall allow; if we have, as the Lamb's wife, made ourselves ready for His appearing (Revelation 21:2 and 19:7-8), then the Father will match it with a nature that will escape decay and corruption - His own (2 Peter 5:4, 1:4). A steadfast character will beget a steadfast nature, If the Divine is discernible in us now, then it will be manifestly declared in us in the glory of the steadfast Shulamite. According to Divine mercy, of course, as members of the Bride, and of Christ in particular, "Quareh", then, will mark our "standing" today. A mention of the word in Esther 2:12 reveals the application to purity and cleansing - sweet odours prior to marriage with the King. Do we then wonder that the Bride is compared to the palm tree, the straight or upright one, in Song 7:7-8? More later under this heading.

### C. Calamus

The third ingredient mentioned. Calamus = Heb. "Keneh-Bosern", the sweet calamus of Exodus 30:22, etc., an aromatic reed cane. The word is currently used in Scripture for a shaft with a hollow centre (Isaiah 42:3 and 43:24); of the hollow branch of the Candlestick of Zechariah 4:2, etc.; of a bone in Job 31:22 from the fact of the marrow-bone being a tube; it is used of grasses with hollow stems, and so forth, and rather surprisingly of a balance (Isaiah 46:6).

Calamus was processed from the sweet pith of the cane and, fittingly, is emblematic of the inward thoughts of Jesus portrayed in the Anointing Oil:

- (1) They were enlightened thoughts. The Candlestick (Exodus 25:31, etc.).
- (2) They were sweet. Antitype of the sweetness of the cane (Isaiah 43:24, Jer. 6:20).
- (3) They were perfectly balanced thoughts. (Isaiah 46:6).
- (4) They were a measuring reed or rod to assess the virtues of others - the Shulamite in particular from our angle.
- (5) They are assured of a "sevenfold" increase of Divine perfection (7), and in all places Egypt (compare Genesis 41:5 - "seven ears on one stalk", s.w.a.). We have been called out of Egypt and pray God that we may form part of this wonderful increase of the "covenant fold" in agreement with Isaiah 53:11, "By His thoughts or knowledge shall My Righteous Servant justify many, for He

shall bear their iniquities" - His thought perfected in action; not insular, but ever outward in true "agape" principle, always extending outward in pleasing the Father and nurturing His Beloved by bearing her iniquities.

Yes, "He shall see His seed; He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand" (Isaiah 53:10). A seven-fold increase in one stalk indeed!

The outward bark of this aromatic plant was highly prized, and its roots were used in healing ointments. Inward thoughts, outward appearance, and the very root used for healing wonderfully reveal the Bridegroom. All His days "we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14-18). "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

Foundation = the Roots; Thoughts = the Pith; Outward Appearance = the Aromatic Bark. All combined in harmony. A threefold cord, never once broken but sustained in perfection. This is beyond us!, we hasten to add. But is it? We are brought to a sharp halt as we look through the Song and the symbology that should represent us as active members of that glorious Bride.

(1) Myrrh is found here, and in this very application.

(2) "Quareh", too, is much in evidence.

(3) Calamus also is seen. All the principal spices, in fact (Song 4:12-14).

They are all part of our experience now in Christ, although the perfection as seen in Him may sometimes frighten and may deter us at times, as it did the Shulamite in Song 1:6. In her own eyes, remembering her sinfulness, she appears black and swarthy, but in His eyes, ever looking with Divine strength and perception towards the "satisfaction of the travail of His soul", she is glorious like unto the curtains or veil of Solomon's Temple (Song 1:5), which will come before us shortly. Her beauty is not her own - it is all of Him. "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us", was the Psalmist's cry to the Father (Psalm 90:17). We cry the same, because it is given in the Son, as we saw in Psalm 45:2 - His is our King, our Solomon, our Peace.

D. Cassia was the fourth ingredient.

The word "cassia" occurs only once more in Scripture (Ezekiel 27:19) and has caused considerable misgivings amongst scholars. Soltace notes a deviation suggested by Robertson that the word comes from a Hebrew root which signifies "to cleave" and also "to stoop" and "to bow down". Kay, however, in his "Notes on the Psalms" comments that "Cassia, or Heb. "Qiddah", of Exodus 30:24 is the commonly known equivalent of "Oetziah" occurring at Psalm 45:8" only - speaking of the garment character of Christ - and gives notice that cassia was a plant closely allied to cinnamon (compare Song 4:14 and Proverbs 7:17) and urges a comparison with John 19:39 (in a general sense). It must also be noted that "Kezia", the name of a daughter given to Job after his symbolic resurrection, is taken from the same root (Job 42:14), - the name of the second daughter of Job's old age, whom he so called "an excellent aromatic smell", because God had healed him of his leprosy and trials and made his latter end to be sweet.

It is interesting to note that the name of his first child at this time is Jemima (Job 42:14), which means in the Arabic "Dove". The Septuagint and the Vulgate derive from "Yom" ("Day") and "Jemuel" the masculine, "The Day of God".

Keren-happuch, the name of the third daughter, is from "Qeren" = "A Horn", "Flashes", and "Happuch", from "Pukh" = "Paint", used anciently, and it would seem today, by ladies in painting their eyes (2 Kings 9:30, Isaiah 54:11). Probably so named because of her beauty: see Bagsters - for no women in the east "were so fair as the daughters of Job (Job 42:15).

The story of this day, "The Day" - "Jemima" is feminine of the Lord Jemuel, is indeed a picture of the time of our Song, brought about through "the Dove" Jemima (Arabic derivation) - the Day of the Spirit of the Lord.

The Holy Spirit of God

As with Job, the travail of the soul of the Bridegroom has been satisfied, inasmuch that His glorious Bride is at His side. In her He sees an aromatic smell, excellent in fragrance and purity. In her He finds the satisfying evidence of His own full obedience. Keren-happuch, the three-fold cord of daughters, captivated His heart

with her splendour of colour, her flashing beauty, the colour outlining and enhancing the soft "doveline" characteristics seen in her eyes of love towards Him. Jesus reminds her of this very trait of character in Song 2:14, 4:1. and 6:9, and the power of their attraction is seen in Song 6:5, etc.

The dove-like eyes were but relections of His own (Song 1:15, 5:12), and the Bridegroom was the very embodiment of the Holy Spirit: "It was not given by measure unto Him", "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). and she is complete only in Him (Colossians 2:10).

It is indeed "The Day of the Dove of the Lord" — the savour of "sacrifice completed" — the Day of the splendour of colour of scarlet given way to crimson; of white shining linen; the wonder of sapphire; the softened splendour of the gold of Ophir; and of the lustre of the gates of pearl; of the Rainbow Angel and the scintillating diamond. It is the Day of El Shaddai, for the Bountiful Giver, the All-Sufficient, has fulfilled His purpose in this "Multitudinous Woman" of great price — the Shulammitte — the Lamb's Wife.

How wonderful we find the information in 1 Kings 6:37 concerning the Temple of Solomon, the typical house of the perfecting:

(1) The foundation was laid in Zif, which means "Splendour" — "the flower month", so called from "Ziv" = "Brightness", "Splendour", "Beauty". It was May, the second month of the Israeli year.

(2) In the eleventh year the structure of the House was completed, in the eighth month, Bul — "the fruit month", from Heb. "Bul" = "Produce", "Fruit".

(3) Solomon commenced to build in "the flower month". The foundation of the Christ life was made in Nazareth, "the flower town" (Vulgate and Septuagint).

(4) Solomon finished building in "the fruit month", the eighth month — speaking of the New Creation, Resurrection, the Final Perfecting. So Christ will build on until God is All and in All (1 Corinthians 15:28) with the help of His Consort in the Millennium. Then, and only then, will He ultimately see His seed in fulness. The Final Harvest — Tabernacles.

So far as the Lamb's Wife is concerned, who is a temple of the Lord, both individually and collectively, her life in the Lord begins in "flowers" and must end in "fruit" — Zif and Bul exemplified (Song 4:12, 16; John 15:8, 16; Song 8:12).

May we, then, retrace our steps to Cassia (Exodus 30:24) ?

What then do we find? It refers to the deportment of the Spirit as it is found in Christ, and to its glorious results in the future. His tendency to cleave to that that was good. See Ruth 1:14 for a superb citation, as an example for our following (trace the word "cleave" through the concordance for real benefit).

First having had the ability (that is, Christ had) to cleave perfectly between right and wrong, the Divine plan had decreed that He would stoop down as a slave (2 Corinthians 8:9, Philippians 2:5-8) and bow down in sacrificial death. But Genesis 49:9 had prophesied centuries before that, though He should "stoop down" and "couch as a lion", He was only waiting to be roused up as the old lion, "the lion of the tribe of Judah", who would from the "white tooth" of the Millennial Throne" wreak vengeance on the "white tooth" of the apostasy (Judges 3:8-10, Revelation 20:11). "He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall He lift up the head" (Psalm 110:7).

The references in Job 42 have declared the glorious fulfilment in that Three-fold Bride of the Spirit, like Job now one of Christ's children at that time (Psalm 45). His sores had been healed and the fulfilment of Shaddai had been revealed in the bountiful seed given to Him.

Such then in brief are the principal spices of the Anointing Oil of the Name "poured forth", and these four ingredients were compounded together with the Oil of the Spirit, "oil olive". So are these precious things found and suspended in the Oil of the Spirit Word today. It is here where we find contact with this Name in our days. It is here where the aromatic character garments of the Bridgroom are found. It is in this Word of God's grace where we find the measure of these most heavenly attributes, and where we may, if we so earnestly desire them, find satisfaction and peace in the anointed spirit of our Lord and Saviour (Ruth 3:1-4, 3:9, Ezekiel 16:8-10).

It is with the deepest contrition that we realise that beatings and cruel pressings were necessary to produce this oil olive. Gethsemane was the place - "The Garden of the Olive Press". We ask, Did our footsteps outline the path that Christ had to walk to Gethsemane? Scripture saith every heart knoweth its own bitterness.

So much, then, for our thoughts around the Name "poured forth", whose loveliness the Bride realised, and appreciated, and followed. May it ever keep us safe in its alluring grasp until that Glad Day!

Song 1, verse 4 "Therefore do the virgins love Thee"

We have emphasised briefly this appreciation and love for our Lord all down the ages of time. We have experienced the oil of gladness seen in this Spirit-filled character of Jesus, the Good Bridegroom. Its profusion has touched our hearts and filled our souls.

Song 1, verse 4 "Draw me - we will run after Thee"

Drawing the virgins to Himself!

The "oil of gladness", the Spirit-filled character of Jesus "poured forth" in profusion, and in symbol upon the head of Aaron (Psalm 133), running down to include the pomegranates - the multitudinous seed, the bride elect, as seen in type in the skirts of his robes (Isaiah 6:1, etc.) - is, of course, the "drawing" influence that persuaded the bride to hasten after her Lord. Jeremiah 31:3 describes the double action very aptly for us:

(a) "The everlasting love". "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love!"

(b) "Therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee!" - which may be set out briefly in two parts:

1. In symbol.

The "witching" power of this lovingkindness could be seen and experienced in the fragrance of this Divine confection as it streamed in profusion over Aaron; the attraction from a natural angle being brought about by the stimuli created in the olfactory organs. We are informed by travellers of the strange influence the exotic perfumes of the Orient have on the sensory system, able to effect rare emotionary states of happiness, joy and the very appropriate sense of sadness and pathos. However, none could be compared to this Divine confection of the apothecary's art. None could produce the strange impulse of attraction, the drawing power of this ointment, because it represents, as we have suggested, The Name poured forth.

2. In practice.

The same "witching" spell surrounded that Name in life - the Lord Jesus all the days of His flesh. He is still the most powerful attraction and drawing power in the world today, 2000 years after His ministry in Galilee. It comes, as it came to us, in all manner of ways, appealing in a very disconcerting way, but, for those of the right metal, as strong and direct and compelling as the magnet is to steel. That sweet influence is still being diffused amongst the isles of the Gentiles and its attraction has never deteriorated or weakened. The dominance of Acts 15:14 is still with us, as we ourselves witness; God is still taking out of the Gentiles a people for His Name.

The "everlasting love" of Jeremiah 31:3 was revealed in the lovingkindness of the Son and the three-fold influences of The Father, The Son and The Word, as they continue to extend their appeal to the Daughter, made up of both sexes and all ages, to complete the Divine Family, herself both Beloved and Friend at the same time; and the true daughter can no more resist the "witchery" than the moth the light or steel the magnet. The drawing power is not compulsion - her freewill is quite active - but attraction: she will not rest until this attraction gives way to satisfaction.

The Father's pleasure in this display of Divine perfection and grace is self-evident from Genesis 3:21, as we have already suggested, and we find it in keeping with Isaiah 11:1-3. We have in this sequence from Isaiah a list of the Spirit-filled



characteristics of Jesus, the Bridegroom, found, of course, in the Name "poured forth".

It is significant that the Septuagint, along with the Vulgate, renders "Branch" in Isaiah 11 : 1 by "Flower", agreeing with the thoughts just advanced on perfume and fragrance. Just as we have conveyed to our nostrils the delicate fragrance of a flower, usually producing intense delight, so the character of Jesus conveyed back to the Father in actual life the beauty and fragrance of His own Name. This apex of satisfaction brought forth those touching sentiments from the Father in Matthew 3 : 17, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased". The good pleasure of the Father is expressed by the timeless aorist tense in the Greek (A. T. Robertson, "Word Pictures of the New Testament"). Jesus, from the moment the thought of Him arose in the Father's mind "before the foundation of the world", has given pleasure to the Father. The foreknowledge saw in Him the obedient and loving Son, in whom the purpose would be carried out and His Father's Name truly honoured and revealed. Is it not in keeping that Nazareth, "the flower town", amongst other meanings, should be His home town? (Matthew 2 : 23). Isaiah 11 : 3 provides a truly scintillating point to the setting we are considering, in that we are shown that Jesus was captivated by that Name poured forth also; so much so that in fact Isaiah 11 : 3 margin states that "His scent or smell shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord". The Well-Beloved did not withstand in any way the sweet influence of that Name which He bore. Smell, palate and very life were given up to its seeking: He always did the will of Him that sent Him (John 5 : 30).

What of our part in the Bride-To-Be? Is it not to follow the One who has loved us and given His blood for us?

We are Gentiles, and dogs in particular! If so, we match up to Caleb, our older brother. "Caleb" means "dog" - not the savage Jewish dog, wild and untamed, more like a jackal; but the gentle dog "who eats the crumbs from under the table", tame, loving, scorning fire and water to follow and defend his Master. This faithfulness was the outstanding characteristic of Caleb, the "dog" of Yahveh, and Numbers 14 : 24, etc., proves it - "But My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed Me fully" (as a faithful dog) "him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it". Our path is to follow our older brother Caleb and scent with delight and odour that goodly smell of the Firstborn, the Son, our Lord - we cannot mistake Him. Song 5 : 13 declares (and we note that this statement comes from the Bride herself - this, then, should be our personal conception of the alluring nature of His scent, never to be forgotten by us), "His cheeks are as a bed of spices" (R.V. "balsam" - banks of sweet herbs), and the cheek, according to Oriental thought, is the most beautiful feature of the face. "His lips are as lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh". This is the Bride's estimation of His loveliness and scent. We know its fragrance. Let us follow closely with Caleb of old, because these characteristics must benefit us, just as the anointing fitted Christ (Song 6 : 2, "the Lord will feed on them").

Therefore, because of this diffusion of the Name, the manifested Name of the Father, from Father to Son, and Son to Daughter, the cycle is complete. Consequently we read in Song 1 : 4, "The upright love Thee" or "the virgins love Thee". We have both aspects of the Bride revealed in this verse: "Draw me" - "We will run after Thee". Besides showing the willing aptitude of the Bride to enter into the personal chambers, or the most intimate communion with Christ, we have the singular aspect. "Draw me" expresses the inward feelings as a whole in the Bride herself complete, and she represents as we know the true believers throughout the ages in Christ, who have been faithful to their first love - in contradiction to some of the Ephesian ecclesia (Revelation 2 : 4) - and have "followed the Lamb whithersoever He goeth". They are virgins "undefiled" (Revelation 14 : 4), redeemed from among men, not defiled with the women of the Apostasy. Back we go again to Caleb in like fashion. They followed the Lamb as clearly as he followed the Father.

The collective aspect is to be observed in the words "We will run after Thee". It is a family aspect we see here: "we will run" and not "I alone" but with the rest of the body. Jeremiah 31 : 3 has already come before us and we found it in keeping with the Name poured forth and the incense of sacrifice. In John 12 : 31-33 Jesus

remarked that His lifting up on the tree would implement the attraction. In John 6:44 Jesus insists that "no man cometh unto me except the Father draw him," and God gave His only begotten Son to this end, "to draw all men unto Christ" (as seen in this redeemed Bride, of course). John 3:13-16, 12:31-33.

It was upon this knowledge that our plea was made to the Father, "Draw me", and again that strangely disconcerting, almost overwhelming, insistence, when we first learned Christ. Baptism couldn't come too quickly, and the call to God to "draw us" became like that compelling fire in Jeremiah's heart, a longing that would not be denied. "Draw me, Lord: do it strongly". Would to God that this sweet influence could pervade our whole life in Christ, for there are times when we are not so eager to follow (compare Song 5:1-6, which will come before us later). We were so anxious and fearful that death and separation might have intervened. "Lord, draw us!" was indeed our plea. Christ was the magnet to Paul: "that I might know Him" was his cry in Philippians 3, verses 8 to 14 "and he found in Him, that I may win Christ".

(a) Christ draws by love (Hosea 11:4), "draw them with cords of a man, with bands of love".

(b) Christ draws by a look. How he drew Peter! (Luke 22:61-62). May such a look be permitted us in these days of our probation; then instead of following afar off even to the place of tempting, as was Peter, we may have a similar explosive charge in our experience as Peter had with that "look", and, as he did, follow Jesus very near in all our remaining days.

(c) Christ draws by a word. To Mary at the sepulchre He said just one word, "Mary". What a wealth of love and sympathy must have gone into that one word, that beautiful name "Mary" (John 20:11-16)!

(d) Christ draws sometimes by silence, as with the woman of Canaan: "He answered her not a word". Yet all the time He was drawing her, and at the last He said, "O woman, great is thy faith. Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt!" (Matthew 15:22-28).

(e) Sometimes we are drawn by afflictive providence to the Lord, as Ruth was in her experiences with Naomi and her family in trouble (Ruth 1:1-20). Many are the ways of the Lord known to us in this spiritual magnetism. In fact, in Proverbs three things are outlined which are beyond human comprehension, the last on the list being "the way of a man with a maid" - and we have before us the perfection of this mystery, The Way of Christ with His Maid.

The call comes individually to us, then collectively, and the response is: "We will run after Thee".

First, as we have said, Christ draws to Himself, then after Himself: to Himself singly, and then after Himself collectively, with others. We must always keep before our eyes the vital distinction:

"Me", a lowly individual, infolded within the  
 "We", a noble indissoluble unity, the Multitudinous  
 Bride herself.

#### Song 1, verse 4

It is because of the manner of this "drawing" that we have confidence in running" - "We will run after Thee". Our confidence is indeed in the ability of this persuasion, "Run!" In her own strength she could scarcely crawl. Isaiah 40:31 and Psalm 119:30-32 reveal that it is those that "wait upon the Lord that shall run and not be weary", and that we shall "run the way of God's commandments" only when He shall have enlarged our hearts. All the going is of the Lord. We can only follow afterwards. How true this is! We are called to be disciples - those who discipline themselves after the way of Christ; literally, those who follow after His steps (1 Pet. 2:21-25).

There is Divine protocol and personal humility in this project, "We will run, hasten, after Thee" - not before, not beside, nor without Thee, but after Thee", in true Ruth fashion, who sought the feet of Boaz when seeking redemption (Ruth 3:6-18); "at His side" would come later, as the Bride manifest in the Song.

The object of the project. Only "Thee". There is no other person either in sight or in mind. She is unable to compare Him with anyone else. Her eyes this time are single and fixed, in keeping with the conduct of the host of worthies of whom the world was not worthy. She is true to her Lord and to herself, as outlined in Hebrews 12:1-2, not looking unto the "great cloud of witnesses" of Hebrews 11, because this cloud is the Bride herself.

She is exhorted by Paul in another place (2 Cor. 10:12) not to compare herself with herself (that is, speaking of the other individuals who make up the mystical Bride), but to "look unto Jesus" in the sentiments of the Song, "laying aside every weight", that she might run after Him with greater determination and endurance (see Bible Class Association Essays, 1965: article "Fulfillment in Christ", for a very interesting discourse on Running). Psalm 16:8 will be a great help in our quest, "I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved", etc. "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore".

The response is here shown to be immediate, in both the Song and in Psalm 45. He has drawn, she has run well, and the result is abundantly satisfying:

1. Song 1, verses 4-6 "The King hath brought me into His chambers"
2. Psalm 45, verses 14-15 "They shall enter into the King's palace"
3. Song 2, verse 4 "Brought me into the banqueting chamber" - the inner recesses of the palace, equivalent in thought to the "secret place of the Most High" (Psalm 91:1), the Most Holy, where God dwells - the "many abiding places" of John 14:1.

Song 1, verses 4 - 6 "Into these chambers", as the Hebrew has it, "He hath caused me to come in".

"Caused" - In 1 Samuel 17, when David went to meet Goliath, he said, "Is there not a cause?" In John 12:23-27, as the greater David faced up to the chilling experience of the death on the cross, He exclaimed (verse 27), "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour". It was because Jesus slew the greater Goliath (sin in the flesh, Heb. 2:14-15) that we are caused by the Bridegroom to enter with joy and gladness into the chambers of the Lord.

Song 1, verse 4 "Into His chambers".

Again, literally, "chamber after chamber", or "court after court", a very obvious allusion to Solomon's Temple, which, as we know, is a figure of "the temple of His body", the dwelling-place of Deity:

1. The Outer Court - the Altar of Burnt Offering and the Laver;
2. The Holy Place - where stood the Lightstand, the Presence Bread and the Incense Altar;
3. The Inner Sanctuary, the Most Holy Place.

These are the chambers, the courts, into which we are brought and are caused to come in; and are brought in spiritual order: The Outer, The Holy Place, and finally, at the time of the Wedding Feast, The Inner Sanctuary, the Inner Chambers of the King's House. This experience enthral us, and so we remember these things which are written and make mention of them "more than of wine". No earthly joy can compare with this Love, likened to the love of Jonathan for David (only greater, of course) that constrained Jesus to strip Himself for our adorning (2 Cor. 8:9). Therefore shall we continually make mention of this love, infinitely more precious and potent than the sacramental wine of the Breaking of Bread. "The upright love Thee!", as seen in Nathaniel, "Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile" (Jacob), John 1:45-47. "Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice", said Jesus.

Song 1, verses 5 - 6 Here we find the Bride making her confession with its apparent paradox (verse 5) to a number of courtiers or the Daughters of Jerusalem.

Jesus so addressed the women of His day (Luke 23:27-28) who witnessed His own humiliation and suffering. He said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children".

In the Song these Daughters of Jerusalem are very interested witnesses of all that surrounds the Royal Pair. We notice the following details:

1. Song 2, verse 7 They are charged not to disturb Christ.
2. 3, 10 They are invited by the Bride to behold the King, and to realise that His chariot is paved with love for the Daughters of Jerusalem - themselves!
3. 5, 11 They have a further invitation to behold the King, this time from the Court itself.

Their role grows in interest in Song 5:8 and 6:13 -

- (a) Song 5, verse 8 They are commissioned by the Bride to inform the Bridegroom that she is "sick of love" - leading to their query in
- (b) 5, 9 "What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women?"
- (c) 5, 10-16 After the delightful description of His excellencies, and
- (d) After the gracious invitation by her to come to court and view His splendour, they too are filled with desire, and
- (e) 6, verse 1 we find them, filled with longing, wanting to go with her to seek Him.
- (f) 6, 13 She finds Him in the Garden of Spices, and the Daughters urge her to return to them, that they may enjoy what her Lord has

made of her and has made her to be. Who are these characters? There can be no doubt of their interest in the union of the Bride and Bridegroom. As yet they have to be brought within the scope of that persuasive influence and to be brought as she was into the Inner Chambers of the King. Could they possibly be the persons mentioned and addressed by the Bridegroom in Revelation 22: 17, "Come!"? —

(a) Those only nominally in Christ at this time, now in our day and age, whose interest has not equalled the fire of the drawing power. Usually they liked to be addressed as "practical Christians" and have not bothered to seek the inner sanction in the palace; writing this Song off as a love song of Solomon only and his strivings to keep a young girl in the harem against her wish!

(b) Could they be those who have become truly interested in Christ and as yet have not taken the final plunge in baptism, such as Nicodemus and Joseph at His first coming? They are almost exactly in the position of these Daughters of Jerusalem in the Song.

(c) Or can they be those not yet immortal in the Kingdom age, but deeply interested and eager to follow the Bride into the King's chamber at the end of the Millennium? Time alone will tell. Probably all three ideas are included.

Song 1, verse 5 "I am black but comely".

The Bride speaks of herself to the Daughters of Jerusalem, not speaking particularly of the state of her affections, but rather of the condition in which she appears in their eyes: (a) of her condition by nature, and (b) the character and effect of God's dealing with her.

Nothing is more marked in Scripture than the humbling character of God's way with those whom He will delight to bless. The whole of Jacob's life supplies full testimony to this (Gen. 47:9), the experience of Job showing the end in view in such dealings (Job 42; James 5:7-11). Think again of the Bridegroom Himself, the "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3, the classic example, 2 Cor. 8:9); and of our brother Paul (2 Cor. 11, Phil. 2:6-7), etc., and so we could go on throughout the Bible. Again the reason is not far to reach.

We have both the "black" and the "comely" aspects here - two completely opposite viewpoints. The black aspect detracts, is far from attractive to look on. "Comely" means "comeliness" or, better translated, "come hitherness"; attraction and allure-ment. It is the Bridegroom's own attitude that is before us in the first place, the right and proper exercise to which we are "drawn", and we follow after this discipline as His disciples.

Song 1, verse 6 The sun of affliction has looked down on the Shulamite. Lam.4:7-8. She has been scorched and her skin has become swarthy owing to long exposure and toil in the sun. She has been under the burning heat of James 1:11, which withers and consumes the grass of human nature and pride. This is her conception of her spiritual worth as she endures hardship and affliction under the chastening Hand of the Almighty.

A true conception of the ways of God is intended to make us little in our own eyes. How else could it be? What are we but finite specks in God's universe? The whole of the nations at any time, or of all time, are less than nothing in His sight, and just as effective as the dust of the balance, which weighs neither way - a drop of water in a bucket, which cannot be seen (Isaiah 40:15). Naturally we are small, tiny, unclean microbes before God, unable to bring anything into the world and able to accomplish nothing in it, except petty aims in keeping with nothing. Most surely we can carry

nothing away with us in death. Do we not feel less than nothing in His sight? How stupid, then, and absolutely futile for men to say, There is no God! The psalmist says it is the fool who so says, and the original for "fool" means "to be empty". So when we reflect that the heart of man is emptiness and man in general is nothing, then we arrive at the rare condition of man in essence as emptiness and vanity surrounded by nothing - a rare and double negation indeed, as Isaiah says, "less than nothing".

This is a Divine equation and not human mathematics, which tend just in the opposite direction. Man is exalted and God not even conceived. The Shulamite will have nothing of this, however. She is brought to realise that the chastisement of the Lord, though outwardly scorching the complexion and darkening the skin, promotes the formation of spiritual features of great beauty, pleasing to the Father and the Son. Chastening yields afterwards the "peaceable fruit of righteousness" - in other words, "spiritual comeliness". So we find that "black" and "comeliness" are together here.

Song 1, verse 5 "As the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon".

"Kedar" = "black", affliction, etc.

These words are not used to compare the tents of the shepherd lover and to contrast them with the curtains of Solomon's harem, as we are urged to accept: in fact, just the opposite is the case! We find they are an extension of, and further outline of, the two conditions just observed, leading to the true conception, in the writer's opinion, of course, of what lay hidden in the first pair of words, "black" and "comely". The sun-scorched or swarthy countenance of the Bride hid a wonderful comeliness of character. Compare the outward appearance of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. The grey-black outer covering of badger or seal skins would fit the description of the Bride's complexion at this time. Yet they hid, as we know, the glorious curtains, veils and furniture from outside gaze.

The Bride is quoting the Bridegroom's viewpoint, as her hidden beauty and comeliness, in which He greatly rejoices, is disclosed to His gaze.

The figure we have before us goes beyond the inner confines of the Tabernacle, beautiful in typical splendour as it was; for the corresponding example is to be found in the curtains of Solomon.

What were these curtains of Solomon? 2 Chron. 3:14 is the only quotation fitting the description, so far as known to the writer, and refers not to the harem but to the division between the Most Holy and the Holy Place in the Temple of Solomon itself, and within the confines of the two stages:

(1) The outward appearance. Unattractive as the Shulamite's appearance was when at work in the vineyard.

(2) The hidden splendour of the Inner Vail, embroidered with blue, purple, crimson, white, and the cherubim, all with their teachings of the redemptive ways of God.

(3) The most illuminating point, in fact, crimson has replaced scarlet in the colour scheme.

The aspect of scarlet. Compare Song 4:3 and Psalm 22: 6. The little worm here, "tolahanee" = cochineal, an insect from which the scarlet dye was processed through death, heat and crushing. Sacrificial death had been merged into CRIMSON (Heb. "Carmel", meaning "extreme fruitfulness". "A fruitful field", Isaiah 35:2; compare s.w.a. "fruitful field" in Isaiah 32:15). Crimson signifies briefly that Christ has seen the travail of His soul and has been satisfied that His Bride, apparently seen in affliction and chastisement, is now with Him, immortalised in glory and in multitudinous manifestation.

Solomon's Temple reveals the "Perfection", and upon careful consideration it will be observed the way by which the satisfaction has come about, Here we have successful conclusion in perfection, as she is found with Him at His side in the inner chambers of the palace. "This could only be observed from within". Consequently, the Bride of Psalm 45 is "all glorious within" (verses 13 and 14) and in symbol is found in the needlework likened unto Solomon's vail. "She shall be brought unto the King; with her virgins that follow her shall she be brought unto Thee". "With joy and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace" (verse 15).

Following this revelation of glory, the Bride very practically shows how the outward aspect came about in true self-abasement.

Song 1, verse 6 She acknowledges the fact that the sun had looked upon her and further illustrates it by the particular way in which she has been afflicted: 1. "My mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards" - and the sad result:

2. "But mine own have I not kept".

She had been exposed to the shame of sin, her own relatives being the cause of it in the first place. Jesus indicated that her greatest enemies would be those of her own household. Harking back to Micah's prediction of the things that should accompany His own chastisement (Micah 7:5-16), this particular affliction would inevitably come upon those who follow in His steps: it is passed on to us in Matthew 10:21-22, as it was to the Twelve and the early disciples that "followed after".

When these trials come upon us we are to rejoice - if they are for Christ's sake and not as a result of our native foolishness. Matthew 5:43-48 is the standard of our behaviour in such circumstances. There is the added pleasure of realising with Matt. 5:10 the blessings associated with persecution for righteousness' sake - we have just considered them! The lessons to be learned regarding natural relationships are to be observed all down Israel's history: Esau and Jacob, Ishmael and Isaac, the mixed multitude that turned Israel's heart back to Egypt; Ammon, Moab, also Midian, such as Balaam (see in this sequence Numbers 23, etc.).

The only cultivation we are called upon to undertake in Scripture is the Lord's vineyard, or Solomon's of the Song. Any other belongs, typically speaking, either to those of our family, the things of life in general, or, more in focus, those delights which tickle our own particular fancy. These usually are well watered and weeded so that our gain may be the maximum.

If we face up to the Truth, we know that our greatest enemy is ourselves, as Romans 7 puts it, and that very often we indulge in things not profitable and which do not help the cultivation of our personal portion of Christ's vineyard. How often have we echoed the sentiments of the Bride here: "My own vineyard have I not kept", or "I haven't had the time". As we have said, we find time enough to cultivate our own natural desires.

So the afflictions fall upon us, and sometimes we despair, as Naomi did in Moab. But occasionally, similar to Ruth, we are compelled in the circumstances to glean in other fields to sustain others, as she did, and it is our prayer that in the end we too may own our personal vineyard as the Bride will, and as Ruth found with the cornfields of Bethlehem, so that we may with them be able to offer its fruits to the Lord when He cometh. Song 8:12, "My vineyard, which is mine, is before me. Thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof, two hundred".

Song 1:5 As brother Tom Griffith of Llanelli indicated, "we see a type of the Bride in the Ethiopian wife of Moses".

She was despised; so are true Christians (1 Cor. 4:9-13, John 16:33). She, the Bride, as the tents of Kedar, is a pilgrim in the loveless wilderness (Heb. 11), ever longing, ever thirsting for His companionship. There is no beauty in a tent, no beauty to the eye. Neither is a tent abiding. So the Bride is not glorious to the casual eye. The carnal man would see no beauty in Jesus (Isaiah 53). He would see the Tabernacle of Moses only as a tent of badger skins (Ex. 26:24). The spiritual man would see the glory of God. He would see inside, with the colour scheme of the Spirit, as we have indicated. Yes, tent-like, but with the curtains of Solomon; speaking not of the sacrifices of many, but of One Completed Offering and its resultant multitudinous fruit, as we have endeavoured to bring forth. No doubt many Scriptures could be advanced in support of Song 1:6 - "they made me keeper of the vineyard" - apart from the personal angle that has occupied our thoughts.

The persecution of the Lord's own has come down through history: Joseph, and Daniel and his friends being notable examples. The little maid of Naaman's household is one captive who has always captured our heart (2 Kings 5:2). With Tom Griffith we are at one again. The maid rose to serve or wait upon Naaman's wife. "What a spiritual feast this incident is! - one perhaps whose true significance has passed by us: "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy!" How came this strong conviction? How could she know this? She had never witnessed leprosy healed! How do we know this? On the authority of Jesus in Luke 4:27, "Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet (Heb. Elisha), and none of them was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian". This is absolute

proof. How did the little captive maid know? Perhaps another word usually passed by unheeded will help: "recover him of his leprosy". "Recover" in Hebrew is "asaph" and means "to gather in".

Our sister saw in Elisha (= "God is salvation") a figure of her future husband and lord, for when in the law was it said that a prophet could cure leprosy? It was the duty of the priest to officiate in matters having reference to leprosy, and he had to pronounce clean or cured when God Himself had, as "the Lord thy Physician", granted cleansing (Lev. 13:13-14). But Jesus cured lepers Himself, being the antitypical Elisha ("God is salvation"). He is now both Prophet and Priest and also King elect.

This maid saw in the curing of Naaman - of which she was certain in her mind at the time - the gathering of the Gentiles into Israel, anticipating the effect of the Gospel being preached to the Gentiles and all men being "drawn" by Jesus to the Father (John 6:14), and then in turn the gathering into One Fold by Jesus (John 10:16), with the assistance of the apostles, and, we hope, of ourselves in these last days. Our sister, though very little, both in the house of Israel and more so in Naaman's household, being forced to keep or serve in another vineyard, so to speak, made full use of her bondage to bring in another element of the Bride - of whom she herself would form so honourable a part.

Her Christlike character is revealed centuries before the advent of her Lord. Malice and envy formed no part of her captivity. "Compassion" was revealed in her declaration. Never let any part of the Bride say, "I can do nothing in the Truth". Let us remember the little captive maid and do good to our enemies, though at times we are found to be "keepers of their vineyard". Could "Mine own vineyard have I not kept" convey to us the idea of self-sacrifice on her part? We must differ from this -- not in principle, though. This must be our attitude regarding our worldly outlook on life. However, what appears apparent in this statement is the meaning, as we have indicated a little earlier, that, owing to other pressures, the Bride has not been able to cultivate her personal vineyard for her Lord. The last verse of the Song gives us the sequel (8:12), as we have before indicated. This is our personal understanding of it. Brother Tom would use verses 5 and 6 of Song 1 exclusively of Jesus. Whilst appreciating his thoughts, we think we have the Shulamite's experiences outlined in the light of her Lord's during the "days of His flesh".

The children of His mother - many were incensed against Him - yes, but in no way did they make Him keeper of the vineyards, i.e. serve them. Jesus did His Father's business from the early age of thirteen (Luke 2: 41-52). His own vineyard He must certainly keep intact for His Father, as the Bride did later for Him.

Song 1, verse 7 "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest".

Here we come to the third petition from the Bride to Jesus :

1. Song 1, verse 2 "Kiss me"
2.            verse 4 "Draw me"
3.            verse 7 "Tell me".

All three are well-known to her when she has entered into the King's chambers (1:4), but in actual experience they are sometimes far removed in time.

"Tell me" takes us back to when at the first she knew her Bridegroom - not as the King Solomon as she now did in glory; but as she thought, and as she knew Him in fact, as we all do the Good Shepherd (Ezekiel 34, John 10), the great David (Beloved).

It is perhaps not without significance that she identified Him as The Shepherd. Later on, as observed in Mary Magdalene (John 20:15), she will see Him as The Gardener. We perceive this and place it alongside Genesis 2:15 and note the parallel that Adam, the First Man, was occupied as The Gardener, and further with Genesis 4:2 we find that Abel was The Shepherd, each being unique as the first of his kind. And finally, with Colossians 1:15, Jesus the second Adam is Lord of all the New Creation, as Adam was over the first; and with 1 Peter 5:4, Jesus is the Chief Shepherd over the Flock of God; and so we find a really wonderful Threefold Cord that cannot be broken, revealing to us how fitting it should be that we know the Bridegroom first of all as Shepherd.

We find that the sentiments of Song 1: 7-8 blend in perfectly, if the words are true to each of us. "O thou whom my soul loveth ! " The highest form of love is spoken of here (Septuagint, "agape"). It is not a love that is undertaken easily or

lightly professed. It is a love that has a knowledge of the object of its affection. She does not merely say, "My soul loveth thee", but "O thou whom my soul loveth". He is identified as the supreme object of her love: Thou, Shepherd, King. No one else is ever in her thoughts in this book, and, of course, this love for Him is reciprocal. We love Him because He first loved us. Jesus claimed such love (Matt. 10:37-39, Luke 14:26-27) and gave the reason for this in the verses that follow in Luke (14:28-35). He had counted the cost; nothing less than these demands would do. He was about to give them the supreme example on the cross. Paul had followed completely (Phil. 3:8). He, on the advice of his Lord, had "counted" all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. It is only logical to suppose that one does not give up home, family, love, etc., easily, and usually not without knowledge and a good deal of thought about the person and his ways for whose sake these things are forsaken.

The Shulamite has made these pretensions in regard to her love for Him. His conclusion is that knowledge must precede such a declaration, and gives His answer (Song 1:8). His reply is very startling when we view it in its setting at this time. "If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock and feed thy kids by the shepherds' tents".

We note first of all that the answer is somewhat different from the one Jesus gave in John 1:38-39. John and Andrew had said, "Master, where dwellest thou?". Due to the testimony of John the Baptist, their master at that time, they had only just met Jesus. They were definitely interested, but Jesus could never have been described as "the one whom their soul loveth" at this time. This followed later, as their knowledge and love of Him deepened. So Jesus answered, "Come and see!"

The individual components of this mystic Bride (such as we hope we are) must always bear in mind this statement of Jesus in Song 1:8, because our knowledge or otherwise of the place where the flock of God is fed and rested is a true and decided indication of whether the profession of our love is pure or counterfeit. The original Hebrew refers to the custom of shepherds guiding their flocks to fresh pastures when one spot had been "eaten down" and then returning back again when the herbage was regrown (Stuart). We know that the green pastures of the Christ flock are the whole length and breadth of the Word of God, with all its doctrines, ordinances and precepts, and, in the real sense of the term, these can never be "eaten down" by any of us. So it would appear that the custom of leaving one pasture of the Word and returning thither after feeding in another place, of itself teaches us that a balanced diet, consisting of all the vitamins and juices of the Word, is essential for all the "sheep folk" of the Christ flock, such as ourselves.

In keeping with many other Scriptures —

1. All Christ's armour is necessary to defend us (Ephes. 6:13-17)
2. All His virtues are necessary for an all-round performance of praise (2 Peter 1:2-8)
3. All the clothes of the spiritual man are essential to cover us (Colossians 3:10)
4. All the pasture of the Word is necessary to feed us and keep us spiritually healthy (Song 1:8).

The pasture of the Word is given us for a particular purpose. Deut. 8:3 is in point here to make us realise, and rely upon, the fact that we "do not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord". We, as the flock in this instance, are led to pasture by the Good Shepherd as we follow His way and directions in the Word, His convictions and applications to all situations in life as they affect us as sheep in that One Flock.

As sheep of the Good Shepherd (Ezek. 34, John 10), we have been from time to time as sheep going astray (Song 1:6). The Shepherd, however, has searched us out, and led us, and sometimes carried us on His shoulder back to the flock (Luke 15:1-5). Contrast the difference in Isaiah 9:6 — the future government of the world can be borne on One Shoulder. Yet He will devote all His strength to recovering that lamb to the flock — uncovering a wealth that is wondrous in the love of the Shepherd for His flock. So under His guidance we have returned unto "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls", as the Bride is now doing in Song 1:7, and, taking His example, we in turn become shepherds (not hirelings who flee the flock when danger appears) and we guard and feed and try as He did to become ensamples to, the flock; and so receive the approbation of the Chief Shepherd when He appears (1 Peter 5:1-4).

Returning to the Bride herself in Song 1:7, it is interesting to note that she wishes



to know His resting place (psalm 23:2, R.V.) - "waters of rest" in the heat of the day. When the sun is hottest, then the shepherd will endeavour to cause the flock to lie down in quiet resting places near the cool waters. The Bride says (1) "Where thou feedest" and (2) "where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon". One is a season of comparative labour (feedest), the other that of rest. Compare Ruth in that wonderful entreaty passage of unsurpassed beauty: she will follow where Naomi, or the Truth, goeth, and she will lodge or rest with Naomi alone. Just a similar spirit is found in this future Bride, of whom she will form a glorious part.

All times are alike to Jesus now risen, but they are not so to us, and the distinction here may refer to the periods of work and rest that are essential to all of us - to have the Presence and Fellowship of Jesus at Rest, as Mary realised in that memorable home at Bethany (Luke 10:38). She had chosen the better part: "Come aside and rest awhile" is the invitation of Jesus to us.

The following little poem comes to us inside an old second-hand book, used as a book-marker — perhaps it could be usefully employed:

"When in the pathway of God's will  
Thou seemest at a stand,  
Longing for wings to scale the hill  
And tired of foot and hand,  
At blessed Bethlehem leave thy gloom,  
There learn divine content —  
By Manger, Workshop, Cross and Tomb  
Thy Lord to triumph went." (Author unknown)

It will help tremendously if we can keep the sentiments of this poem in our minds as we follow our Shepherd.

The Chief Shepherd has given orders that we, the Shepherdess Bride, should attend to the feeding of the flock as our ordinary calling at this time, and during which our intercourse with Him must be of an interrupted nature. Although our work is all for Him, to converse with Him at this time is not the duty in which we are engaged. We must never get out of earshot, because we must hear His commands, and throughout our daily toil we must always keep Him in sight, to mark closely His workings, and so that His call "Come unto Me and rest" is always heard by us; or that we might apply to Him for help, and be aided by Him in the hourly difficulties that beset our spiritual vocation. The sentiments of the old hymn are very near to us: "I need Thee every hour".

So our busy lives in Christ are found working at all times with Him, in communion with Him, but not at rest with Him in the fullest sense. The Bride will ever find Jesus working for the redemption of His flock (John 5:17) - "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work", said Jesus, to bring in the true Sabbath, which would not be broken into by sin and wickedness; so in our labours for the flock we work also with Them. We ask, then, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest thy flock".

Song 1, verse 7 "Where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon".

She asks this, longing to be with Him, for this is the hour or time when nothing else is required of her but to sit at His feet to receive refreshment, both natural and spiritual, sufficient to strengthen her for the obvious work that lies ahead.

At the moment of time when the Song is sung her work under this heading has been completed. She now dwells as consort of the greater Solomon, and the many who make up this mystic Bride will recall the moments of joy spent in meditation with Him in the Word. Some of this mystic multitude had the inestimable privilege of sitting at His feet during the days of His flesh. She is now at rest.

We have already mentioned Mary of Bethany, who timed her periods of work for Him and resting places with Him in perfection, and so earned eternal approbation for her spiritual perception (Luke 10:38). We see in this one incident far-reaching principles that we do well to take heed of. We have to follow Him and rest at His feet in like manner as our sister at Bethany:

(a) In times of daily devotion in the quietness of our resting with Him to seek to enter more fully into His mind, resting in Him and casting our burdens upon Him, to suffice our minds with that depth of spiritual wisdom available only in Him and resident in our days in the Word of His grace.

(b) In times of daily work and occupation, in earning our daily bread, essential though it perisheth - and should be regarded as such and emphasised sufficiently only for the purpose placed upon it in our lives. After all, the Lord Himself knows the necessity of it, having spent the greater part of His life in Nazareth supporting and helping to support the household of which He was the eldest son. He became known as "The Carpenter of Nazareth". We hope to see why in our future studies in this book.

Paul says, "If a man will not work, neither shall he eat", even though that man (wrongly as it proved) expected the return of the Lord hourly (see "Thessalonians" by A. Hall), 2 Thess. 3:10.

With the seeking of our daily bread we have the shepherding of our high calling, requiring diligent attention. We have to follow carefully the various movements of the Chief Shepherd, as we have already realised. So the two aspects of our calling today being "agreed" must "walk together". We must see Jesus in both occupations of life, and make sure that in His wisdom our choice will be made, so that we may be in the correct place and occupation at the right time. See what Thomas missed in John 20. He had missed the resting place for some reason or other, whereas Mary of Bethany found it. We have to be so careful in striking a proper balance between earning our daily bread and shepherding, because, should we miss Christ on either occasion, we are in danger of losing Him in both. Paul's advice comes ringing down the centuries: "Abide in your calling with God" (1 Cor. 7:20-24), then the true balance will never be lost sight of, and the crown of glory in the King's chambers will await us on that day (1 Peter 5:4).

Song 1, verse 7 "For why should I be as one that turneth (or "veiled", R.V. and A.V.) by the flocks of thy companions?"

A veiled woman in Israel was a harlot (Genesis 38:14-15), but see later exposition with regard to Tamar. The position was very different in her case: the veil was used as a sign of widowhood. The Shulamite was apprehensive lest she should receive the obvious name and treatment of a woman who followed the shepherds' camps. Humiliation and degradation could only come of such a situation. She would appear to be a woman of easy virtue, willing to be unfaithful to her beloved. Such are the dangers which beset us should we lack the necessary knowledge of the ways and goings of the Lord our Shepherd. Whenever we find indications such as these in the Word, we can but turn our thoughts to the various divisions that have rent the body. How sad it is that many have "turned aside" and followed other shepherds! The reply from the Chief Shepherd carried a two-edged sword.

Song 1, verse 18 "If thou know not, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents",

meaning that we should know, and that this is a true indication of whether we belong to the Bride or not. John 15:14-15 makes the issue quite clear on this point - "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you; henceforth I call you not servants (bondservants, R.V.), for the bondservant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you". The word in Greek for "servant" or "bond-slave" is "doulos", applying to the lowest form of menial subjection. The word in Greek for "friend" is "philos". Papyrus discoveries reveal the title was given to the highest officials of Ptolemy's court. The Septuagint rendering in Esther 2:18 is used of "prince" in the A.V. of this word. Thus members of the court, his friends, having audience and interested in the concerns of Ptolemy's kingdom. The inference, then, is crystal clear from the Shepherd's reply, "If thou know not" - then we are interlopers, strangers, none of Christ's. The only answer can be, "I never knew you!" If then we admit we are unaware of His habits and movements, we prove that we are none of His. As His friends, we have been told all things in the Word. Shall we not make sure, then, that we belong to that intimate group of Friends of the Inner Chambers of the Palace?

Paul has a wonderful passage in 1 Corinthians 2:9-16 in which these principles are summed up. Peruse this at leisure: we allow ourselves one verse only as an illustration - 1 Cor. 2:12, "Now we have not received the spirit of the world; but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God".

(1) May we share the reluctance of the Shulamite to turn aside to other companions, other than Christ. We want only Him.

(2) Because it is unlike the child of God, the Bride of Christ, to be without the society of her Beloved.

(3) There is always danger of separation, or diversion of this kind.

(4) Eve was away from Adam when the serpent tempted her, and sin will always take advantage of our absence from Jesus to bring us into temptation.

(5) Our only safety is with Himself - this probably forming the basis of the queries we have studied.

The alternative suggestion that we have been offered is that the advice of Jesus was, if we should desire to know where He could be found, would be by following the footsteps of the flock and to feed our young ones by their tents - likened to a flock of God in Heb. 11 because each one in his or her day looked unto Him, therefore our footsteps would be led to Him in this way.

We do see an element of truth in this suggestion, and its gradual awakening of knowledge and interest in the things to be found in Him. However, we think that Paul gives us the correct direction in Hebrews 12 :1-2. Reference is made to the "cloud of witnesses" already referred to in Hebrews 11, then our attention is directed not to them, but to Jesus, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith".

Although we do well to trace out the lessons of the characters of this cloud of witnesses for our guidance, the issue in Song 1:8 is not with them, but only Himself, for He has told us all things concerning that ministry and rest. He is the Good Shepherd (Psalm 23), the Great Shepherd (Heb. 13) and the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4).

Song 1, verse 8 We note in this verse the Shepherd's first mention of the Bride : "O thou fairest among women", matching up with the description of Him. He is the "altogether lovely" (Song 5:16). Masculine and feminine happily married together in unity of character.

It is most instructive to note that in Song 5:9 the Daughters of Jerusalem think similarly of the Bride : "What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women?" This is a fair indication of what Paul emphasised in 1 Tim. 3:7, "We must have a good report (or testimony, R. V.) of them that are without" the Truth as well as from within the Brotherhood. Paul's statement was anticipated by Song 1:8 and 5:9, revealing the Shulamite's reputation by Jesus and the interested witnesses outside Christ, as we have seen. It is characteristic that she should be addressed as such by Jesus after describing herself as "black and swarthy of skin".

The reason why she could be described as "the fairest among women" in parallel thought to Jesus as the "altogether lovely", is that :

1. The character of Jesus reflected that of the Father, Who had taught and shown Him all things (John 5:19-20).

2. The character of the Bride reflected back to Jesus.

We have already commented on the fact that in Hebrew thought the more handsome a man was, and the more beautiful a woman was, reflected back to the Divine character. So, then, once again we have a "threefold cord" of transcendent beauty in this Divine harmony of character.

Song 1, verse 9 "I have compared thee, O my love (R.V. margin, "friend"), to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots".

One wonders what a modern girl would think if we gave the comparison found in this verse to her ! She would hardly be flattered, one would think. What can we make of it and of the symbology behind it? We note that it is the first comparison of the Bride by Christ :

(a) It is not of one person, but many are grouped together in One ; so we conclude the multitudinous aspect is here.

(b) We have pictured before us a perfect team, the ecclesia of God.

(c) Beauty of order.

A perfectly timed action.

(d) Oneness of mind. Oneness in action. Unity of control.

(e) Perfect response to the bridle, calling to mind James 3:2-3, 6-8 ; she had responded to the bit in her mouth. "If a man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man and able to bridle 'the whole body'. Revealing that fire of iniquity, the tongue, a most

prominent weakness of the Bride elect, for James 3:8 continues, "The tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison". No ordinary man can, in the fullest sense; but the Bride did, and of course we realise that this Company of Horse alludes to the finished, and not to the as yet incomplete glorious Bride. The point is, however, that it does refer to us, if we are to help make up the Mystic Bride. Can we do it? Only through the strength available in Christ, as Paul found (not having his own righteousness) -- through Christ, who strengthened him, he could be found blameless, but not in this life faultless (Philippians 4:13, 1 Thessalonians 3:13).

Note the insistence on super-excellence in this figure of Pharaoh's horses and chariots: (1) The Egyptian horses were the finest in the ancient world, and Pharaoh's horses were the pick of the Egyptian horses (1 Kings 10:38). (2) They were used for pageantry and the conveyance of royal and other dignitaries (such as Joseph, who rode second only to Pharaoh himself), and for military purposes (Gen. 41:41-43, Ex. 14:7-8, 26-28).

Following the Shepherd required not only affection and the capacity to feed the flock, but demanded power, energy and discipline to overcome the hostile influences that would oppose them. Jesus presented this problem in Pharaoh's chariot horses. If purity of affection and fellowship is to be preserved, then there must be power to meet what is adverse. Job 39:19-25 presents the terrifying sight of the battle horse in his day. Judah is to be the goodly battle horse in the day of Christ's return (Zech. 10:3, Jer. 47:20). It is later shown to be a white horse (Rev. 19:11), the saints riding with Jesus (Rev. 19:14). We have, then, at this early stage in the Song the militant nature of the Ecclesia.

In Song 6:4-10 she is found "terrible as an army with banners". Our duty is found not only in pastoral pursuits in Christ, but also as invincible warriors - as the chariots of Pharaoh were at this time among the world's cavalry. See 2 Cor. 10:3-5 for the ideal of our campaigns and the nature of our warfare as the ecclesia of God.

The Bride had said, "Draw me and we will run after thee". Here in Song 1:9 we find that speed and precision of movement related to this Egyptian crack cavalry of world fame. In such a way are we called to follow our irresistible Lord.

We note that the original Hebrew for "compared" is referring back again to Philippians 4:13, "I have made thee like unto" - what power resides in the Bridegroom! Note once again the ascending scale from a comparatively "lower seat" to the higher place, as can be discerned in the militant nature of this mystic Bride:

- |    |           |  |   |              |
|----|-----------|--|---|--------------|
| 1. | Song 1: 9 | "As a company of chariot horses"                                       | ) |              |
| 2. | 6:10      | "Fair as the moon, pure as the sun"                                    | ) |              |
|    |           | "Terrible as an army with banners"                                     | ) | warlike      |
| 3. | 6:12      | "Like the chariots of Amminadib" - "the chariots of my willing people" | ) | propensities |

Zechariah 6 shows the Four Chariots of His "willing people" - the Cherubim - the Chariot of Yahweh, whose warlike efforts finally make the whole earth still and at rest, to usher in the millennial reign of Christ, subduing to His rule the Mountains of Brass. This is the picture that evolves from a contemplation of the militant nature of the Bride: (1) militant for her Lord; (2) for the flock, and, of course (3) always militant against her own faults, never content to rest under this heading.

Song 1:10-11 "Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold". "We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver". R.V. "Thy cheeks are comely with plaits of hair, thy neck with strings of jewels". "We will make thee plaits of gold with studs

of silver". (a) May we see here the ornaments on the headstall that adorned these marvellous horses, making them look a dazzling, flashing splendour of light with the sun shining upon them, striking terror into the hearts of the opposing forces, paralleled, as before quoted, Song 6:10, "As fair as the moon, as pure as the sun", with Song 1:10-11, "Ornaments of silver and gold": again the militant aspect of this wondrous Bride as foreseen by Christ, the Lord of Hosts of the Millennium.

(b) "I have made thee like unto Pharaoh's horses", and, because of her obedience and fidelity, she is now adorned with the jewels of her Lord's adorning and giving. In contradiction to her warlike propensities, we now behold - with brother Tom - the Spouse in beauty of character, gentle and meek with grace, thus adorned by the Word of God (1 Pet. 3:4). The Word of God is an ornament of grace upon her head, and chains about her neck (Prov. 1:9, 3:22, etc.). The Bride, now in the splendour of

character, is adorned with rows of jewels and chains of gold.

The plural number is very important in Song 1:11, "We will make thee . . ." - the Father and the Son! "For the Son can do nothing by himself, but what he seeth the Father do, that he doeth" - the indissoluble unity of the Father and the Son is in prominence again (John 5:19, 17:21-26). Again the three-fold link has been established and none can break it. The marriage of the Son of Matt. 22:2, etc., is in obvious contact here, and should be worked out at your leisure.

Again with Tom Griffith They (the Father and the Son) only can beautify the meek with salvation (Psalm 149:5). On the day of resurrection, when these happenings (i.e. the perfection of the Bride) take place, the Father through the Son will symbolically put or make the borders of Israel with borders of gold. Gold = everlasting life (Psalm 74:17). He that setteth the borders of the earth will again make the borders of Israel with pleasant stones (Isaiah 54:12). He will enclose the Bride with immortality - borders of gold. Compare Song 4:12, "as a garden enclosed", and Revelation 21:18, where the Divine "We" have made a jasper for the City.

The cheeks, in Oriental thought, are the most beautiful part of the features (the teaching on this heading will be further amplified later on in Song 5), and the ornaments were so arranged to bring out these features of the face. We have seen that the features outlined represented spiritually meekness and grace, the law of God being an ornament of grace to her neck. Indeed Isaiah 66:2 comes into vision - "Unto this man will I look, that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at My word", and so forth. One example only can be illustrated because of space limitation, that of Rebekah, one of the most notable of the company who will make up the Bride. She also was given jewels from her master, sent by the hand of Eliezer of Damascus, or, to be precise, from her master's father, Abraham, and, as in our case, this was before the two parties had met. This affords one of the most instructive examples of the calling and adorning of the Bride :

Study closely the context in Genesis 24. We can give only a selection of points:

Gen. 24:2 "The God of heaven". This is the first occurrence in Scripture of this title. It is used only when Israel is "Lo-ammi" ("Not My people", Hosea 1:9), or, as in this case, before Israel had been formed into a nation, or, as in Jonah 1:9, when the action of the prophecy is not in Israel and has to do with a foreign nation. It is prominent in Daniel, Ezra, etc., the captivity books of Scripture. It is prophetic also of the age when the Bride is forming in the times of the Gentiles, our days. We note that this title is prefaced by "Yahweh", and the burden of Gen. 24 is the getting of a wife for Isaac, the seed of the promise. Typically, then, we see the procuring of the mystic Bride for the Son Himself in contact here.

The details of the chapter are well-known to us - if not, now is the time to make ourselves fully acquainted with them before we study the following notes :

Gen. 24:14 Study carefully the request of Eliezer ("whom God helps"): "I will give thy camels drink also until they have done drinking". Quite a task when camels require from 12 to 20 gallons each to satisfy their need! It has been known in Gospel terms as "the second mile" - if a man ask thee to go with him one, go twain (Matt. 5:41). The first mile is Christian obligation but the second is that of Christian service and grace. In one small word - "also" - we get a simple yet searching definition of Christian character. Rebekah, who had no need to do this service, did so out of kindly consideration, revealing according to God's grace and estimation, a fitting wife for the Son. Rebekah's aspirations were centuries ahead of time, even agreeing with her true Bridegroom and Son Jesus.

How intensely Eliezer looked upon Rebekah to see whether she would come up to the expectations he had thought fitting to make! The Revised Version of Gen. 24:21 brings this out beautifully: "And the man looked steadfastly on her, holding his peace, to know whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not". Profession only on Rebekah's part was carefully scrutinised, but (verse 22) "as the camels had done drinking" he prepared to take the matter further. The man took a golden ear-ring (or nose-ring) of half-a-shekel weight and two bracelets of ten shekels weight of gold for her hands. R.V. for "half-a-shekel" is (Heb.) "beka". See Ex. 38:26, where we find the same is the equivalent of the ransom money for the fighting men of Israel, only the metal here is silver. The word "beka" means "to separate or divide", and "Rebekah" means "to bind again or re-unite that which

has been divided or separated".

(a) Taking "Rebekah" first, it would appear to teach that in her antitype, the Bride, we find those who have been separated to God by redemption, as were the fighting men of Israel (again the militant aspect), just as earlier Eve, who had been separated from Adam, became united with him as one flesh after their coming together.

(b) Because the metal is not silver, her immediate redemption is not prominent in these verses; rather has she been "marked out", set apart, for her ultimate destiny by God, pointing to the glorious Bride in immortality as perceived in the golden aspect (Rom. 8:28-30, Ephes. 1:13-14, Rev. 21:2), the Lamb's Wife "marked out" from before the "foundation of the world" (Ephes. 1:3-7).

(c) Gen. 24:53 indicates the means by which this union would be effected. In verses 49-52 Eliezer had made sure that Bethuel was a "dweller in God". Most certainly he was sent to the right place by Abraham, a reminder that our younger generation in the Truth should look for partners in such Godly surroundings within the Brotherhood and not seek the Canaanites outside. We are told he "worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth". Then he took "jewels of silver and jewels of gold and gave them to Rebekah". Here we have the symbols of redemption put forward, but not before consent was given. A refusal could have emerged from the transaction, but, from a natural angle, as Isaac was the son of a very rich relative, it was very unlikely. And from the spiritual angle Rebekah had been "marked out" from "before the foundation of the world" as the bride of Isaac and the typical spouse of the Son. The transaction of the union between Christ and His Beloved would come about through the redemption found in Him, because He would Himself be "a ransom for many", or, more particularly, a ransom for "the many" who would constitute the multitudinous Consort (Ex. 38:26, 1 Tim. 2:6). The "all" in this latter verse, while being open to "whosoever will", in redemption terms is bounded in the "many" just mentioned; similar in idea to the Gospel net, in which all manner of fish are found, and to the great fish - 153 - in John's Gospel, the outcome of the Gospel exercise, the pick of the catch, 153, making up the glorified Bride (Matt. 13:47-48, John 21:1-11).

Gen. 24:53 The jewels of gold reveal the personal tried faith of Christ, and also, as we saw from verse 22, the outcome of it all as seen by God from the foundation of the world - the glorified union of Jesus and His Bride at the moment of time when this Song is being sung at the Wedding Feast in the Kingdom of God.

(d) Gen. 24:58 We see the action of Eliezer was anticipatory of Rebekah's consent. "Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go". Further details must not delay us, interesting though they be, apart from one point: verses 62-65, the dwelling-place of Isaac, near the well "Lahai-roi" = "the well of life and vision". Rebekah recognised Isaac immediately she saw him (the real meaning behind verse 65), yet she had never seen him before. How was this? One can only conclude that Eliezer had told her all about Isaac on the homeward journey. What is the help that God gives us today so that we may be able to recognise our Lord on sight, although we have never seen Him in fact? The "word of His grace" is our help and infallible guide and index to Jesus. We are among those who hope to be "blessed because we have not seen, yet have believed" (John 20:29).

Rebekah was a truly wondrous forebear in this respect. May we find with her the ultimate realisation as seen in the well "Lahai-roi", the well of life and vision. John finds the antitypical counterpart in 1 John 3:2, "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is".

These jewels of silver and gold can be said to have been given us (we must leave the Rebekah sequence with reluctance) that we might see in them our Bridegroom-to-be as He really is.

Israel, too, was similarly adorned by God: Ezekiel 16:11, "I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets on thy hands and a chain on thy neck", that Israel might realise she belonged to God, as Rebekah had done regarding Isaac. Rebekah showed forth the Divine characteristics as seen in the great Bridegroom, as Ruth did after her, and both laid hold of the hope held forth. But Ezekiel 16:17 sadly records, "Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of My gold and My silver which I had given thee" and turned aside to other men and gods.

We must not attempt to misuse or prostitute these gifts as Israel did, or the fate which befell them will overtake us. 1 Pet. 3:16 records what Christ has bestowed upon us, "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of

great price" - representing the gift of His own character. It is significant to know that both Rebekah and Ruth showed anticipatory sympathy with these characteristics, and, of course, Naaman's little maid (2 Kings 5). This gift, then, of anticipatory identification is bestowed upon us before we meet Christ personally, so that in living with it now we might be able through His grace to recognise Him even as we come nigh in the day appointed.

Song 1:10 "Borders of gold with studs of silver".

The promise is, "To him that hath shall more be given". He shall have them "in abundance". The Bride has already rows of jewels and chains; she shall now receive further honour, "borders of gold with studs of silver".

Stuart asks, "What can be meant by making her borders of gold with studs of silver, which should be more valuable than what she wore except the royal crown?" - or the nuptial crown in view here, or perhaps both in one, agreeing again with Ezekiel 16:12-13, "A beautiful crown upon thine head"; "Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver", etc.

1. First, bracelets on the wrists.
2. Jewels on the forehead.
3. Now a beautiful crown on the head.
4. Paul declared it to be a "crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. 4:8), as the Thessalonians would prove to be his crown of rejoicing in the day of Christ (1 Thess. 2:19).
5. Peter saw a crown of glory to crown the faithful Bride at her Lord's coming (1 Pet. 3:5).
6. John and James saw it as a crown of life (Rev. 3:1, 2:10, James 1:12) - made possible, let it never be forgotten, because we His Bride (we hope) made first for Him a crown of thorns, and its ruby drops were the drops of His own blood. In true remembrance of this terrible fact, may we strive to lay fast hold on Faith, so that no man might take hold of that crown and take it from us, so that we may share in the gladness of that day of espousals of the true Solomon (Song 3:11, Isaiah 61:10, 62:23). The promise is, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life". Again identity, this time of purpose. It was because the Bridegroom was faithful unto death that He first received the crown (Rev. 3:1, 2:10).

This crown of silver and gold is a true memorial for all faithful members of the Bride of the Throne of Glory and the Man, the Branch (Zech. 6:10-15), and the Chain of God (Song 1:10) of Joseph (Gen. 41:41-44) and Daniel (Dan. 5:7), and of the glory and power destined for the Bride mystical in the Millennium.

Song 1:12-14 Beautiful description of the preciousness of the Bridegroom in the Bride's affections, in view of what has been advanced regarding her redemption and marriage.

Tom Griffiths puts it this way in poetic thought:

"While the King sits at His table  
 He breathes the fragrance of the Bride,  
 Spikenard gathered when she was able  
 Now a perfumed memorial at His side.  
 A parable revealed in spikenard smell  
 Of precious love in love doth dwell.  
 With the Bridegroom of myrrh bundle of life (?)  
 Enfolded with spikenard precious breasts,  
 The mystery spoken with myrrh smelling sweet,  
 The spirit marriage in joyous camphire meet.  
 He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts,  
 All night, yet not night of the light.  
 Myrrh and camphire sweetest symbol, immortal rest,  
 Spikenard bride in the dawn of spirit light,  
 Fragrant symbol of the dawn,  
 A loving bride of immortality is born."

What exquisite feeling, discernment and love have been poured into this poetic paraphrase! In our brother Tom we find the timely expression of the Bride at this time.

Song 1 : 12-14 Returning to our exposition of these verses, we will take verses 13-14 first, (a) because they only reveal just what her Lord means to the Bride, and (2) because verse 12 outlines her compulsive (voluntary, of course) action in her love for Him.

Song 1:13-14 "A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts".

A bundle (or little bag) of myrrh was usually carried, as the Song has outlined, in the bosom by Orientals, scenting the garments and diffusing fragrance all around, whether at home or abroad, at work or resting, in the sanctuary or in the social circle. Silently but surely the fragrance of the perfume, like the air, fills the scene. Even after the person has left, the lingering sweet odour of the perfume remains. Song 5:5 - here she found this to be true. Only this haunting perfume remained on the slightly sticky substance on the latch, to say that Christ had been present, and left without, because she was reluctant to come to Him.

Song 1:13 She would wear the symbol of His sacrifice nearest to her heart, between her breasts, in memory or anticipation of the sacrifice of her Beloved on her behalf, that through efficacy He might afterwards receive her without spot or blemish - that self-flowing myrrh which held all the wonder of purpose in the voluntary shedding of the blood of the Lamb - purifying, decay-arresting, purging, bitter-tasting and yet sweet-smelling, wondrous in soothing all on her behalf. The bundle of myrrh never would leave its resting place betwixt her breasts. "All night" - the Gentile night of darkness. A testimony to herself and others of the love she bore to Him who had given so much for her (Ephes. 5:25-27). His sacrifice would be her constant thought. She would delight herself in her Lord's salvation.

Her memory could be constantly attuned to her Lord by this means, but sometimes human ambition and ego affect our smell and momentarily the delight fades. It is then we are in grave danger, and we lose our sense of direction, and, if not very careful, we too shall lose track of the movements of the Beloved, and we shall not comprehend, and shall forget at times, that our Lord's head was wet with the dew of the night (Song 5:2), and we shall lose our way.

However this may be, whilst the Lord remains away this love must delight, sober, refresh and encourage us during the night of Gentile darkness wherein we dwell. The bundle of myrrh must remain nearest to our hearts at all times.

Song 1:14 We observe a difference in the teaching of verse 14, "My Beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi".

In Song 1:13 the bundle of myrrh in the breast is hidden from the eye of the beholder and could be termed the Bride's own special testimony and remembrance in herself; but, though it is not seen, the effects of it should be evident, as we have seen from the fragrance still lingering even when she is absent. In Song 1:14, "My Beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire (or, R.V. "henna flowers")", this is quite different. This is open testimony for us all to see, carried openly in the hand.

Myrrh, as we have already observed, is the living juice of the tree which flows or exudes in drops through the broken parts of the bark (i.e. the spontaneous variety free flowing). The flowers of the camphire grow in dense clusters and are beautiful as well as fragrant. Myrrh, then, would correspond to the Pauline prayers "that Christ may dwell in your heart through faith", and camphire "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of the Lord Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. 4:10). How true this is!

From henna the Orientals made a kind of face powder or talc, rouge, etc., on account of its beautiful perfume; also a beautiful golden dye with which they tinged their hair and the tips of their fingers. The word "camphire" is also translated "cypress" = an evergreen, as we all know. Its fruit was white and tiny like the coriander and it was known locally as the "manna tree", which is very significant when we realise that the Hebrew is "kepher" (Song 1:14, 4:13).

"Kepher" is used for atonement, propitiation, mercy seat, and so forth, as the Concordance reveals. In Gen. 6:14 we have both the verb and the noun. Concerning the Ark Noah was commanded, "Thou shalt pitch it ("kepher") within and without with pitch ("kepher"). In fact, the paraphrasing of Song 1:14 could be,



"He whose all things are has atoned for my iniquity". This passage is full of beauty and grace for us. We see even the beauty of the Bride, and the most important features by Eastern standards - the cheeks - are openly adorned and covered with the atonement of her Lord. Her glory (the hair, 1 Cor. 11:15) is touched up by it and her fringes are covered by it, and the manna of the food of life is the fruit of it. Note the allusion to Song 1:14 in the Corinthian passage, the long hair "given her for a covering". The sister wears a covering on her glory in recognition among other things of Song 1:14; that henna tinging showed forth her Lord's atoning love for her.

The beauty requisites are a must for every brother and sister in Christ. The modern idea with pale green eyelids is more inclined to the Jezebel figure and is to be discouraged, in the writer's opinion. However, because of the sentiments found in verses 13 and 14, verse 12 comes into true perspective: "While the King sitteth at His table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof". We have already considered this passage under 1:2, etc., but in brief summary may note the following:

As this passage saw its partial fulfilment at Bethany (John 12:1-8), we realise that Mary had saved her precious ointment for this occasion. Her love was reflected in that in all probability it was a priceless family heirloom she used for anointing her King. Judas the thief was quick to point out its costly nature - in fact, 300 pence represented a man's whole wages for a year. She had saved up her precious gift for this anointing, anticipating that death which would redeem her and bind her to His side at the Wedding Day. The Bride (consisting of the faithful element of the Truth in the first century) lavished her ointments on Him to greet Him in every stage of His redemptive journey: (a) at Bethlehem at His birth; (b) at Nazareth, His home city; (c) during the course of His ministry; (d) when He was about to be taken away (Bethany); (e) after His death a double anointing was intended, but only one was necessary (John 19:38-39) by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus; (f) the Resurrection had intervened before the second could be applied - the type had given way to substance; (g) on the occasion of the Wedding Feast in glory, of which John 12 was a type.

On this occasion the ointments of the Name will have been crystallised in immortality, and these characteristics will be demonstrated in the multiple unity of the Bride. They will be presented in life to Jesus - poured forth from the Bride, whom He has presented faultless before the Father.

Today, however, His Name is an ointment poured forth in His absence. It therefore amounts to this:

- (1) He is the myrrh in the bosom;
- (2) The camphire cluster in the vineyard;
- (3) The fragrance of His grace and truth fill the house (the ecclesia) and rejoices His guests. And the way they appear before us:
  - (a) The spikenard as at the banquet;
  - (b) The bundle of myrrh night and day in the bosom, through the bustle of business or practice or in the quietness of everyday rest in the home;
  - (c) But the cluster of camphire is in summer seclusion and in the heart of all that is most attractive in nature.

The Garden or Vineyard. Song 1:14 "The vineyards of En-gedi".

Their situation was found near the Dead Sea (and is known today). They were amongst the most famous in Israel, containing other rich fruits and costly spices, due no doubt to the sub-tropical climate found there. "En-gedi" means "The Fountain of the Kids".

The Bride's allusions to these vineyards are that they are (a) beautiful to the eye; (b) sweet to the taste; (c) fragrant to the senses. We shall see why in a moment.

This place was also famous in providing a hiding for David and his men when they were pursued by Saul (1 Sam. 23:29, 24:1-4). A final discovery while we were contemplating the happenings around this place was found to be quite absorbing. Again only in brief detail:

Ezekiel 47:10. Ezekiel speaks of En-gedi along with En-eglaim as a place where fishers shall stand and spread their nets and catch many fish after their kind. The relevance of En-gedi with Ezekiel 47 opened up to us the vision splendid indeed, and

this is the way the thoughts came to us :

Ezekiel 47:1-2. This water of life (Septuagint, "zoe", Ezek. 47:9) issued from under the Temple and the south side of the altar and out from under the east gate of the Temple. The law of procedure or Temple protocol in the future is very important to know - summary: it is to be one way traffic !

Ezek. 43:2-4. The Glory of the Lord (Christ and the saints or the Bride) enters in by this east gate. Ezek. 44:1-2 informs us that the gate is shut after the Glory has entered - no more to be opened.

Ezek. 46:9. Concerning the worshipping nations. They who enter the Temple by the north gate must leave by the south. No one may leave by the gate of entrance. Temple protocol demands one way traffic only. As the Glory entered by the east gate it must be obvious that the gate of exit must be the west gate. We may search the record through but we shall not find a west gate. The Lord of Glory enters by the east gate, closes it behind Him and declares that it must remain shut. He shuts Himself in and provides no exit for Himself, in keeping with the last verse of the prophecy: "The name of the city shall be Yahweh Shammah, "The Lord is There". The Lord comes to stay, but this river of life flows from the south side of the altar of atonement down to the east gate and under it. Ezek. 47:3-5 remarkably notes the increasing depth and width of the stream until it becomes two rivers.

It is a healing river : - indicates that it will go down into the Dead Sea and heal it completely. It is also connected in a very curious way with the River Jordan (= Heb. "Yarden") and the words "go down" here are the words which it was known by - "The Going Down" or "The Plunger", because of its immense fall. In little more than 100 miles it falls as much as 1,812 feet.

It is also said (Ezek. 47:8) that these waters entered the Plain (R.V.). It means the plain of the Dead Sea. Jordan is called the River of the Plain.

Ezek. 47:12. We have a description of these New Waters. There went forth in the waters forgiveness, agreeing with the other definition of the Water of Life - now Waters of Forgiveness, born out of the sufferings of Christ, under the brazen altar where the blood was sprinkled.

John 19:34 gives us two rivers - the water and blood out of the wounded side of Jesus. John never forgot the sight as he saw Jesus on the tree, and when speaking of Jesus in his first epistle he says (1 John 5:6), "This is He that came by water and blood; not by water only, but by water and blood". Perhaps we can say as the water issued out from under the same gate by which the Glory had entered the Temple, as C.H. Waller noticed: "So it was when Christ had ascended up to His Father's House, the stream of the Holy Spirit came down, bearing the message of repentance and forgiveness of sins in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem". What a beautiful touch this thought is in anticipation of the time so near at hand. At first it was a little stream, then as it gained momentum ankle depth, and so on. And so the healing stream of forgiveness has flowed on. 3,000 souls - 5,000 souls - until the whole Roman world was turned upside down. At the time of Ezekiel's Temple in the Millennium it will indeed have become a mighty river and fishers in En-Gedi and En-eglaim will reap in an abundance of fish !

The stream begins at the south side of the altar, and very important indeed for us that it does ! Song 4:16 speaks of the south wind. The soft winds that help to fructify the fruits (always used of the Holy Spirit in Scripture).

Ezek. 37:9 New birth of Jewish nation. John 3:5-8 New birth of the individual.

The judgment of the north side has been sated; now the south wind, the south side of abundance of fruit in the new birth comes into play, the Holy Spirit working in the new life of forgiveness as it is extended to the nations. It is in this context that we find the teaching of the name "En-gedi" = "Fountain of the Kids". The kid of the goats is usually identified with (in particular) the sin offering, and as the sin offering for the congregation of Israel on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:5). It is the atonement of Jesus, as seen in this Fountain of the Kids, which will wash away the uncleanness of Israel in that day (Zech. 13:1), and the wonderful result is to be observed in En-eglaim = The Fountain of the Twin Calves" - the young bulls (never bullocks) of the burnt offering. A national dedication of Israel to Yahweh and the grand total result of this sequence in the resultant abundance of the fish harvest.

We remember the words of Jesus to His disciples, "I will make you fishers of

men". Although the apostles were wonderful fishers for Christ, this angling picture of the Millennium proves that the days of their flesh were but days of apprenticeship. The Gospel net in these days will be full to overflowing with all kinds of fish dedicated to the Lord.

Consequently we have Ezekiel 47:12 in context -- healing connected with the trees growing upon the sides of this River of Life; the leaf thereof used for medicine (R. V. "healing") -- see "The Significance of Blue in Scripture" by the present author. Hark- ing back to Isaiah 53:5, "He was wounded for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed", back again we return to the sacrificial work of the Bridegroom. This alone could constitute the healing, from the Lord thy Healer ("Yahweh Ropheka").

Finally the scene is found in Rev. 22:2. We find the altar has given way to the Throne of God and the Lamb. There is "no more curse", because the water of for- giveness and life will heal the sea of death and also take away the judgment of Jordan, the river of judgment - En-ge-di indeed, the Fountain of the Kid. In turn, En-eglaim, the Fountain of the Two Calves, explains a wholly dedicated, a universal burnt offering to Yahweh, instantly serving Him day and night. This is why that "cluster of camphire" - the clustered fruits of the "kopher", atonement, ransom, reconciliation, are so near to the Bride. They represent the many sides of redemption first seen in her and finally extended to the whole universe. The further fruits of this cluster are well known to us and they will come before us in future exposition (Song 4:12-16, Galatians 5:22-23). The Ezekiel prophecy in chapter 47, etc., is a story of the complete redemption of the Bride to the very day this Song is sung - that happy day in the King's Chambers.

Song 1:15 "Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair, thou hast doves' eyes".

This verse reflects the immediate reaction of the Bridegroom to the Bride's appreciation recorded in verses 12-14.

She is fair, or pleasant to Him, not "black" as in her own eyes. (1) She is as "the curtains of Solomon" and represents the travail ended and the ultimate consummation of the Father's purpose in Himself. (2) She is fair. Why? Because He too is fair. She is pleasant, because she has doves' eyes. They are the evidence of spirituality, a true valuation of the things of the Spirit as they are found in Christ. (3) Her eyes are the reflection and complement of His own, as she freely admits (Song 5:12), and she has eyes of spiritual knowledge because He alone has made known this to her, as we have seen earlier in our exposition from John 15:15, "I call you friends, for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known unto you".

The Dove, as we know, is not only a metaphor for the Holy Spirit of God (Matt. 3:16) but also a type of Jesus Himself, as the dove or young pigeon was the only feathered creature allowed to be offered in sacrifice under the Law (Luke 2:24, Lev. 1:14-15, 5:7, etc.). The Eye in Scripture is regarded as the index of the mind; consequently we have lofty eyes, evil eyes, adulterous eyes, beautiful eyes, glorified eyes, and so on. So Jesus, gazing into her eyes, sees a mirrored reflect- ion of Himself, surrounded by an indwelling of spirit guidance culled from the Word of Life, which led her to Him, and kept her after Him as the sole object of her desires. The deeper aspect of the study of the Dove we will leave for future invest- igation in Song 5:12 as it applies to Jesus Himself.

But a few practical lessons could be drawn here for our guidance in life as they affect us, constituents of the Bride elect (or at least such is our hope):

It was Durham who recalled the dove's remarkable ability to see her cote from far-off distances, viz. -

The dove from Noah's ark, keeping the ark in view amidst the vast expanse of waters; difficult enough today with modern detection aerial photography, but the dove with unerring accuracy saw it, and returned thither when it could find no place to lodge. If we are not careful we shall lose sight of the ark of our safety amidst the storm- tossed seas of the angry world, in which we "are not of this world" - neither was the dove, until the olive leaf grew again and Noah knew that a New Creation was at hand. The olive leaf was an earnest of fruit to come, and in our day it may be had in abundance, the sap of life found in the Word.

May we never lose sight of the ark of our safety. It is our only life-line. If we let it stray from our sight, we are truly lost. However we may fail, as Peter did, and many other folks more noble than ourselves, this instinct of the dove must never leave us.

Scripture records that the Dove has further characteristics :

1. Gentle in manner. Matt. 10:16
2. Clean in nature. Song 6:9
3. Particular in food. Genesis 8 Unlike the raven. Not of carrion appetite.
4. Swift of wing. Psalm 55:6
5. Beautiful of plumage. " 68:13
6. Constant in love. Song 5:12
7. Definite in perspective. Gen. 8:9
8. We also were delighted to find that the dove is the only species of bird without gall bladder, the obvious symbol of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:16).

We know that there is no gall nor root of bitterness in the Holy Spirit. The characterisation of the Power of God was seen by James, the half-brother of Jesus. Thinking back in his Epistle to those early years he spent with his Lord as his older brother, never comprehending fully his great privilege until that astonishing experience when Jesus appeared to him after His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:7) - what a meeting !

We urge our readers to contrast for themselves the parallels in James; such as Jas. 3:17, "Wisdom from above" with Jas. 3:14-16, the earthly wisdom - the first agreeing with Proverbs 1 as the character of Jesus; the latter, much to the disgust of James, reflecting his own earlier attitude to his elder brother; and so on.

The first characterisation is dove-like, and must be sought by us.

Song 1:16 - 17 "Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea pleasant".

This is the Bride's response to the appreciation of herself by Christ.

"Thou art fair". The fairness is not in me but in Thee, she exclaims. "Thou art fairer than the children of men" (Psalm 45:2), "Thou art Messiah". My fairness is but thine own. Yes, pleasant, i.e. full of wisdom (Prov. 3:17) and of love surpassing that of natural affection (2 Sam. 1:26), as found between David and Jonathan. Many other avenues under this heading can be followed. A short list of enterprises must suffice. The Concordance reveals under the Hebrew word "naim":

1. Psalm 16:6 "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places".
2. Psalm 81:2 "The timbrel and pleasant harp" of the sweet and solemn melodies of the sanctuary.
3. Psalm 133:1 The good and pleasant unity of brethren in fellowship.
4. Psalm 135:3 The praises of Israel, the Lord's peculiar treasure, are pleasant.  
13 To remember His great memorial for ever.
5. Psalm 147:1 Praise to the Lord is pleasant and comely, because (verse 11) "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy".
6. Proverbs 22:17-18 Bowing down to the words of the wise, and the application of the heart to knowledge, is indeed a pleasant thing, if kept within her, etc.
7. Proverbs 24:3-4 Through wisdom her house shall be builded, and by understanding it will be established, and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all pleasant riches. Because the Bride

will build her house, seek her knowledge, find her wisdom, and reach her understanding in Christ. Through Him she will find unity in fellowship, and each Sunday she will call to mind the great memorial revealed in Him at the Breaking of Bread in His Name. Praise to the Father through Him will be truly pleasant, and through Him she will stand (as she now does in glory) as the Father's own "peculiar treasure", and all because she founded her house upon a rock (Matt. 7:24-29) and that rock was Christ (1 Cor. 10:4). In our days of division and various denominations the vision shines splendid and we long for the time when the multitude of brethren shall dwell in unity and render united praise to the Father. It is our prayer that the Day is near. The return of the Bridegroom alone can accomplish this, when He takes to Himself His Wife (the Lamb's Wife, as a fair indication of how it will be brought about).

Augustine rather aptly summed up her fairness as reflected from the Shepherd-

King: "The Bridegroom to us believing is everywhere beautiful. He is fair in heaven, fair on earth; fair in the virgin's womb, fair in the arms of his parents; fair in his miracles, fair in his stripes; fair when calling unto life, fair when disregarding death; fair in laying down his life, fair in receiving it again; fair on the cross, fair in the sepulchre." How can the Bride fail to be fair if she follows Him? We submit that the messages we have drawn from the Song so far are very practical, if at the same time drawn from Oriental imagery. Who amongst the children of God could dare to relate this Song to the mad ravings of a perverted old king? The Spirit's voice is heard here in all its appeal and beauty. However, to pass on -

Song 1:16-17 "Also our bed (or couch) is green".

"The beams (house beams) are cedar, and our rafters of fir (or cypress)".

The first rather lovely thought emerging from these words is the fact that SHE HAS FOUND THE REST THAT SHE SOUGHT. The little word "our" in the context brings this to our notice. Never despise the little words of the Word; they are, when rightly understood, just as profound as the greater things. Study the implications of this little three-letter word, Our bed, Our house, Our rafters. She has found where He rests at noon and is sharing its privileges and comforts with her Lord. Compare 1 Cor. 3:21-23, "All things are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's". Search out the Pauline equivalents in Ephesians - the "us", "we" and "with" in this epistle. An eternal oneness is claimed, which is our privilege in Christ: one in death, in life and in resurrection; one in righteousness; one in acceptance; one in peace; one in rest; one in joy; and one in glory. Ephesians informs us that such are our privileges if we are found in the Bride.

It is noticeable that the Bridgroom is never found in the city on His own behalf. He is only found within the city because the Bride had been beguiled into it, and it was here that Jesus was insulted and shamefully treated (Isaiah 53) on her behalf, and, when He went to call her to Him, to help Him complete His sufferings without the camp, she was not ready to open the door to Him, and she was left (as we have observed before and hope to expound later in Song 5:1-6) with the symbol of His sufferings and sacrifice for her - myrrh, on the latch of the door, and so shame and sorrow became her lot, as with Dinah of old at Shechem (Gen. 34:2).

We were happy to find that the Bride really knew the favourite retreats of her Bridegroom: (1) the Vineyard, (2) the Garden, (3) the Mountain of Myrrh, (4) the Hills of Frankincense, (5) the Valleys where the Lilies bloom. A whole world of spiritual delight and expression is centred in this symbology, each with its practical counterpart. The Vineyard (1) has already opened up its charm to us, as we saw at En-gedi. We are about to enter (5) the Valley of the Lily, and no doubt a similar spiritual context will be found in abundance.

Returning to the Bride, we have the pleasing realisation that she did know where to find Him - "the couch of green pastures" (Song 1:16, Psalm 23), near the "waters of quietness", as we have observed. The shepherd will never pitch His tent inside the city. There is no grass, no quietness, there. Modern conditions only re-emphasise this principle. The broad ways of the city of commerce and pleasure-seeking are not the atmosphere that the flock should dwell in, neither can food sustainable for their pilgrimage be found there. Quietness for city dwellers is a thing of the past. The life and traffic of the world city roar on. "Without the camp" is our lot, where we may find our Lord, the "vineyards, mountain, hills, valleys and gardens" in these places of spiritual tuition. He may be found, and continually the call comes to us in the midst of our busy lives, "Come aside and rest awhile" - with Him, of course! How may we find Him in this night of Gentile darkness?, we may ask. John says that Christ is "the light of the world" (John 1:4-9). In Christ there is only light and no darkness at all. Therefore our following will always be in light (1 John 1:6-7).

"The beams (or supports) of our house are cedar", even of Lebanon, cedars whose roots, we are told, search out the very bottom of the mountains. "The incorruptible" the ancients called the cedar, with standing storm, rain, ice and snow, unafraid of the cosmic elements in life and displaying an equal front to death and corruption when

cut down. Genuine cedar has never been known to be worm-eaten. We remember mother's cedar blanket-box in our childhood days, old-fashioned (decidedly "square") but absolutely foolproof and mothproof.

Paul seems to have the cedarwood principle in mind when writing 2 Cor. 2:14-16, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death: and to the other the savour of life. And who is sufficient for these things?" The lovely aroma emitted by the Word is fully met by Paul in the spiritual sense in these words - just as the aroma of the sap of the Word is fragrant to our nostrils, and yet is death to moths and worms. So the children whom this wood refers to are fragrant to the Lord, emitting unto Him a sweet savour of Christ, a "savour of life unto life" (verses 14-15). This is done because our God has made manifest His knowledge by us in every place, and, of course, where this knowledge is found there is also manifest in contradistinction a 'savour of death unto death'. It would appear that the Bride has followed close to her Lord in this aspect and that in Psalm 45:7, "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated wickedness", there is a savour of life and a savour of death simultaneously. No doubt we have in Paul's mind the figure of the Roman emperor or victorious general being feted on his return to the capital, and the fragrance of the rose petals showered upon him in his pageant of triumph to erase the stink of his wretched captives, being paraded or dragged through the streets. To this one he would grant life or freedom, but to others death, either immediate execution or a fight to the death with gladiators in the Colosseum later - a savour of life unto life never to be forgotten by the fortunate captive, but a savour of death unto death, swift-ensuing death, to the less fortunate. We feel, however, that behind all this pictorial pageantry the Hebrew mind of Paul had the cedar quality to the forefront, and no doubt its use in Solomon's Temple and in that of its successor, Herod's, where he had worshipped.

Song 1:17 Equally prominent in the House of the Beloved the Bride found the "rafters of fir" or cypress tree, another fragrant evergreen, forming the roof of Solomon's Temple, the emblem of strength and durability (1 Kings 6:9, 2 Chron. 3:5). What have we here but our two principles of life and death? The evergreen speaks of endless life, typical in both woods of resurrection life and strength. Equally so it is based on obedience in death - the death of the Son in laying down His life for His bride. In so hating wickedness He laid down His life for her sake, that He might in the near future "present to Himself a church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephes. 5:25-27).

The two trees are spoken of in Scripture as "the glory of Lebanon" (Zech. 11:1-3). So it is in Lebanon that the Bride found her Shepherd Lover and rest here first of all, but, as we have seen, the symbology equally fits the final resting places - Solomon's Temple.

The Lebanon figure illustrates the dwelling in booths, or tents, of this life, wherein we too should dwell with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Heb. 11:9), but we also look for, and discern with the eye of faith, that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, and also that spiritual house or dwelling of God of which the Bride provides through God's grace the "living stones". We have just glimpsed at cedar and cypress found in it.

Returning to the more "temporary" dwelling (so to speak) depicted in the Song, we note that the A.V. advances the idea in the margin of the "galleries" of inter-twining cedar and cypress forming their cover and the greensward their bed or couch to rest upon. This beautiful symbology emphasises a most lovely aspect of their relationship now established. Her references to the cypress tree shows that she understands now, however dimly, that union with Christ in His life is based upon fellowship with Him in His death, for the cypress grows in the necropolis, the city of the dead. Only two among the august throng of disciples and believers knew of Christ's approaching death - Mary of Bethany (John 12:7) and the thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43) - he earned his reward - but the enemies knew, and feared His resurrection (Matt. 27:62-66). The cypress grows today in the churchyards of our older churches - as we have said, death and life, and no

latter without the former. "Intertwined in the galleries" of the house of the Lord:  
how true this is indeed!

Solomon's Temple supplies a further extension of these ideas, as we have advanced - the rest in the Father's House for ever, the rest that Israel as a nation failed to enter (Heb. 4:8-19), but most assuredly reserved for them who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). The Father's House, and from the Pauline angle, we see

in -  
Song 1:17 Jesus and His Bride surrounded with the pillars and supports of His House - no doubt (with Galatians 2:8-9) James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars or supports in that house - protected by the power and strength of the antitypical fir trees or cypresses, interwoven around Him and His Bride - the bodyguard of Song 3:6-9, as we hope to examine later. We shall find Jesus in these surroundings if we can attune the state of our minds to these glorious truths amidst the prevailing time conditions of our days which are daily getting progressively more evil. And so our Bride found her Loved One in this scene amidst the Glory of Lebanon.

"The Glory of Lebanon". We have been informed that there are no cedar trees in Israel, therefore the situation points clearly to Lebanon, which means "very white", "mountain of snow". We also note that "Lebonah" comes from the same Hebrew root "labhan" = "to be white".

"Lebonah" means "frankincense". Immediately we perceive the spiritual beauty of this Bower of Evergreens and the Temple of Solomon in typical estimation. We have the Hill of Incense or frankincense of Song 4:6, and of course the Mountain of Myrrh, the sacrifice and praises of Yah as found in the Wellbeloved Son Himself. May we ever rest here with Christ until the Day break, "Zion's glad morning" and the shadows of Gethsemane flee away. More of this anon. Sacrifice, death, resurrectional strength, and eternal praises of the Bridegroom and Bride are represented here in Song 1:17, exemplified in Heb. 2:12, "I will declare Thy Name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee". Secure in the redemption found in the Son, we may anticipate, howbeit with trembling and fear, that great Day. Should the Lord deign to acknowledge us, if we can ever surely find Him that we might come into His presence, then it will be "where the bed is green, the beams of our house cedar and the rafters of fir".

With brother Tom we conclude this first chapter, the Llanelli bard again displaying a deep spiritual appreciation of verses 15 and 16 of Song 1:

"Behold, thou hast eyes of a dove,  
With treasures of heaven's wealth,  
An honest heart revealed in love,  
Eyes of the Bride in spiritual health.

For us our bed is green,  
Within house of fir and cedars' splendour,  
Immortalised Bridegroom with His Queen,  
A Spirit Temple, praise to render.

The cedar speaks of strength and majesty,  
Fir of temple, floor without decay,  
And of the everlasting door made by Thee,  
Guardian of truth in glorious array.

## THE SONG OF SONGS, Chapter 2

Song 2, verse 1 It is amidst this scene surrounded by the Glory of Lebanon that our Bride indulges in a little introspection. After contemplating the wonder of her Shepherd King and the might of Lebanon, she reflects in quiet humility :

"I am a rose of Sharon" - or, literally, "of the plain" - "and the lily of the valley"

- absolutely unpretentious in her claims - the lowliest of flowers, the autumn crocus (R.V.) and the red lily that lies in profusion all over The Sharon - The Plain - not taken from any rich man's garden, not even the flowers of the heights, as the edelweiss and gentian of the Alps, but of the plain - could we but paraphrase, the "plainest flower of the plain" - lowly as ever in her own eyes, but beautiful and pure in Christ's eyes, because the flowers reflected Himself.

The lovely white and purple of the crocus, the rose of Sharon indeed. The white of righteousness, found only in and through Him. The purple of the seed royal, David's own Lord and Son, a mixing of the scarlet of sacrifice and the blue of healing. His own "minchah" (Heb. = "gift offering") for and to her. "Shoshannim" = Heb. "lily", the emblem of Passover and passion, scarlet exemplified and with the hint of the crimson of fruitfulness in its lovely petals.

The recollection of these spiritual emblems will no doubt give gladness and pleasure to the royal pair as they look back through the medium of their Spiritual Picture Album. The remembrance of them will be very sweet indeed, a comparison in the words of the Bridegroom Himself. The lovely lilies and the writer, Solomon, himself will inevitably come into their minds, "Consider the lilies, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Matt. 6:28-29). Compare A.W. Pink on this point. Only a brief quote may be permitted, "And yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these". Wherein lies the point of contrast? Was it merely that the lily is clothed with a robe of more delicate texture and of greater beauty than any man-made fabric? We believe there is something else, something more important for our hearts. A deeper truth is concealed therein. All of Solomon's stately glory was but artificial, put on from without, whereas the adornment of a flower is from within: theirs is no foreign drapery but an essential part of themselves, namely a development and result of what they really are. So should it be. So must it be with the Christian. That life and light that God has communicated to his heart silently but surely illuminates his mind, sanctifies his affections and brings forth the fruits of righteousness. At the resurrection that Divine life shall break through and envelop the whole person with splendour' (speaking of those accepted, of course). "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matt. 13:43)."

Pink continues in this vein of spiritual ore: "It is a very profitable exercise to 'consider the lilies of the field'. A spiritual meditation thereon cannot but be most instructive, for they are the handiwork of Him who is 'wonderful in counsel, excellent in working'. If we consider and take to heart 'how they grow' we shall perceive that which will both humble and encourage us. Their growth is gradual. First the blade, then the bud, then the flower! Their growth is one of increasing loveliness. Is ours? Are we gradually becoming more Christlike? More meek and lowly, more gentle and unselfish? Are we really going "from strength to strength" (Psa. 84:7) and being changed into the same image (of the Lord) "from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18)? Their growth consists in an increasing development and display of the life which God has endowed to them. Are we so growing, making more and more manifest the principles of grace, enabling us to show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light?"

Matt. 6:28-29. We have in this saying of Jesus two direct opposites. Solomon's fine clothes were for palaces and cities and not for the environment of a lowly plain, As Pink has outlined, whenever the glory of man and man-made clothing is placed in contrast with the beauty of God, even in the most common flower of the field, man's glory is seen to be tarnished and moth-eaten, and when the spiritual application is made the rift widens appreciably. The character garments



of Solomon were earthy, sensuous and moth eaten, in comparison with the lovely soft and beautiful texture of the Lily of Passover, of suffering, love and obedience that the true Pascal Lamb portrayed in life here displayed in this Emblem of a Lowly Lily which His future spouse must covet after, "Faint but Pursuing".

"Thou art Fair, my Beloved" - but I - I am but a lily of the valleys". So she responds to her Lord, and how deeply the true servant of God finds and appreciates these sentiments. "I am but a simple flower not worth Thy notice"! We must venture the comment at this juncture, that as Fausset remarks, "It is generally assumed that the Bridegroom speaks here and calls Himself the Lily of the Valley, but the division of the R.V. does not support this. The words accord more with the response of the soul. The Bride thus speaks of herself as lowly though lovely, in contrast with the Apple tree, later, - the Bridegroom." This is our personal opinion of this verse. Thus the Lily without any strength of her own, free from pride and ambition, growing, living, thriving under the beautifying hand of her maker, far exceeds the glory of Solomon's earthy pretensions.

The Dove is the bird of the Song. The Lily is the flower. No wonder The Lord feeds there. Song 2:16. "He feedeth among the lilies"! Again we find our thoughts linking with those of Brother Tom.

- (1) We see in Temple symbology and find the lily in the glorious temple - as a type of Lily Saints. 1 Kings 7:19.
- (2) The lily as a crown upon the pillars in the porch of the temple. No longer in low estate, but in honourable standing and responsibility. 1 Kings 7:26, cp. Phil. 4:1.
- (3) The brim of the molten sea, with flowers of lily. The lily most certainly prefigures the saints in their spiritual character and labour in the Spirit's work. Here we find it glorifying as seen in this temple sequence, God praised in spirit and service.

The lily represents the Priest and Levite in this glorious symbology. The Rose of Sharon, both King and sacrificial victim, as we have already advanced. "Friend, come up higher", this teaching has called, because if not lily of the valley first, then no lily of glory in the temple of the Lord, in the future.

Song 2:2. The King's estimate of His "friend". "As a lily among thorns, so is my friend among the daughters". "If thou art a simple lily" says the well-beloved, "thou art in my eyes as a lily among thorns." He sees His own life already growing up in her, with the self same features of humility and meekness, whilst he beholds others as still dwelling in the thorny life of earth. This earth life can produce nothing but thorns whose end is to be burned (Heb.6:8). His "friend" we note who is fair to Him, is as a Lily in their midst.

Song 2:2. In this verse we have seen the ecclesia likened unto the lily, and when she is invested with the Christ spirit she is supremely beautiful above all earthly glory even Solomon who sat upon that throne. She too will be pleasant in unity, love, wisdom and fellowship. Psa.133. There is no doubt that a good deal of spiritual value is to be had from following through this symbology of rose and lily. Many have compared them to the twin personalities we find linked together in the service of God, viz. :

- (a) Leah and Rachel. Gen.29:16.
- (b) Ruth and Naomi. Ruth 1.
- (c) The two midwives Shiphrah and Puah. Ex. 1:15.
- (d) Elizabeth and Mary. Luke 1:36-39 and 42.
- (e) Lois and Eunice. 2 Tim. 1:5.

Our readers might like to follow them through and make lists of their own to elucidate the principles found in the "Rose of Sharon" and the "Lily of the Valleys", and possibly acquaint the present writer of them.

"The lily among thorns" - spiritually the church in the world. What a comparison: the lily so pure and beautiful - the thorn so hurtful and often poisonous in its effects. Suffering and oppression is conveyed in the symbology, how "the lily must suffer among the thorns". They must pierce her, prick her and cause her to bleed in their daily contention with her. Jesus said, "In the world

ye shall have tribulation, but be of good comfort, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). It is interesting and comforting to note that both Christ and the Bride are represented by that lily among thorns (1 Cor. 12:12-26). "The body is one and hath many members - so also is Christ." When one member suffers all the members suffer with it. Christ is the Head of the Body and Church, Paul insists. So also Matthew, that very accurate scribe of things "new and old", and of that mystic bride herself recorded in Matthew 27:29, that a crown of plaited thorns was placed on the head of Jesus, so with that "head sore wounded" the Bridegroom experienced His lot as a lily among thorns. Isa. 53, Psa. 22, Psa. 69, Psa. 109 etc. outline that terrible suffering and hatred which came to Him as God's lily who chose to go among the thorns quite deliberately so that He might experience beforehand our oppressions. It was His bruising that provided medicine for the healing of our stripes.

The crown of thorns and the cross are a necessary prelude to the crown. Jesus had full experience of it and has truly ascended for us. The cost is according to His reckoning a way of life as a lily among thorns. It does mean, by implication, a forsaking of home, father, mother, kindred and country and at times brings great stress and sorrow. The mind of Jesus is quite readily determined upon these matters. Song 2:16. "He feedeth among the lilies". He has found refreshment, satisfaction and delight in eating these principles we have just outlined in this garden of lilies, and bringing the application a little nearer home the R.V. is "He feedeth His flock among the lilies". We must follow His lead and feed on these lily-saint principles, and love them as He does, then our harmony with Him will be complete, said again in the words of our Brother Poet of Wales.

#### To the Lily

The Lord with a kindly thought,  
Spoke when wearied in the Valley,  
When seeing flowers God had wrought,  
Of the humble, gracious lily.  
She spins not, nor toils,  
Lives by the hand of her maker (Matt. 6:28)  
Free from earthly care unsoiled,  
A queen for her Redeemer.

The gardener stoops to the ground,  
He gave grace for grace,  
The Lord raised her to His crown,  
And in the temple found a place.

A lily wreath upon Boaz's head, (1 Kings 7:19-22)  
Gathered down the valley,  
Now a crown upon His head,  
The sweet-smelling lily,

Who shall ascend unto my Holy Hill?  
The pure gathered from the valley (1 Kings 7:26)  
Then at the Temple to have her fill,  
The sweet fragrant lily.

Oh, meek one of the earth,  
With Thy Spirit let me linger,  
In praise of thy graceful birth,  
And beauty that never withers.  
Thy ruddy face risen towards the sun!  
With a virgin modesty,  
Heaven's love thou hast won  
The Bride of eternity.  
Thou hast drunk tears of the sorrowed,  
And with fragrance gladdened Galilee.  
From the slain lamb Thou hast borrowed  
The crimson blush of Calvary.

After these words of spiritual beauty concerning the lily as they were reflected in the mirror of Brother Tom's mind and the application of this life among which she dwells, we do well to take heed to Luther's remarks on this verse. Song 2:2 - "If thou art the lily and the rose of Christ, know that thy dwelling place is among thorns, only take heed lest by impatience, rash judgments and pride, thou thyself become a thorn" ! A timely and practical warning, it is the easiest thing for us to re-orientate ourselves again with our former life, in other words, to Egyptian bondage, a leavened work. Paul's exhortation on this aspect is specific - "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us - let us keep the feast (7 days of unleavened bread) not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth". 1 Cor. 5:7-8 cp. sequence in Ex. 12:1-17. Feast of Passover and unleavened bread and their obvious application in our day. Entrance into Christ and the casting off - leaving behind the old life represented by the sour dough fermentation of leaven, and the future walk in Christ unleavened without the malice and wickedness. Let us take heed, the way back is easy, it is swimming with the tide. Our place is to face it, and make way through it just as the fragile lily grows and flourishes amongst the thorns. Again the emphasis of separation "in the world but not of it" only kept from its evil. John 17:15-17. "Not taken out of the world". The equivalent being that the lily should not be taken up from the thorns in a natural sense. It would be torn and lacerated in the process. In the spiritual consideration it would be unwise and would negative the aim of the lily, as the object is to show to the world the lily-like character of the Lord, flourishing amidst oppression, persecution and tribulation. See Acts 16:16-40. Paul, Silas and the Truth flourished amidst the thorns of Philippian persecution. The fragrance of the lily and beauty of the autumn crocus attracted others to the Name. Such is her witness and must be ours to the contemporary age we live in.

Song 2:3. "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." No doubt one has to experience the searing heat of the blazing Syrian sun to really appreciate the full meaning of this verse naturally, and from this standpoint to realise why the apple tree amongst the trees of the wood could have this special significance to Christ as the tree pre-eminent. Special features of this tree :

- A. We note very carefully that the apple tree is masculine, against the feminine of the lily and crocus, so we can have no doubt as to whom both apply.
- B. It provides welcome shade and shelter from the sun, in particular, the noon-day terrific heat.
- C. Thirst quenching properties were attached to its fruit.
- D. Fragrant perfume to soothe and calm the jaded nerves worn out by the persistent heat.
- E. That this tree was cultivated, presumably, whereas the others were wild.

It is very unlikely that our species of apple is mentioned here. The actual identity is not known, although the word 'apple' Heb. 'Tappuach' derives from the root 'Taphach'. The idea is "to breathe sweetly". The apple was known by the fragrance it exhaled.

The Chaldee rendering is 'citron', others 'quince' etc., apricot, lemon, orange and so forth. Evidently the citrus variety is meant here. However, taking the citron and quince in particular, we are informed that the foliage is perennial and that there is no time, even in mid-winter, when there may not be seen on it a profusion of flowers, and there is throughout the year, a continual succession of blossom, young fruit and ripe fruits, at the same time.

The fruit was of the colour of gold, very pleasant to the taste and reviving to 'those who were ready to faint' owing to the heat of the climate. The leaves were studded with small glands to which the tree owes its rich fragrance. The shadow of the tree was deep and refreshing, so we learn from various sources.

Song 2:3 R.V. The words "I delighted and sat" are intensely expressed by the tense of the verb in the original, showing what the application of this tree and its pleasures had upon the Shulamite in general. Spiritually we could trace its origin back to Isa. 11:1 : no doubt Christ the Branch out of the root of David

saturated with the Holy Spirit of God. Now, at the time of the dispensational writing of the Song, this Branch had grown into (or rather the tree of the wood) among the other trees of the wood, a Branch fully grown and complete with its foliage, blossom and fruit in their various stages. These as we have discovered are perennial in nature. The fragrance of the spirit character is ever present, as seen in the tree of the Lord: Jesus Christ yesterday, today and forever (Heb.13:8).

- (1) He is unquestionably the Tree of Life to us. The Father has made Him the Lord our Shade, our Keeper. He alone can slake our thirst spiritually as He revealed to the woman of Samaria. John 4:10-14.
- (2) "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life".
- (3) He is also the bread or food of God to us (John 6:48-50) upon whom we must feed daily.
- (4) He is the fruit of the Spirit or the Name of Yahweh. A Name in life and action for our example.
- (5) To whom can we go for shade from persecution and flee from the scorching rasp of sin but to Him? Isa.25:1-8.

Christ is the apple tree - the tree of life to us (Rev. 2:7). We have noted rather briefly that this imagery carries the notion of Christ the tree of the Lord, particularly as it applies to the Spirit of God. In fact, taking the analogy as Isa.11:1-4, the tree of the Lord in its primary stages = the Branch or Shoot. Christ as Yesterday. The Word made flesh. John 1 etc. Here we find Christ as the ever present Today, and in the yet future Forever or Tomorrow.

Surely the word 'Today' has included all who are called to Him of this Bride, since His ascension in Acts 1:11. All this is very important to us, as we lay alongside Song 2:3 a parallel passage in Song 8:5. "I raised thee up under the apple tree" (R.V. of tremendous importance in our understanding of this imagery). "Under the apple tree I awakened thee. There thy mother was in travail with thee". Here is a further vital reason as to why the apple tree was preeminent among the other trees. To the Shulamite, in fact to all of us! It was here that we received our awakening to spiritual life as they are found in Christ. That is if we are truly awakened, walking in light and not sleeping in the day. Paul leaves us in no doubt as to the identity of the Shulamite's mother in this sense. Gal.4:26. "Jerusalem which is above is free and is The Mother of us all" (R.V. Our Mother).

God set up the System of Law upon the earth, but it was sadly enough not productive, re Mosaic Law. Whatever was productive incidentally found its origin in His Promises (Gal.3:10-13 (not productive sequence) Gal.3:7-8, 16-18, 26-29 Fruition in Christ).

We rejoice in a New System of Heavenly Grace and that system is a joyful Mother of children and it brings forth that which responds affectionately to God and Christ. Indeed, what is bridal in character has its origin here. Her very origin is that of grace and of Divine calling and it is by grace that each one of us has been awakened, and brought forth to appreciate the well beloved. We hear it said of a person that he or she is an awakened soul, meaning that conscious exercise had entered into their thoughts and that they realise their need of justification or deliverance. No doubt this could be said of many religious people in the world today, but to be awakened in the sense of Song 8:5 is to have our eyes opened, to see the unsurpassed excellency of Christ and to love Him as a result.

This is the true beginning of what gives pleasure to God, and there is something brought forth that is a delight to the heart of the Well Beloved Himself. Consider the conversion of Paul (Acts 9) and the pleasure it must have brought to Christ. Paul himself later disclosed the true category of such conversion or awakening (1 Cor.2:11-16). The thoughts that occupy our attention, when we study such implications are (at the least of the writer)

- Five fold application
- (A. How do I shape up to this standard?
  - (B. Have I been truly awakened under the apple tree?

(C. What is my personal appreciation of such grace ?

(D. Shall I be able to eat of this apple tree of life in the Kingdom? (Rev. 2:7)

(E. Will I share in healing the nations in the future ? (Rev. 22 : 2, etc.).

linking up with our findings in En-ge-di and Ezekiel's Temple in the very near future.

The fruit was sweet to the Shulamite's taste, Song 2 informs us. Taste or palate : these things must be so to us if we wish to keep within the orbit of the Bridal character (more later regarding this aspect). To what can we liken this fruit? Perhaps Proverbs can help - Prov. 25 : 11, "Apples of gold (or golden fruit of the citron) in baskets of silver", and these are likened to a word fitly spoken. How true this description is! The word most fitly expressed was the Bridegroom Himself, a true son of the Word. The expression and the embodiment of the Yahweh Name in redemption, as we have seen, aptly put, is "apples of gold in a basket or filigree of silver - the basket of silver the aspect of redemption.

"Sweet to the taste", Psalm 119:103, etc., 1 Pet. 2:3. Let us take Paul's advice and ever keep them in mind; Heb. 6:4. She has "tasted that the Lord is gracious", indeed awakened, and raised, in this benevolent atmosphere, shaded from the searing heat of sinfulness and revived by the fragrance of the apple tree of life.

The apple tree is the tree of the Song, just as the lily is the flower of the Song, and the pomegranate the fruit. Each holds for us a depth of spiritual riches, but a diligent approach is necessary, with concordance and lexicon, to plumb their depths, so far as human endeavour is possible.

Finally under the heading of "Tappuach", we are interested to find that several cities in Israel found their names from the same root in Hebrew. They are mentioned in Joshua 12:17, 15:34, 16:8 and 17:8; and there is one individual called Tappuach, son of Hebron, son of Judah, in 1 Chron. 2:32-43. A brief investigation will not be amiss to find the general idea behind this name. It is very remarkable that the towns should all be spoken of in Joshua, the book of Jesus (= "the Lord is salvation"). No doubt they will all fall into place with this leading idea :

Joshua 12:17 Tappuah, a Canaanite city conquered by Joshua and given by him for Israel to inhabit. Tappuah="the apple region, fragrant fruit, fruitful place".

Joshua 15:34 A city of the lowlands of Judah. Similar application.

Joshua 16:8 A city on the border of Ephraim.

Joshua 17:8 Reference to the one in Ephraim having reference to Manasseh.

The general idea behind the scheme appears to be one of perception, discrimination, discernment; expressing in different phrases consciousness and faculties in the spiritual awakening, and unfolding individual abundant fruitfulness and good.

Smell bespeaks perception and discrimination. We note the conquering begun with Joshua or Jesus. It is when we are captivated by the influence of the exhaled fragrance of Christ as the Yahweh Name that we learn perception in the things of the Spirit. We are awakened to life as it is in Him. Discrimination follows, and if carried out brings fruitfulness. It is first associated with Judah. The "Praise of Yah" then extended to Ephraim, i.e. doubly fruitful, because through him it is extended to the Gentile (Gen. 48:14-22, Rom. 11:12, Isaiah 27:16) - also seen in the attitude of the Bride (particularly of Gentile extraction), who, as seen in Manasseh, has been caused to "forget" her affliction and the land of her nativity, the household of her father and former way of life. Compare chapter 1 of Ruth concerning Ruth herself, and Joshua 2 concerning Rahab, who sought the peace of Israel, and so received a true token, saving herself and her household when Jericho was sacked (Joshua 6). Read carefully the whole chapters under this heading and marvel at the sheer beauty of the integration of Scripture. It is, then, of the first importance that we investigate these names as they come before us in the text. What's in a name?, indeed.

Finally, the individual and his associations sum up for us the state of "sitting under the apple tree" (Song 2:3). Tappuach is a place of Tappuah, "exhaled fragrance", of Hebron "fellowship", and Judah is found in "the praise of Yah" - particularly from the Pauline standpoint (Rom. 2:29), the true Jew whose praise is not of men but of God.

So we have mutual appreciation and satisfaction between the Wellbeloved and His Spouse. She is feasting upon apples (this time not forbidden, as found in Gen. 3:2-6) with joy and spiritual refreshment, as He is found in Song 6:3 "feeding among the lilies".

Song 2:4 "He brought me to the banqueting house and his banner over me was love".

The scene has changed and returned to the Wedding Day in the Palace of the King, to the joyfulness of the marriage union, and the intimacy of the inner chambers. The R.V. renders "banquet" as "banquet of wine". The simplicity of the pastoral enjoyment is now transcended by the dignity and splendour of the royal dining room.

Israel of old were given a glimpse of the majesty of this feast in Exodus 24:10-17. There Moses, Aaron and the seventy elders had the sapphire vision of the Elohim of Israel (Christ), saw the Elohim and feasted before Him (see book by the present writer, "The Significance of Blue in Scripture"). Jesus spoke of it more clearly when saying that He 'would "drink no more of the fruit of the vine until" He should drink it new with the disciples in the Father's Kingdom (Luke 26:29).

The whole palace of Solomon, according to Josephus, was in a manner made up from the base to the coping of white marble, cedar wood, gold and silver, with precious stones here and there intermingled upon the walls and ceilings (compare 2 Chron. 3:4-7, etc.). We know the sight of it was sufficient to take away the Queen of Sheba's spirit when she saw the magnificence of the gold plate and feasting, etc. (1 Kings 10:5) - perhaps in anticipation of our Shulamite, who was also overcome with the splendour and majesty and love of the Bridgroom to her, for she will in a more remarkable and intimate way "receive all that the requests and far more besides". Esther 1:3-7 - We know from this Scripture that the Feast of Wine was used to display the king's honour and exemplify His magnificence, and to make known the extension and supremacy of the king's realm throughout the then known world, 120 provinces of Ahasuerus. Esther 6:4-12 - from this passage we learn that the banquet was a time for promotion (such as the wicked Haman hoped), a time to give gifts, and a signal honour to the person for whom it was held.

How fitting this information is in spiritual context. It is a matter of increasing and progressing in the knowledge and experience of our Lord. We are called to the Banquet or House of Wine each Sunday and are continually reminded that "His love is better than wine", the substance being infinitely greater than the shadow, and we are well aware that this feast we celebrate regarding our absent Lord will give way to the magnificence of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. This true feast of wine will glorify the Father, in whose presence is fulness of joy, the true wine of the Spirit. It will be a time of regal promotion, ascendance from the lowest place to the highest. All will have received the gift of immortality (the golden jewels of Gen. 24, etc.), and the union of Messiah and His Bride will be consummated in honour and love. Now the time has arrived to ascend from "At His Feet" to "At His Side". (Ruth 3:1-14, etc., Psalm 45:9.

The Standard Royal mounted over the Royal House of Wine is that of Love. Song 2:4. The Bride has been brought to this Feast with the exultation of a conqueror returning in triumph as with a loved one wrested from the power of the enemy. Securely she rests in His love, and now His pennant declares to all that this same militant unwearied process is available for her defence. "Christ is the Captain of our salvation" (Heb. 2:10). His banner has always been Love. It was this love from the Father which sent Him. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son". Christ returned to the Father the love that was found in Him (John 8:20, 5:30) in prompt and full obedience at all times. The love of Christ for His Bride was proved in laying down His life for her, in mediation now for her and in the future returning to claim her for Himself (Ephes. 5). Yes, the Banner of Christ is Love, and all to be found in brief in the Divine Title, "Yahweh Nissi" = "The Lord My Banner" (Ex. 17:5 (see Numbers 33 under Rephidim).

With brother Tom our thoughts again synchronise. The Wine House full of Life. Jesus is the Wine. He is the Man of the Wine of Life, and with regard to our position it is to be understood in spiritual appreciation that Esther became a Queen through a banquet of wine (Est. 1:9). The standard of Love is unfailing, the defence unlimited. Love is the root of the Yahweh Name (Ex. 33 and 34). All things will vanish but Love is eternal, and the Holy One of Israel Himself (1 Cor. 13) in all its unutterable beauty "The Greatest Thing in the World".

Again the thoughts of our brother recall to our mind the glorious fact that Jesus

having loved His own loved them to the end ("to the uttermost", used only of the Son). A Divine word utterly out of our conception, never mind performance (compare John 17; the High Priestly prayer on her behalf). So long as she keeps within the orbit of this love all will be well — compare (a) Within the blood-stained doorposts in Egypt at Passover time (Ex. 12:1-22, etc.) (b) Inside the ark with Noah (Gen. 6:11-22, 8:16, etc.) (c) Remaining within the city of refuge the appointed period (Num. 35:1-28, etc.). Love is the most powerful force in the universe (Song 8: 6-7).

Finally coming into focus under this heading is Psalm 23:5, "Thou preparest a table, or banner, before me, in the presence of my enemies". The love of God has continually fed us and guided us to this happy feast - the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (if we may so presume), but only through God's grace, extended to us through this Bridegroom at whose side we now sit - at peace. It is no wonder that our Shulamite, a mere country girl and agricultural worker (as we should say today, a land girl), was overcome with this display of supreme love on behalf of her Lord towards herself. We find her completely overpowered (as Sheba was so long ago), absolutely overcome with it all, bewildered and tremulous. When she remembers these things her memory floods in with the desperation that overcame her, to cope with the situations that came upon her from time to time, and she recalls how help on those occasions was desperately required by her.

Song 2:5 "Stay me with flagons", or (Geneva Bible rendering) "Heap upon me tokens". "Comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love".

She had said, Song 2:4, "His fruit was sweet to my taste". The Hebrew for "taste" means "palate". With the privileged two on the Emmaus walk after the resurrection (Luke 24:13-32), she had experienced the glow of the Spirit Word within herself, as she had sat down under His shadow. It is a great truth that unless she had done so, her palate would have let pass undetected the sweetness of the fruit of her Lord and of His presence.

"Under His shadow" can mean not only protection from the sun's scorching rays, but also "in character with", "of sympathetic alliance", and "unfailing with" (compare earlier notes on Bezaleel in "The Shadow of Ail" and the various spirit gifts allotted to him for building the Tabernacle. He, Bezaleel, would execute his duties according to the Divine characteristics outlined to him and be assured of strength, as seen in the "Ail" element of his name, to fulfil his task. He is only brought before us as a type of what was to come (in fact, Bezaleel himself, it would appear, will be found within the orbit of the glorious Bride).

Isaiah 49:2 spoke of the King in prophecy as the One Who would Be "hid in the shadow of the Father's hand", and 51:16 reveals that the Father's words were put in His mouth; He was covered in the shadow of God's hand, that the Father might be able to say, "that I may plant the heavens and the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, 'thou art My people'".

At the time of the Wedding Feast this had come to pass. Furthermore, Luke 1:35 extends the principle far more intimately in the words to Mary, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Just as The Son shadowed His Father in all things, so must it be our delight to shadow The Son in this intimate way. Once again the Pauline conception of the principles involved is paramount, particularly as he himself is within this glorious mystic Bride. 1 Cor. 2:7-16 and of course emphasizing verse 14. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he discern them because they are spiritually discerned, but he that is spiritual judgeth all things."

So the Bride replete with spiritual 'palate' tasted with delight the Fruit of the Apple of Life. It is all too much for her, as on many occasions we have been overcome with the wonder and beauty of the Word; in fact Sept. rendering of Song 2:5 says, "Her soul has become wounded and overcome, so calls for further tokens of this love." Heaps of them in fact, in reassurance that her Lord takes notice of her: lowly in her own sight, she needed confirmation that she had the love of such a wonderful Person. In fact, what she asked for proves that she has been granted that spiritual disposition and has truly taken in her knowledge as she "sat in delight under the apple tree".

Song 2:5 The R.V. gives "Comfort me with Raisins", margin "Cakes of Raisins". Grapes quickly dried by the sun and pressed into a cake. A further expression of the love of the true vine (John 15) who was presented and dried by the fires of affliction and who was heard to cry out in agony on the tree "I thirst". Jno.19:28.

This love she now recalls in glory. She too, following her Lord, had "thirsted after the living God", Psa.84:1-2, and we note "her soul had fainted for the courts of the Lord". It had been portrayed in figurative language in Song 2:5 - she had indeed fainted for the love of her Lord. The feeding she desired upon "the cakes of raisins" would sustain her. She knew that this sacrificial love would never let her go, and the apples of gold, the presence of the power of the Spirit, would strengthen her once again. One of the older generation of poets, Erskine by name, portrays it beautifully:

"The Love, the love that I bespeak  
Works wonders in the soul;  
For when I'm whole it makes me sick,  
When sick it makes me whole.  
I'm overcome, I faint, I fail,  
Till love shall love relieve.  
More love divine the wound can heal  
Which Love divine did give  
More of the joy that makes me faint  
Would give me present ease.  
If more should kill me  
I'm content to die of That Disease."

No doubt lovers of all ages could ascribe to these sentiments if they have well and truly felt the pangs. The Bride has given this delectable experience the highest spiritual standings.

Song 2:6 The Shulamite's appeal is not in vain, and Christ comes to her without delay. "His left hand is under my head and his right hand doth embrace me".

Daniel, the man greatly beloved, had to be strengthened that he might bear communications from God (Dan.10:18-19, also Ezekiel 1:25, 2:2 and Isaiah 6:1-8). This principle, in line with the individuals who make up this glorious creature of the future is discerned in the Shulamite. How great and heavy is this privilege she bears. No doubt her cry to be refreshed and comforted is expressive of each individual which will make up the whole. With Brother Tom that pining, longing down deep in the bowels of love for the loved one is seen in the Welsh "Hiraeth".

Song 2:6 RV "Let his left hand be under my head" gives to us the inward wish of the Bride at this time; whilst the A.V. "His left hand is under my head" actually portrays His action towards her, i.e. What He has done. We know the Hebrew contains both ideas.

Meditating on this verse we gather the general ideal is found in Deut.33:17, "Underneath are the everlasting arms". The Bride is embraced with immortality, with the everlasting arms of immortality. It was John the Beloved who declared that Jesus was in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18) and is now the express image of His substance or person (Heb.1:3). Here then the Bride is found in the bosom of eternal life (again we find our thoughts in unity with T.G.). As we advanced, this appears to be the general picture. Can we break it up a little and review its more particular elements:

A. "The left hand under the head"

The head is the seat of the mind, and she had the satisfaction of resting upon the pierced hand. The scars are apparent, it would appear, for all time (John 20:20 and 24-28). The teaching is consummated 'sacrifice' conveying to her that she may have absolute reliability in the redemptive love of her Lord. There was NOW intimate connection, and nothing to interrupt communication between her and that left hand with the depth of fellowship it conveyed.



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B. "The right hand embraced or enfolded her"

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She was securely sheltered by the power of the Son of the right hand of The Father. It had been laid bare for her salvation. All through her pilgrimage it had led her and protected her. "Thou savest by Thy right hand them that trust in Thee". "The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly". Her enemies were very summarily dealt with: "Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy". We do well to remember our position before the right hand of the Lord (Rev. 1:16): "And he had (speaking of the glorified Son of man) in his right hand seven stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword". John fell at His feet as dead, such was the exceeding glory of the manifestation. Such is the security of the right hand in Scripture and such also is the responsibility of those who have and are being saved by it.

C. Note the position of the head. It would appear that if the left hand were under the head, then her head would naturally be lying on His bosom, upon His heart. We remember that Aaron, High Priest of Israel, bore the names of the tribes upon both shoulders in the Breastplate of Judgment; the Breastplate indicative of the Lord's love and affection for His people, and the shoulder the strength or power by which they were upheld. Now the Bride, containing many who were under the Law, along with others who were never under its jurisdiction, is able personally to partake of the symbols' substance and to rest her head upon the very breast of the King Priest Himself.

The position of John Zebedee at the Last Supper was anticipatory of this most wonderful time (John 13:23), and also after the resurrection (John 21:20), revealing a very true and forceful principle, that we must aim to be close to Him now, as John was during the time of His temptations, if we hope to be with Him in similar confidence in the Kingdom.

It is interesting to see from what we have read concerning the defeat and control of the nations, that only the right hand is mentioned; but when we come to be the special subject of the love of God or of Christ to His Bride then both His hands are employed, the one to support and the other to embrace her. Compare Isaiah 9:6, where we have the future government upon one shoulder of Christ, with Luke 15:6, where both shoulders are used to convey the lost sheep back to the fold. All His power and love are revealed towards the loved one!

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Now it is understandable that the Bride would wish to keep this state of things undisturbed, and the sentiments of Song 2:7 come to us in a three-fold strain (Song 3:5, 8:4). But, in fact of time, presumably our first reference is the concluding one within the Inner Chambers of the King's House. Song 3:5 takes us back to a previous occasion when, in her dreams maybe, she seeks for her Lover. Rising up, she goes out into the night and, after enquiring, finds Him. It is understandable again why she expresses the wish to remain undisturbed; perchance she would lose Him again. Again, Song 8:3-7 is set in a context of similar sentiments as Song 2:7, but this time in an anticipatory way. Note that we read "should embrace me" and not "doth" as in 2:6-7. The anxious note is very evident in the refrain, "Stir not up, nor awaken my Love till He please". In one sense we realise it means that this communion must never be disturbed.

Nothing is so sensitive as the ear, especially the ear of the timid roe or hind. When at rest, the merest whisper of the wind or even the falling of a leaf may disturb it. If alarmed, these animals are easily afraid and, being fleet of foot, are out of sight in a moment. So it is with spiritual things. The slightest deviation tends to distract, as C.S. Lewis well knew and cleverly pointed out in "The Screwtape Letters". Spiritual concentration must be intense when in communication with the Wellbeloved. It is never forced upon us. Song 5:2 indicates that. He stands at the door and knocks and very quickly withdraws upon concentration being absent (Song 5:6), as swift as the hinds of the fields.

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Psalm 22, which is descriptive of the sufferings of Christ, has the marginal title, "The hind of the morning", and we find Jesus as hind of the morning being hunted to death by the dogs and lions (Psalm 22:12-13, 20-21). Psalm 18:33 reveals that God has "made His feet like hind's feet", and in our next verse in the Song He is spoken of as "a roe upon the mountains" (Song 2:8). In Song 2:7 we have the same roe neither pursued by dogs nor skipping over the hills, but quietly reposing; yet with a rest most watchful, and quickly broken by the

slightest sound. The distraction could come either from the beloved herself or the startling impulse from an outside source. Undoubtedly we can take the lesson to ourselves. Ought we not to take that same careful watch when we approach our Lord's presence at all times? - the same breathless lip, the same watchful eye, the same listening ear, the same circumspect step. We must always keep in mind that, though He is pleased to be the Bridegroom, at all times He is THE SON, THE LORD from heaven. He too has eyes of fire and of glory to search us out. We may never blunder into His presence, or, like the roe startled out of sleep, He will be gone.

How many times have our distractions caused interrupted communion between ourselves and the Lord? Obviously, when Song 2:7 comes to a consummate end these hazards will be past. The Bride is for "ever with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17), but it is not proven in our experience as yet that we shall be found there, and when this verse does come to its glorious conclusion, shall we have satisfaction in Him and be found within the Bride? These words are stern warnings to us. Let us pay heed to them so that in the days to come the pierced hands of the glorified Lord may enfold and embrace us, and that we by His grace may duly enjoy and appreciate the "love which is strong as death and whose coals are as a very flame of Yah (Song 8:6).

Song 2:6. This verse completes the first idyll of The Song with the Bride safe in the arms of her Beloved within the Inner Palace of the King, and in verse 7 she asks in refrain that this perfection of bliss might not be disturbed as we have already determined. Her anxiety is outlined under the figure of the hind, whose sleep is so easily interrupted. Not that it could be when the scene just enacted comes to pass in the fullest sense. Neither the little foxes of 2:15, her natural brethren, or any other thing, can separate her any more from the love of Christ - neither height, nor depth, nor any created thing (Rom. 8:35-39).

She is now splendid in immortality. From this viewpoint, then, the plea of the refrain not to disturb could only be measured in her sustained love and desire for Him.

Canticle No. 2 (2:8, 3:5).

(1) The second Canticle is retrogressive in time. We are taken from the Marriage Feast to the occasion when He comes to appear to her and to call her to Him.

(2) Secondly, to lead her to the place where she is to wait for Him until He finally returns to make her His own.

(3) We have as an interjection the warning note of Song 2:15 concerning the ravages of the little foxes among the vines, of which more will be written shortly. Our interest for the moment is restricted to the plural number "our" and "us" in this verse. The enemies specified are not just Yours, not even My Own, but they are Ours. They belong to us - a naturally shared interest, the multitudinous aspect of herself and her glorious Lord.

These things are our problem and concentration must be undertaken to deal with them.

Song 3:1 Speaks of the nocturnal searchings for the Bridegroom by the Bride, and, having found Him at the dawn, she takes Him home with joy to her mother, once more ending the canticle with the refrain, Please do not disturb.

Let us enquire into it a little more closely.

The most casual reader will have noticed the difference of circumstance of this Second Canticle. As we have already observed, it is the Lover who is shown seeking the Beloved in the first place. His voice is heard and known. His activities in love are perceived. But the spouse does NOT have His company. There is love on both sides. She says, "My love" or "beloved" repeatedly, and He says "My love". But they are not together: she is within and He is without. A wall! Lattice windows are between them. In short, His activities are occasioned by the fact that they are not together.

Song 2:8 He moves with the utmost rapidity, for He comes leaping and skipping upon the mountains: "My beloved is like a young hart. Behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills". The voice of her Beloved is likened to this. She says, "My Beloved is like unto a young hart (or gazelle)". He moves so swiftly because she is not with Him. He comes to call

her to Him, to attach her to Himself. His call is to come to the Spring in His presence, to release her from the icy grip of Winter in her soul, to relax in the warmth of His presence among the scent of the young grapes and the lilies and the Spring of the Spirit in general.

We may see Jesus in this book, acting and speaking in order to assure His loved ones of the place they have in His thoughts, that they may come into the enjoyment of His love of what we called The Normal Process in Christ, and He very graciously takes into account the conditions on the part of those who are TRUE lovers of Himself and yet in part are unable to be in accord with His mind. He shows how He would correct these conditions, either by (1) the attractiveness of His person, and (2) of what may be enjoyed in His company, or (3) by the unhappy consequences that follow upon apathy or lack of response to His call, and (4) the unhappy consequences that follow as an aftermath of this lack of response to Him.

Song 2:8 "Behold, the voice of my Beloved! Behold, He cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills!"

"My Beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart".

Way back in Gen. 49:21 we begin our sequential exposition of this beautiful word picture of the Beloved Himself. Gen. 49:21, "Naphtali is a hind let loose, he giveth goodly words". We can appreciate the goodly words of Isaiah 9:1-2 as transmitted by Matthew 4:12-13. We note that the sequence begins with the committal of John the Baptist to Herod's prison in flagrant disregard of the claims of John as the "prophet of the Highest", preparing the advent of Messiah - the Bridegroom Himself giving salvation (i.e. knowledge of) to the people by way of remission of sins (Luke 1:76-77), because the Dayspring from on high had visited them, "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide their feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:78-80).

The phrase "to give light to them that sit in darkness" is very obviously from Isaiah 9:1-2, giving us this context, and the inference would amount to this that the darkness really came into effect by the Jews' refusal to accept the law and the testimony of Isaiah 8:20, and truly if anyone speaks not according to this Word it is because there is no light in them. Isaiah 8:22 gives us a grim and gloomy word picture of the result of this neglect - trouble in the land (earth, Heb. "eretz"), darkness, dimness of anguish - driven to this sad state of sin's misery.

However, make way for the epiphany of Light, the glory of the only begotten of the Father. Isaiah 9:1 holds out tremendous and gracious hope for Israel. Translated by the R.V., "But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali" - hence the Jews' contemptuous query, or really assertion of fact.

John 7:52, "Art thou also (speaking to Nicodemus) of Galilee? Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet" - gross darkness in lowly Galilee according to their ideas. John 1:46, Nathaniel himself put the usual viewpoint. Philip said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph". Nathaniel's reply was the customary one, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?, or literally, "Can the Good Thing, Messiah, who would speak the Goodly Words" (Gen. 49:21) "arise out of Nazareth?". Not only could the Goodly Thing or Goodly One come out of Nazareth - the City of Separation, the Flower Town (later) - but He came out and down from the Father and "lighteth every man that cometh into the world", as John himself, in their own way to give witness to that Light (John 1:4-13). The "every man" in this context must have a first very primary application to the "every man" (and woman) who make up the glorious whole of the Bride herself.

Notice briefly the insistence upon the law and the testimony (John 1:17, Isaiah 8:20) and so forth. Make your own parallels. You will see that the Isaiah narrative is the underlying basis from the Song's point of view of John 1; not only so, but 1 John 1 continues in similar vein connecting exquisitely both Isaiah 8:20 and 9:1-2 and giving us the grand result, fellowship in light and true affinity with the Father, Son and Daughter in glory. The historic sequence being observed in 1 John 3:2, "We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is". "Oida", Grk. perfect.

The Name poured forth and crystallised in Life, splendid in Immortality.

So much for the Light of the World, and Life as John expounds it from its Isaiah

foundation. But we have long passed the application in Song 2:8. It is "the voice of the Beloved" at the moment of time that we are considering in the goodly words as belonging to Naphtali in the language of Matt. 4:16. "They who sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region of the shadow of death light is sprung up". In a figure we have portrayed the flashing light of the eastern dawn conquering the dark gloom of night, and the few of His Day who had eyes to see and were prepared to make a way for their Lord. "That Light was the light of life".

Historically, we detect the voice of the Beloved in an indirect kind of way in the prophets of Israel, as Peter stated in 1 Pet. 1:10-12, "things the angels desire to look into, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" — only natural in this case, as the prophets themselves are included in the general scheme of the multitudinous Bride; particularly as John the Baptist introduced Jesus, Emmanuel (God with us), in the words of Isaiah 40:3-9, "Behold your God". But in process of time the "hind of God" (Psalm 22 heading) became hunted, and was savagely pursued by the Gentile dogs. The chase was extremely brutal and terrible. The voice of the Beloved is heard in complaint in Psalm 22:16, "For dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me (the Sanhedrim). They pierced my hands and my feet". Verse 12, "Many bulls of Bashan have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me around", in their savagery with their gaping mouths, heavy frontals and cruel twisted horns (the proud and haughty Jewish leaders, the Pharisees, Sadducees, etc., and the iron might of Rome, the chief men, priests and elders, whose hearts were filled with savage pride. Fierce were their bellowings heard in the wild, crying "Crucify him! crucify him!" The Herodian jackals join in the chase, those lurking wolfish dogs (foxes?) who compass the city night and day; the meaner, the baser elements of the hunters.

They thought that they had hunted, cornered, caught and destroyed "the hind of God", but the headings of Psalm 22 "Aijeleth Sharar" reads "The Hind of the Morning", speaking of the dramatic escape from the net of the wicked at the first dawn of the morning light on "the third day". He had declared, as Psalm 118 reveals, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord hath chastened me sore, but He hath not given me over to death". The whole Psalm is appropriate. It is recognised as part of the Hallel, or Hymn of Praise, sung at the Passover. If this were so this psalm would represent the Beloved and His Bride saying in faith the glorious truth of Resurrection (verse 17).

So we have outlined in unmistakable detail the Hind of the Resurrection Morn, "the hind let loose" (Gen. 49:15), and as the rays of the morning sun, of the morning without clouds, the Shulamite will behold the coming of her Lord; but again it is the Voice of her Beloved she hears, as He comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills - not only as a hind in swiftness and surety but also as The Light Himself, and as the light in contrast to darkness and as the Spring against the Winter.

She heard the voice of the Beloved speaking goodly words of Naphtali (= the Wrestler, who had prevailed). Habakkuk 3:18-19 reflects her thoughts as the Truth drove home to her: "I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord is my strength and He will make my feet like hinds' feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places" (see "Name of Reproach", Christadelphian 1965).

Nahum 1:15 conveyed the message to Israel in general, but alas the warning was not heeded nor the gracious exhortation accepted: "Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings (i.e. goodly words), that publisheth peace" (the whole fabric of The Song itself). "O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows; for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off".

Alas, the very opposite took place; the Beloved, the Hind, He was "cut off out of the land of the living", "for the transgression of My people was He stricken" (Isaiah 53:8) and in consequence the Daughters of Jerusalem wept over their slain, as the Hind Himself prophesied during the time He was taken in their net, "Weep for yourselves, O ye daughters of Jerusalem". Here we have an indication as to the interested nature of the Daughters of Jerusalem in the claims of both Bridegroom and Bride as we suggested earlier (Luke 23:21-31). The goodly words became as a curse to them. The unheeded voice became a curse to them, and again, as we saw earlier, a veil is cast over the face of Israel even unto this day (2 Cor. 3:14).

They have always been goodly words to the Shulamite in each successive age down to our own. We ourselves have heard that appealing voice calling us to His side, and it is our brother Paul who has given us notions regarding the method of call and attraction. Using Isaiah 52:7-8, "How beautiful are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings of good", etc., Paul translated (Rom. 10:15) in the plural number, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!" The full sequence is Rom. 10:13-18 under this heading. Each of us can qualify to be among the "them" of this verse should we so desire and act. The Beloved, then, is found likened unto a gazelle or hart, and is seen to be coming swiftly to her, disregarding all obstacles, which are made low by Him in His eagerness to find the Shulamite. "Hills and rivers are swept away by Him and mountains are not found". He is found with all eagerness towards her.

Song 2:9 He is, however, very sensitive, "like a gazelle". He does not thrust Himself upon us: in fact, at this juncture (Song 2:9) He does not even take the liberty of knocking on our door, as He will later do (Song 5:2), but merely contents Himself with staying outside our wall, looking in at our windows, glancing through the lattice.

"He looketh in at the windows" has a lovely connection in the Septuagint version, where we find s.w.a. John 20:5 for Peter looking eagerly into the sepulchre of Jesus to see whether or not Jesus had arisen from the dead, as Mary had informed them (John 20:1-3). A similar idea is found in the diligent enquiry of the prophets searching for the sufferings and the glory of Christ that should follow after (1 Pet. 1:11). Now the Wellbeloved has reversed it, and He in turn looks with that same tremulous surge of eagerness to see if she is waiting for Him and has heard His call (Ephes. 2:14-15).

Song 2:9 "He standeth behind our wall". Is the Wellbeloved content to stand behind the wall? In John 4:5-6 we find Jesus going over the wall of partition separating Jew and Samaritan (the most hated of all Gentiles) in keeping with the ancient prophecy of Jacob to Joseph (Gen. 49:22), the well in this text being Jacob's, found in the parcel of ground that Joseph received as the firstborn of Israel through the default of Reuben (1 Chron. 5:1). Jesus does come over the wall to us; in fact, it is necessary that He should do so, otherwise we should still be beyond the pale, shut up like the hearts of the ten spies, who could only see cities walled up to heaven (Num. 13:32-33).

Neither mountain, hills, doors nor walls present any difficulty to the glorified Hind of the Morning (John 20:19-25).

But He decides to stay outside, as in this case giving in the terms of the Song tantalising glimpses of Himself to draw her to Himself in love and obedience as recognition dawns on her. We have compared in another place the speedy way in which Rebekah recognised Isaac afar off and alighted off her camel to do him obeisance. Obviously through the good offices of Eliezer of Damascus - it takes little conjecture to realise that Isaac, the future bridegroom, would be the all-consuming topic of conversation during the long journey (Gen. 24:61-66).

In Song 5 the Beloved again stands without the door. Here the circumstances are different from those in 2:9. Christ awaits the call to enter to her. In 2:9 the call is for the beloved to go OUT to the Wellbeloved Himself.

How many walls or obstructions do we erect between ourselves and Christ? A wrong attitude to others constitutes a division and unforgiving spirit. A most certain way to build a wall between us and Christ (Proverbs 18:11). Jealousy in our hearts. All these things can be hindering walls.

"He looketh in" and His eyes are eyes of glory (Isaiah 3:8). Eyes of fire. Searching eyes prying into every nook and cranny of our innermost thoughts: What does He see within us? A life cluttered up with business, social activities, pleasure, trouble, impurity (Ezek. 15), self-love (1 Tim. 6, 2 Tim. 3:2), or of service to God and others?

If we are given the call today, shall we "rise up and come away" (Song 2:10) or will that lattice of Self obstruct our view of His charm and personality, so that under our halo of egotism the sight is blurred and the vision lost? All these things belong in reality to the Winter of life, when the springs of the spirit are frozen hard. The ground is barren with hard and unresponsive and consequently unproductive condit-

ions, and, no matter how hard the effort, failure to bring forth fruit is apparent. The mystic Bride all down the ages has felt the frustration of these unproductive conditions, and under these morbid times of depression has felt the Winter season will never end. So the welcome call comes to her, as it does to us in Song 2:10-13. The Winter of life is past. Our frozen feet are called upon to convey us quickly to Him.

Song 2:10-13 The Winter is past, the heavy rains of God's judgments are past and gone. Now the gentle rain has brought forth flowers in the earth. The time for the pruning of the vines has come and that sign of Spring has returned, the turtle-dove. The fig tree this time putteth forth her first ripe figs and the vineyards are in blossom (R. V.).

Song 2:16 The lilies have flourished and the Wellbeloved will feed His flock among them, and if the sight and experience of this Springtime of the Spirit fails to call us forth immediately to Him nothing else will! No more clouds of wrath shall return for her after the rain; only the perpetual sunshine of the Light of God (Eccles. 12:2, Rev. 4:3, ch.22, etc.). It is the time of Passover (Shoshanim lilies), and we are taken back to the old theme - the full token of Christ's love for His beloved, of death and resurrection.

Spring is the living illustration to fallen man of the truth that there shall be a like resurrection from the barrenness that the curse has placed upon all creation. A time for which all creation groaneth in pain until now, said Paul, waiting for the "deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God", etc. (Rom. 8:17-23). This in Song 2:9 is the call to this liberty, or rather the consummation of this call for which we as children of God daily wait in prayer.

The time of singing is now come (Isaiah 35:10), the singing of the New Song (Psalm 33 and consequential passages). Trace the passages through carefully and prayerfully and play this New Song praisefully upon your Harps of Ten Strings, for "praise is comely for the upright". Ten speaks first of all of ordinal perfection - 10 plagues, 10 Commandments, etc. Praise, then, must occupy our whole personality. How can it be expressed upon our own instrument of ten strings? Presuming this instrument to be our personality, what have we? - Two eyes, two ears, one mouth, one nose, two hands and two feet, which make 10, and give expression to the whole life, keeping in mind the glorious end, Psalm 50:23, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God". Compare 2 Pet. 1:4-6, Virtue = Praise. Isaiah 42:12, etc. Also the word "add" in this sequence is used of a choirmaster blending all the voices of the chorus available when required. So we must blend our lives of Praise or Virtue until we have "Agape", which is the full chorus of Praise in Love. Such is implied in the New Song on Ten-Stringed Instruments - all our personality expressed in living song.

It is the time of singing, indeed, of which our feeble murmurings are but the earnest of that paeon of praise led by Christ in the Kingdom when He leads the praise in the great congregation (Heb. 2:12, Psalm 22:25). Compare also the following references under New Song: Psalms 96:1, 98:1, 106:2, 144:9, 149:1, Isaiah 42:10, Rev. 5:9, etc.

Tom, summarising, adds: "The return of Spring with the bud of immortality. The dawn of a New Year (i.e. Passover, Ex. 12:2 presumably what is meant) or age when the fig tree is no longer all leaves only but bears green figs in preparation for the harvest. The voice of the dove is heard in the (our) land - the voice of the Spirit, as seen in Christ, gentle, holy and undefiled".

It is an interesting fact, before this study unknown to the writer, that the turtle or dove is the ONLY BIRD THAT HAS NO GALL. A rather stupendous fact, we would say, but true. The Lord's people are like Him called to a dovelike character, without bitterness. There is no bitterness in the Christlike character, gentleness and lovingkindness. The dove is the symbol of peace and the Holy Spirit, which is without bitterness. The characteristics of the Bridegroom must be found in us. "Thou hast doves' eyes, my love".

Song 2:13 "The fig tree putteth forth her green figs", or ripeneth her green figs (Arabic: "reddeneth"). The figs referred to remain unripe on

the trees during the Winter and rapidly ripen in Spring, developing before the leaf on the old wood. Hence Mark 11:13, where the leaves were present in abundance NO figs, which should have been there first of all. It is of God that the only other reference to this word for tree or branch in Song 2:13 is to be found in Isaiah 25:5 with the idea of pruning behind it, "Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, & the heat in a dry place; as the heat with a shadow of a cloud: the branch of the term ones shall be brought low" - pruned or cut off. Not only is it Passover time but all that of judgment of pruning or cutting off in judgment.

We think of Jesus, the Tree of Righteousness. He too was pruned that He might bear more fruit (John 15:2), and we are forcefully reminded that dead wood was cut out of the Twelve (Judas at the same time, Acts 1:16-26, Psalm 69:25, 109:8, etc. We are called at this time to judgment, and when that call does come we shall be powerless to prevent its persuasion, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive in our own bodies the things good and bad that we have done" (2 Cor. 5:10).

Song 2:13 "The vines with the tender grapes are putting forth their smell".

The blossom of the fragrant vine and the first-ripe grapes add their allure to the senses with the promise and the thought of the House of Wine to follow. With all this tumult of emotion we obey the summons, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away". In such a way does the Hind of the Morning appeal to His mate to follow Him to the mating ground.

Song 2:14 Again the metaphor changes - the Dove is brought before us, the natural scene picturing the dove nesting in the clefts of the rock for safety. The Dove of Christ finds safety and security in the Cleft Rock which was smitten for the thirst of His people (compare 1 Cor. 10:1-5), first of all perhaps along with Moses and with Elijah (Ex. 33:18-23, 1 Kings 19:9-13), and pre-eminently in the cleft wounds of Christ we have the privilege of communion with Him. Consequently, we have a beautiful order in this Song 2:14 -

- (a) The Bride as seen by "Christ in Himself" (Phil. 2:15).
- (b) The Bride safely hidden in the wounds of Christ, the secret place of the saints.
- (c) Her privilege, the stairs of access (Gen. 28:11-12, etc., compare Nathan's prayer, 2 Sam. 12:13).
- (d) The way and privilege of access to His presence (Col. 3:1). (John 14:6)

The Order of Approach : "Let me hear thy voice and see thy countenance".

(1) "Let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice". The Wellbeloved hears first the beloved's voice as a suppliant through Himself to the Father (John 16:23-24), just as His own strong crying and tears ascended to the Father in the days of His flesh, before He ascended to His Father (Heb. 5:5-9, verse 7 in particular; Matt. 26:38). John 17 of course prefigured by the incense preceding the blood at the Day of Atonement, Lev. 16:12-13).

(2) "Thy countenance is comely" - indeed, comely as Jerusalem. "Comely" is Old English = "come hither -ness" or attraction as Jerusalem. Jerusalem = "The inheritance of the possession of peace".

These are the two aspects of her dwelling in Christ: (1) The suppliant voice - this life of probation and trial; (2) The comeliness - the satisfaction of the travail of His soul in her (later for fuller outline, Song 6:4). It is when the Lord declares His love and concern for her that she becomes conscience-stricken and remembers her faults before Him.

Song 2:15 "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines" - having reference to the jackals, that root up and tear the tender grape vines; not only small animals but deadly foragers, with particular reference to the aromatic young vines. Their characteristics were to be seen in their most mature malice in that OLD FOX Herod (Luke 13:31-33) - greed, lust, rapaciousness, pride in the extreme - whose only thought was to destroy the seed of God (Matt. 3). Unholy thoughts, then, must be watched and conserved in that they do NOT penetrate into our vineyard in the Truth and ravage the younger vines that enter Christ from time to time.

Herod-like tendencies are abroad today - profane, outside the Holy Place - thoughts tending to Evolution and science, falsely so-called higher education - lack of discipline - all in their peculiar way comparatively "little foxes", but each on

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By what strong means at that unseemly hour  
The gard'ner should with some uncanny power  
Have borne Him hence beyond my reach.  
But when He spoke and uttered forth my name  
And I beheld my Saviour standing by,  
My heart did leap with sheer and utter joy;  
'Twas then, O Thou, that recognition came :  
With tear-dimmed eyes my precious Lord to greet  
I fain had stooped to clasp His feet."

Song 2:17

"Turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether". The mountains of Bether, which were separated from the rest of Israel by the river Jordan (2 Sam. 2:29), must be adjacent to the place where Jesus was manifested to Israel, Bethabara, beyond Jordan. "Bethabara" means "The House of Passage"; Jordan = river of judgment; "Bether" = "Separation" - mountains, then, of separation.

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Naturally, these mountains are intersected with deep rents, extremely precarious and jagged, and noted as the home of the roe, hart, etc., and most difficult for travellers to traverse. Mountains that have in one way stood between the Bride and the Bridegroom and yet speak of the love that has conquered to pass over and through them to her. "Bether" s.w.a. Gen. 15:10, Jer. 34:18; used in the sense of animals being divided in sacrifice at the making of a covenant. Compare, from the same root the word "bekah" of silver redemption money (Ex. 38:26, Gen. 24:22), the "half-shekel", which has already come before us in the Rebekah sequence (= "Rebinding", Gen. 24:15, the rebinding of two parts, through the dividing of covenantal sacrifice). Lev. 20:11 All mountains fled away before the face of the Lamb of God given in sacrifice for His flock. Bethabara (The House of Passage) speaks of His passage through the Jordan, the river of judgment overcome by Him in His love for the Bride. Thus were all mountains and obstacles overcome by the Roe, and the stress is again "by sacrifice".

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So these inhospitable regions, as they once were to the Bride, are now the very symbol of that covenant by sacrifice into which she had entered with God - through the Son - and have now become to her a security of the returning of the Roe or Hind of the Morning (Psalm 22 heading).

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The beloved, then, awaits "the breathing of the day of resurrection", the very gentle breeze that heralds the dawn. She has been awakened by the voice of her Beloved and, catching a glimpse of His fleeting form, as of a roe upon the mountains, obedient to His summons she has gone to the vineyard and has found the Winter past. The singing of the birds and the turtle-doves' plaintive note have comforted her. She has had the smell of the tender grapes in her nostrils and has paused, conscience-stricken, at the damage done by the little foxes.

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Tom, musing over these lines, adds hopefully, "But tomorrow, when the day breaks and the day star arises in the heart of the Bride, the little foxes will be NO MORE and she will be fed of the Lamb (Rev. 7:17) and He will feed of His lily garden Bride". But, as in our day, this day is yet future - she has not found the Beloved Himself, for the call was not to come along with Him, but to come forth and meet Him. Having come forth and spent the day in the vineyard, the night has crept upon her. But there had been an implied promise by the Bridegroom of His presence. She now beholds the dark night approaching, but He is still absent, and she earnestly implores Him to return and abide with her till the darkness be past - that hour of darkness which came upon Abraham in Gen. 15, lit only with the fire of the torch of the sacrifice passing through the two halves of the carcasses of the dead animals.

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The dark night of the Gentiles is till with us with all its horror of blackness, and we too must dwell in the safety of the Bether covenant until the Roe of God returns to take us to Himself. We are informed that the roe and fawn mate once for life and in the mating season at Springtime the roe will return to the original meeting or mating place. He will there call to his mate and she will come to him.

Our chapter ends with the Bride on Bether, with all the inaccessible places taken away by the Division, or Separation as the word means, by the Dividing of the Sacrifice of Christ (Gen. 15:10, Jer. 34:18-19). May we add the following information regarding the Hebrew word "berith" used here, meaning "to cut" and "to eat", while the Vulgate (the Latin version) has the rather interesting words "to come together". So the idea of fellowship around sacrifice is latent in this word, and the peace offering



latent in the teaching, Eph. 2:11-22 etc. We have made our peace with God and Christ at Bether, having heeded His call: we must find our peace with Him now in His absence and be found AT PEACE with Him in separation - Bether, when He calls at His coming.

"Until the shadows flee away" this peace remains safe within the cleft of the Rock. Let us remember to use and not neglect the stairs of access - John 1:51, John 16:23-24. Here too we will hope through Gentiles' dark night and await "the morning without clouds", the clear shining after God's day of hail and judgment, gladly responding to the Hind of the Morning, the greater Barak.

### THE SONG OF SONGS, Chapter 3

Song 3:1 Once again the Bridegroom is absent. The time is night, the word MY bed giving emphasis to His absence. Compare 1:17, where it is Our house, Our rafters - they are together there, but in 3:1 it is MY bed and experiencing that kind of yearning which can be felt only when one lover is absent from the other. "By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loved". Again our thoughts linked up with those of Tom, for down the ages the Bride has been searching for the Bridegroom. Upon her bed at night she sought for her Lord.

The present writer, if he may presume to be of the goodly company who are to make up this Bride, for such is his hope, can testify to apprenticeship in this nocturnal exercise. The insomnia of medical science and life in these last days can be of great value on this wise. Upon our beds and in our study this watching has been a constant companion, and we are at one with the Beloved with the eye of faith; the watchings in the small hours have blossomed out into spiritual reality until one feels that the touch of the angel is almost on the shoulder, and those words so long awaited have come at last, "The Master cometh and calleth for thee". The Bride in searching has the mind and desire of the angels, for they too "desire to look into these things" (1 Pet. 1:11-12). Again with Tom - "Oh, what a spiritual mind to delight in things the angels delight in". Isaiah, the prophet of salvation, unfolds the depths of the Bride's seeking (of which Bride he himself will be part), "O Lord, the desire of our soul is to Thy Name; with my soul have I desired Thee in the night, yea with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early".

Thinking of the Ecclesia surrounded by the Gentile night with her Bridegroom absent, and waiting for her Lord to return, we have the parables of Matt. 24, etc. - The Woman Grinding (verse 41), The Goodman of the House (45), The Faithful Steward (45-51), continuing into Matt. 25: The Virgins, faithful and otherwise (1-13), The Talents (14-30) and the "Do unto others as you would unto Me" as seen in The Sheep and the Goats (31-46). The general tenor of the theme of Night and Darkness is not to sleep, at the least spiritually, but to be watchful and alert for His return. All these principles can be said to have been met in the fellowship on Bether, for they are incumbent on the sacrificial aspect of the meal of fellowship, the Breaking of Bread. A partaking of the meal alone does not exhaust the intimacy of fellowship, but rather a genuine partaking in the life and principles that govern this meal, making possible our access which is vitally essential. It is possible, once more linking 2:14, for us to dwell in the clefts of the rock (or the wounds of Christ) in this way. So then, by a performance of these principles as outlined by Jesus in Matt. 24:25, we are watching diligently and our lamps are trimmed with oil, ready for that shout, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!"

This is the general situation as outlined for the Ecclesia or Bride of Christ during the Gentile night.

Song 3:1 "But I found Him not". That is, the promised one has not appeared. Again with Tom: "David sought for Him, the Messiah, and he knew by visions and revelations the kind of man (2 Sam. 7:18-21, "And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?" In the day of resurrection, David (along with us) shall see Him as He is - 1 John 3:2. But David, sweet psalmist of Israel, closed his days with these words, "This is all my salvation and all my desire, although He make it not to grow (2 Sam. 23:5) - "I found Him not". "

Song 3:1 Again, this verse from a different angle appears to represent the

loneliness and restlessness of the spouse waiting for her Lord during the blackness of the night, almost, could we say, with the anxiety of those who wait for the dawn, as many who are sick long for the dawn. We have a personal appreciation of this aspect too! - and, as people after a particularly sleepless night do, she is thinking of the One who brings the dawn. But could we also glean the information that maybe she has lost (temporarily) the sense of His nearness? What a terrifying thing this is, to lose the sense of the nearness of Christ! The seriousness of this situation has already been considered in 2:7, and we are about to have the lesson repeated in 3:5. Each time it follows a searching for her Lord and her anxiety can be appreciated lest her spiritual concentration is lost and her Beloved has gone once more.

(1) What a tragedy it must be for anyone to lose this sense, this awareness of the nearness of the Divine Presence!

(2) Compare the awful obtuseness of Samson who had profaned his Nazariteship, "who knew not that the Lord had departed from him" (Judges 16:20).

(3) The terror of Peter who became unaware of the Master's presence when fear overshadowed faith and he began to sink in Galilee (Matt. 14:30); and the fear of people that overcame him and obscured his Lord in the Temple precincts (Matt. 26:69-75).

The Bride in Song 3:1 would appear to have temporarily lost her consciousness of the nearness of the Presence. She becomes restless and agitated and her gloom needs not to be measured by the sun even at noonday. Spiritually for her it is night, a deep gloom that can be felt, when this condition arises within her.

'On my bed'. There are three words for "bed" in The Song. Song 1:16, "our bed"; Song 3:1, "my bed"; 3:7 "his bed". In Hebrew the word in Song 1:16 means "a couch". Young gives the literal word for bed in Song 3:1 as "a place to lie down", but not necessarily a couch as in 1:16. In Song 3:7 "bed" means a palanquin. We conclude that in Song 3:1, with the night season and the indefinite tense, just "a place to lie down" is meant, and that there is a direct contrast with "our bed" in 1:16. the place of affection shared. There is also a difference in prevailing conditions. The time of Song 3:1 is one of depression and doubt, far removed from the happy companionship and rest which may be inferred from the other passages.

Song 3:2 "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."

The streets of the city and the broad ways or the city gates - grand result: "I found Him not!" Because these are just the places where not to find the Lord, and to be out after curfew in an eastern city, particularly a woman alone, could only have met with one rather unsavoury conclusion.

In the night time problems and troubles sometimes assume a disproportionate magnitude and importance which usually evaporate to some extent with the arrival of morning. Psalm 30:5, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning". Kay beautifully expresses the original idea of eastern hospitality behind the phrase, "Sorrow is but as a wanderer who has a lodging given to him for the night and must leave in the morning". Such was and still is the unwritten law in those parts. Jesus alludes to this custom in John 16:20, "Sorrow is for the night of affliction of Gentile times, but joy cometh in that morning without clouds". Israel will learn, as we have to do, that Psalm 30:5, "His anger endureth but for a moment", the lodger who must be given lodgement for a brief night, but joy cometh in the morning: "In His favour is life" - "His favour is for a lifetime" (R.V. margin).

Thus "weeping" with all its complaints - sorrow, anxiety, etc. may "tarry for the night" (R.V.). We have to face up to this fact squarely and serenely as we may. This condition is God's traveller. We must give him shelter in our hearts, else the joy of tomorrow, whose faintest breathings we earnestly seek under these conditions of hospitality, will be denied us. It would be unthinkable to refuse this traveller admission in eastern lands: so we must offer not only lodging but our salt of peace to this angel of God, so that we may be offered in return the joy of tomorrow for a lifetime which is eternal.

Paul, summing up in 2 Cor. 4:17-18, gives an assessment of the relative virtues of this "lodging" and "abiding". In isolated logic we suggest it may be comparatively easy, but receiving this lodger and entertaining him in the "watching hours" is a different proposition. At night, as the stresses and emotions of the previous day unwind, memory rushes in upon us and when we lose the nearness of the Presence

what appears to be the dreaded future can terrorise and agitate us. Logic temporarily deserts us, and, like Jacob, we feel face to face with God (Gen. 32:30, etc.) - also like Gideon, who found himself in a similar plight (Judges 6:22).

The Song would have us know, and receive strength and comfort from the fact, that this experience is not the isolated terror of the individual but the common lot of the Bride in general. She got terrorised, agitated and confused, and lost for a little while the scent of her trustworthy Guide, because the true guide of the Presence would never have taken her into such outlandish places to seek her absent Lord. The impeccable discernment of the Spirit in Proverbs would teach her differently. Briefly :

Prov. 1:20 "Wisdom" (symbolising Jesus, as Micah can prove) "cried aloud in the street" and in the gates of the city His advice. Applying the teaching personally to Jesus, he was refused (verse 25) and they slew Him (verse 30). The streets of the city and the broad ways or gates speak of a world that is preoccupied in pleasure and business, a world that is at enmity with God (1 John 2:15-17).

Prov. 1:21 "Broad is the way and wide is the gate that leadeth to destruction".

The city gate was the main place of municipality and commerce in those days. Should we find Christ there? Christ on Wall Street or the Stock Exchange? He would at the least be the loneliest figure who visited the Temple of Wealth and Ambition. We may wonder why Annas condemned Jesus and sent him bound to Caiaphas - the unprecedented flouting of a Sanhedrin rule that no uncondemned prisoner should be bound. Josephus enlightens us. Annas owned the money-changing booths which Jesus overturned. They were known as "the booths of Annas". For this act on Jesus' part there could be no redress! The Lord had touched his pocket! For this Jesus was bound and the verdict of Annas to Caiaphas made plain - Jesus must die! John 18:24, etc. Jesus can never be found where the God of this world holds sway.

Isaiah 42:1-3 holds contrary to the place of the Bride's searching. "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street". The following verse 3 reveals a character out of sympathy with big business practice in general, and also one of which the business world in principle thinks nothing, and rather takes advantage of such weakness, as they think it to be.

Prov. 1:20 intimated that the streets of the city, and the wayfaring inhabitants, had blankly refused to accept Him. They "knew Him not", as 1 John 3:1-2 complains; but the beloved should have known, as we should know, that this is not the domain of the Bridegroom and that He could not be found there. Logically and principally we do know and acknowledge this to be so, but in the night sometimes of doubt and sorrow agitation and fear distort and garble our facts. Later on in our exposition we have the ready answer to "fear in the night" - the sword of the Spirit, ready on our thighs for action (Song 3:8). To this we have already alluded. Seeking the Lord on our bed, etc. It would appear that the Bride's intentions were sincere, but direction all astray.

Song 3:1-4 Compare the fervour of search in these verses: three times we read, "I sought Him" and once "I will seek Him"; four times we note the repetition of affection "whom my soul loveth"; twice we perceive the pathos of dereliction, "but I found Him not!" Her fervour requires no emphasis in verse 5, "I held Him and would not let Him go". When He is found of her these passages simply breathe sincerity on her behalf. Mostly, however, we find in this sequence of nocturnal experience a surprising lack of knowledge of His ways. It could be filed under "Zeal but not according to knowledge" and supplies for us a very trenchant lesson: she had an infallible Guide, but through the circumstances she had become unaware of and insensitive to its influence; and the guide we mean is -

Song 1:13 The bag of myrrh, which she herself had said should lie all night between her breasts. "All the night!" What had happened? Why had she become insensitive to it? Had she taken it off for a moment? and lost her touch with Christ? If so, then she had truly become lost in that darkness, and eventually would become as Cain = a wanderer in the Land of Nod (= "Nodi", wanderer), and if contact had not been established, no doubt along with the Pharisees of His time she would have fallen into the ditch, from whence there was no returning! Think of Judas who did just this! "He went out - and it was night". Temple says these are amongst the most pregnant words of Scripture. Yes, Judas fell headlong into the ditch. How terrible is this Night - from which the good Lord delivers us! (John 13:30, Acts 1:16-20, 25).

From this instance in Song 3:1-4 Jesus outlines to us in clear detail how hazardous it is to take off that "bag of myrrh", the remembrance of the sufferings of Christ from between our breasts or over our heart, or from memory — and, of course, the dire tragedy that could arise.

In the mercy of God, the Bride was found by the Watchmen of the city. The text makes clear the fact that she did not seek the watchmen. Her sole occupation was directed to one end, her Lover. As we have stressed, she was going in the wrong direction. The fact remains that she was found by the watchmen, as they were occupied in their nightly task of keeping the peace of the city while it slept. But who gave them their commission to find her? The King Himself, no doubt, as His parables reveal. He Himself with the Father seeks out the lost one, either a lamb, or part of the wedding necklace, or a prodigal who had gone into a far country (neatly recorded for us in Luke 15 and apparently spoken just before John 9. Please investigate).

Jesus graciously sends help for us in the guise of the watchmen here outlined, that through their help we may find ourselves and Himself.

Who or what does the Watchman symbolise in The Song? One who conveys to others warnings from God. The Bride, unlike the unheeding House of Israel, accepted the timely warning and got back "on the beam", so to speak.

Song 3:4 "It was but a little time that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth". How did she find Him again? Did she replace the bag of myrrh around her neck and over her heart? Have we a parallel in Moses who had withheld circumcision from his son? Remember how the Lord sought to slay him! — until Moses obeyed through Zipporah (Ex. 4:24). Quite a paradox! Moses about to lead Israel and yet he himself had lost the way! In keeping with the Bride, of course, Moses himself will be part of that glorious being, and we note a similar reaction on his part. Zipporah immediately circumcises the child. Another query arises. Moses had two sons (Ex. 18:1-4), Gershom and Eliezer. One only is mentioned in Ex. 4:24 as undergoing circumcision. Was the first son circumcised? and had Moses temporarily lost the way afterwards until he was confronted by the angel? Moses will perhaps clear the matter up for us in the future day! Just as the angelic opposition was removed upon the action of Zipporah, we find the Bride on contact with the watchmen able in but a little while to find her Lord.

Inevitably at some time all children of God lose contact with the Divine, and usually in the mercy of God receive in one way or another the WARNING from the Lord, and if it is duly heeded then the re-discovery of the Divine is but "a little while away". That warning may come by devious ways to us, but when "the moment of truth" does come, we shall know that it is the Lord speaking to us. Ideally, of course, the Watchman for us at all times is The Word of God.

Examination of ourselves in the light of this Lamp of Truth should put to flight all darkness and clear the way to find our Lord. Compare the following points on finding the Lord:

- (1) Simeon found Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:25-32).
  - (2) When Mary and Joseph "lost contact with Him", again they found Him in the Temple about His Father's business (Luke 2:42-51).
  - (3) The woman of Samaria found Him near to the city at Jacob's well (John 4:4).
  - (4) The malefactor found Him "without the camp" and gate, on Golgotha upon the cross (Luke 23:42).
  - (5) We shall ever surely find Him when we seek Him with all our hearts (Jer. 29:13).
- Each case is a lesson of the removal of and receiving again the Bag of Myrrh.

Song 3:4 "I held Him and would not let Him go".

The beloved, with further enlightened and renewed tenacity, "holds fast to that which is good", in Pauline language. Great was the joy of the delighted Shulamite when she found her Beloved. This tenacity can be observed in many of those who make up the number of the Bride all down the ages, as this fact became a realisation to them:

(a) Job, who said, "Though He slay me, yet will I hope in Him". Job too lost contact through misconception and through extremity of circumstances, but the Warning Voice of God in Nature restored him to his senses, and in but "a little while" he found the Almighty, and, being cleansed of his leprosy, was given further children and honours. So his faith, by which he cleaved to the Lord, was rewarded. Job

(b) Jacob (Gen. 32:26-30), as seen in despair and urgency at Peniel. He would not let go of the angel until he got the blessing, and, putting all craft and self-seeking away, not relying on his own strength, but with tears and supplication (Hosea 12:4) and in clinging to the angel, he prevailed. Then Peniel ("The Face of God") was revealed to him.

(c) The determination and enlightenment and faith of Ruth, as revealed in her treatment with Naomi (Ruth 1:14).

(d) The tenacious clinging of the Shulamite woman to Elisha, "Christ's mystical forebear". She knew that he alone could restore life to her dead son through the power of God (2 Kings 4:27-30).

(e) The affection and patience of Mary Magdalene herself, who clung to Jesus undoubtedly (as the Bride in our Song did to her Lord) in the Garden of the Tomb, unwilling to let Him go (John 20:11-16).

Such, we believe, were some of the emotions and fervour that thrilled the Shulamite on "finding" her Lord once again. We can enter into her feelings as she embraced Him and took Him into her mother's house and the innermost chamber of that house.

**"Her mother's house"** The mother has already come before us, that is Jerusalem the Free, as Paul demonstrated in Gal. 4:26 and Hebrews 12:22-23, and that Jerusalem which is above is Zion, and the Assembly of the Firstborn; consequently, the Bedchamber where the conception of each member of the Mystic Bride took place. It is the place of the life and birth and is therefore an easy stage to Psalm 87:5-7, which apparently gave birth to Hebrews 12:22-23 - "This and that man was born in her", and the life that shall be given there (before very long, we pray) is "life for evermore" (Psalm 133), when Jesus returns. Again with Tom - "Jerusalem will be revealed as the mother of immortals".

**"I brought Him into my mother's house"**. The confession of the disciples and of the multitude is revealed in the "Hosanna" period, mentioned by all four evangelists. Many had witnessed Christ's miracles, particularly that of raising Lazarus from the dead, disregarding the threats of the Pharisees, and were unashamed of Him as the coming King of Peace (Matt. 21:1-17, Mark 11:1-19, Luke 19:28-48, John 12:12-16, etc.). He entered Jerusalem on the colt, the foal of an ass. They brought Him to their mother, Jerusalem, historically in A.D. 33 all right; but their enthusiasm was short lived and within a few days they lost all contact with their Lord once again: and finally Jesus had to go and seek them because "they all forsook Him and fled", said John, omitting to say that he himself did not (John 21:1, Luke 24:5-11, Mark 16:7, Matt. 28:5-8).

We look forward with great interest and joy to the second time that the Bride takes Jesus home - to her mother! Compare John Zebedee's treatment of the Hosanna period. He used Zephaniah 3:16 as the basis of his exposition of the Hosanna period. "Fear not!" The obvious context is related to the second advent, "the King is in the midst of her". "He is mighty. He will save" (verse 17). "I will make you a name and a praise among all peoples of the earth" (verse 20), and, linking Psalm 24 with the closing events of Psalm 22, "the seed of generations that truly seek Him will come unto" the "nation born in a day". Once again the watchman will challenge: "Who is this warrior above all warriors?". The joyous answer will be, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle". Psalms 46 and 47 come to fruition at this period. Psalm 47:5-9, "God is gone up with a shout. The princes of the people are gathered together". In this glorious way will the Wellbeloved be taken to the Bride's mother, when the now blind watchmen of Israel (Isa. 56:10) have the veil taken away from their eyes and understanding.

The Lord enters the mother's house. Then is the long-broken relationship between the Lord and His people re-established, and the Daughter of Jerusalem will "rejoice greatly"; and will enter wholeheartedly into the Shulamite plea.

**Song 3:5** This was considered under its first occurrence in 2:7. Similar treatment is called for here, the time position to be marked. The first of this trilogy was 2:7, first in mention but last in time, as its setting is to be found within the King's inner chambers. 3:5 is at the conclusion of her search for Him. Again she would not want the situation disturbed and asks for the kindly co-operation of the Daughters of Jerusalem to make sure that it will be so. She now rests securely within the everlasting arms and pierced hands. Because their own

blessedness and happiness is now seen to depend upon this happy union, and the situation can now be seen without the covering veil, the Daughters of Jerusalem will make sure that their own deportment and deference will fit in with this Shulamite they all love. We can say that everyone who has been awakened to the love of Christ will step warily and affectionately and prevent at all cost this union being disturbed.

Song 3:5 - 5:1 begins the Third Idyll - THE BETROTHAL DAY.

It is most important to the Shulamite, for Solomon (Shulamoth) comes to claim her, and her Shepherd Lover is now seen to be the King also. As a shepherd He had loved and won her. As her King He will now come to claim her and make her His Queen and Spouse, which means Bride. It is interesting to note that the word "spouse" or "bride" occurs six times in this Idyll and nowhere else in The Song (4:8, 4:9, 4:10, 4:11, 4:12, 5:1). Not until this Day of Betrothal does the Bridegroom use this term (which we shall consider later, God willing). The love that more minutely declares all the Bride was in the Bridegroom's eyes appears the more wonderful when it is remembered He was the King, and she but the Shulamite earning her bread as a day labourer in the vineyard, scorched and blackened by the sun. Song 1:5. It will be interesting to see what effect this estimation has upon her. No doubt we shall find it in keeping with her own estimation of herself (4:6), bringing forward still more love and praise from her Lord.

Song 3:6 "Who is this that cometh!", expressing the Bride's surprise at such a spectacle. "Behold, it is the litter of Solomon".

The truth slowly dawns upon her that her shepherd lover was NONE OTHER than King Solomon (3:9), who had brought a palanquin, or car of state, to convey her away to the Feast of Esposals, and the glad cry from her lips is carried to the Daughters of Zion, 3:11, "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".

There is much that is plainly obvious in this rich symbology, 3:6-11, but nevertheless worthy of repetition. One immediately thinks of the Tabernacle marching in the Wilderness, which evoked such language as we have here from one who wished to curse but was forced to bless - Balaam (Num. 24:5-6) - "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" etc. This symbology is indeed rich in the things of the Spirit. With Tom we put our reverent enquiry, "Who is this that cometh out of the Wilderness?". First, Solomon in glory, majesty and prosperity; but there is another who came out of the Wilderness (Luke 4:14), "Behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (Luke 11:31). Jesus, the Greater One, will come with His Bride in the beauty of immortality (Psalm 68:17, Habakkuk 3:3-4).

Song 3:6 "Like pillars of smoke", plainly an allusion to Exodus 13:21. Yahweh went before Israel in a Pillar of Cloud and the lurid glare of Fire by night (For those who faithfully kept within sight and influence of this manifestation of light there could be no darkness - "even the night is light to Him", "In Him is no darkness at all", If we are in the Father we walk in fellowship and light (1 John 1:7).) Again with our Welsh counterpart we confess that the "Who is this?", "like pillars of smoke", in its fulness is the Lord, Who will be a Cloud of Glory (Isaiah 4:5).

The smoke of burning incense is seen likened unto pillars and a vast amount of incense would be required for such a manifestation; the reason being that we have before us the prayers and praises of the redeemed who have followed the Ark of God throughout their Wilderness journey. We can, then, construe with some tentative dogmatism the antitype of Ex. 30:31 - Rev. 8:3-4, the Spirit Golden Altar offering up prayer and praise. Frankincense spoken of in Song 3:6 makes sure of this as we well know. Frankincense, among other aspects, finally represents praise in life eternal, beyond our pen at the moment, but sure and certain (if we fulfil our obligations now) in the New Creation that shall praise God (Psalm 102:18, etc.).

Myrrh speaks of bitterness and suffering, but accepted sacrifice; and, as the incense on the golden altar could only be ignited from the coals of the burnt offering (compare Lev. 10:1, 16:1 and the deaths of Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, who failed to do this), we observe that this praise is once again all connected with the sacrifice of Christ, implying that unless Jesus had first travailed, Yahweh in this way

could never have been praised.

"With all powders of the merchant". All the splendours of the perfumer's art.

These were included within the anointing oil and incense, as we reviewed earlier in this exposition - the Holy Spirit and character of God in its unearthly beauty.

Such, then, was the testimony of the One who came before He was recognised as Solomon, the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6) -

- (1) "Who is this?" One who was known by complete devotion - the burnt offering smoke mingling with the incense vapour continually ascending to the Father (Gen. 8:20-21).
- (2) "Who is this?" One that had experienced the bitterness of death (myrrh) and yet through that experience had become the cleansing agent for others.
- (3) "Who is this?" One whose whole existence had been of praise to the Father (compare Psalm 50:23 - note double way of praise and effect, both in A.V. and R.V. texts) and now was the very channel through whom all praise must be offered and "powdered small" before it could reach the ears on high.
- (4) "Who is this?" One in whom was found all the "powdered perfume" of the Spirit without measure (John 3:34), the perfume of the Spirit itself, distilling its lovely fragrance upon all whose senses were spiritually exercised. By these details the Shulamite knew that it was the Wellbeloved approaching, because she had experienced all these wonders in her previous relations with her Lover. But great indeed was her surprise, and very disconcerting when she realised that her Shepherd was also her King, as the royal cortege of Solomon arrived to convey her away to Jerusalem for betrothal and marriage.

We are informed that such travel was usually undertaken in the cool of the day and evening and that marauding Arab bands made a habit of plundering these richly caparisoned retinues. Consequently, what should have been a time of great happiness and delight sometimes ended in great sorrow and tribulation, the Bride never reaching her true destination, either pining the rest of her life in the sheik's harem or being sold in the slave market (Song 3:7-8). Therefore on this occasion Solomon sent his own personal bodyguard or mighties to guard her and to make sure that she was kept from the "fear in the night". 60 mighties - double the bodyguard of David, which was 30 (2 Sam. 23). Not only does the King send his own personal litter, or carry-chairs (usually borne on the shoulders of the friendly or personal servants of the Bridegroom), in which to transport the Shulamite to Jerusalem, and to his mother, for the crowning ceremony and marriage, but also for the admiration of the Daughters of Jerusalem.

On the surface, and in a general way, this is the theme of Song 3:6-11, but is this all we are intended to glean from these words? Hardly so, we would think. We are impressed by the personal touch in all this detail - Solomon's bed (verse 7), his mighty men, his chariot or car of state (made by himself - we doubt this would mean under his personal supervision). When applying the antitype to Jesus, we know that this not only could be, but no doubt was, His own personal work, because Jesus was a carpenter or builder, "The Carpenter of Nazareth", and as Nazareth was the town of the "separate" or separated branch of Yahweh (Isa. 11:1). The more we muse on this situation the more certain we are that no one else could build that chariot or car of state but the Greater Solomon Himself.

We have said before that this particular symbology is taken from the Tabernacle, the Temple and Psalm 45, the Marriage Ode of the King. We feel sure that this chariot was first produced in the order of things. Why? Back to Exodus, briefly - it has already been outlined earlier in the exposition:

Ex. 31:1-5	Bezaleel	Son of Uri	of Hur	of Judah
	The Shadow of Ail	Light of Yah	White, Splendid	Praise of Yah

supported by Aholiab = Causing to shine, the Tabernacle of my father

the son of Ahisamach = Brother of support of the tribe of Dan  
(Judgment)

Bezaleel and Aholiab were the Spirit-filled men who made the Tabernacle, or the Chariot of the Father in the Wilderness.

We compare Jesus - the True Tabernacle of God with Men (John 1:14); the antitypical Bezaleel, "hidden in the shadow of His Father's hand" (Isa. 49:1-2) - compare Luke 1:35, "The Holy Spirit shall overshadow thee; therefore that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" - truly in the Shadow, Protection, Power and Character of the Father. Jesus was the Light of Yah (=Uri) to every man who cometh to God (John 1:9). "He was the TRUE LIGHT that lighteth every man that cometh into the world". He was that "holy thing", white and splendid (=Hur) (Luke 1:35) and the Glory (Luke 9: 28-36). Jesus truly fulfilled His tribal mission - Judah = "Praise of Yah", as expounded by Paul in Romans 2:29 - a Jew - Judah - one inwardly circumcised in heart, in the spirit; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

As Aholiab, Jesus glorified the True Tabernacle of God, causing it to shine with judgment (=Dan): "we beheld His glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14); and "the Father hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the son of Man" (John 5:27).

So Christ met all the requirements in His capacity as Carpenter or Builder of the True Chariot, Dwelling or Travelling Tabernacle of the Father. He is Emmanuel (= "God with us") = the Sanctified Builder in whom Yahweh tabernacled, and Who, in turn, has built for Himself a Chariot, to meet the Bride of His making and choosing out of the Wilderness of Nations, to convey her to the Feast of Espousals and gladness.

Of what materials did He choose to build this chariot? 'Of the wood of Lebanon'

Song 3:9

= Cedar, the incorruptible tree, used for Solomon's

Temple and the King's House (1 Kings chapters 5 to 7), replacing the shittah or acacia of the Tabernacle and the Wilderness. This incorruptible fragrant cedar of Lebanon formed the basic structure of this chariot. No true cedar has been found to be worm-eaten. We remember the old cedarwood blanket boxes that kept the moths away. We too recall the fragrance of the cigar boxes amongst which we worked many years ago. We are informed by experts that the true scent of this tree is not perfected until after the death of the tree, after it has been cut down. So this chariot built by Jesus, the Sanctified Carpenter Himself in the Shadow of "Ail", was framed from the "Tree of Resurrection Life". Paul outlines the dual purpose role of this cedar principle - life and death - in 2 Cor. 2:14-16, "unto God a sweet savour (of the accepted sacrifice of Christ) in them that are saved and in them that perish. To the one a savour of death unto death, an attitude of life meaning death to sin = the deadly aspect of the cedar see to worms and other wood pests; but at one and the same time equally the savour of life unto life, precisely the same fragrance with the opposite effect! - in fact, the Way of Life of the Son, Who hated iniquity and loved righteousness and in each case perfectly (Psalm 45) - precisely the effects of Col. 3:1-3, when living the life in Christ in God we automatically mortify or make dead or put to death sin in the flesh.

Rom. 12:1-3 - once again a living sacrifice, with conforming worldly aspirations, must be turned into a transforming by the renewal of the mind. Again the same action performs a precisely opposite action. Death to the egoism of self and life to the Spirit. The thought that death to the cedar in the sense of being cut down or cut off from the sap of life must intervene before the full effect of this same action takes place emphasises the Temple aspect of the cedar, because its place in the dispensational plan of God is that comparable to the perfection of "God all and in all". It will be clear, then, that the renewal of the mind and the transfiguration (or 'metamorphosis', Greek) of Rom. 12:2 stand together perfectly revealing the complete process. The mind had been made dead to sin and had received a renewal or resurrection wherein life in Christ is made possible (with God), as commensurate with Col. 3:1-3. So the chrysalis commences to give way to the splendour of the moth or butterfly. That transfiguring or renewing of the mind and body can only find perfection at the coming of Jesus in the Resurrectional Body Multitudinous, which in itself will be a chariot of the Spirit, as identified in the Cherubim of Ezekiel and of John and Habakkuk 3:8, each finding its mate, so to speak, in the Temple of Solomon. "Encharioted cherubim equipped with wheels" (1 Kings 7:23-29).

The way of this "cedar" state of affairs is revealed quite plainly in Romans 6 in keeping with both Romas 12 and Colossians 3. How fitting that this cedar is a prominent feature of the Temple! This house of cedar (2 Sam. 7:7) that Solomon, the man of rest, had to build, and not David. It takes us back again to the Sanctified



Builder personally building this spiritual cedar house of the Father, the saints being a royal priesthood and a spiritual house, having the stability of God's erection and Christlike grace of service.

This cedar structure of the chariot has to do with imperishable principles outlined in glorious detail in Solomon's Temple - the Temple of the Living God. A Living Way, a Living Sacrifice, a Living Hope and an Eternal Dwelling of Deity through the Spirit. This wonderful tree of great beauty and strength and durability. Concerning its living state we are told that its roots penetrate down to the very depths of the Lebanon range, to the bottom of the mountains themselves, defying all the elements - wind, rain and tempest leave them unmoved. The lessons come to us - now in the living state we are not to be moved about "with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men", but are to get our roots sunk deep into this Rock of Truth, so abiding in the doctrine with determination, keeping in Him and the power of His might, until He appears and the chrysalis stage is completed in full and in His grace the creature is completely renewed in glory. May its cedar qualities be found in us, that in that Day abiding, we may be not only encharioted with with wheel but part of the structure of that House in Glory.

Song 3:10 "Pillars of silver". Silver was used in Israel as coin current in commerce.

Many instances can be found in Scripture of its being so employed:

1. Gen. 23:16 Abraham bought the field of Ephron for 200 shekels of silver.  
2 Sam. 24:18-25 David bought the altar site of Solomon's Temple for 50.
2. Shekels of silver. An interesting figure, 50 shekels of silver = 100 ransomed souls at the rate of a half-shekel each = the number of sockets on which the Tabernacle stood (Ex. 30:12-17, 38:27).

Again, we have two noticeable instances when life was bartered for silver:

1. Joseph was sold to the Midianites for 20 pieces of silver (Gen. 36:23-28).
  2. Jesus, the greater Joseph, was sold for 30 pieces of silver (Matt. 27:1-10).
- (a) It is plain, then, that the idea attached to silver, actually and typically, in Scripture is that of price paid, silver being typical of Israel's redemption; Ex. 30:12-16 being but the picture of a Greater and Better Offering, and availing of itself no more for true redemption than the blood of a young bull.
- (b) It was precious, but compared with that of which it was a type it was worthless. Compare Peter's classic comparison of type and antitype, 1 Pet. 1:18-19, "We are not redeemed with silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ".
- (c) Mal. 3:3, another fundamental teaching, makes careful note of the purifying process through which these precious metals must pass at the hand of the Great Refiner.
- (d) Matt. 17:24-27 records the one and only time when a man - "the man Christ Jesus" - paid the ransom for his brother - Peter. That piece of money, a shekel, was twice the ransom money (compare Ex. 20:15-25, Psalm 49:7, etc.).

It would appear that these pillars of the chariot of the wood of Lebanon (cedar) have been purged and redeemed from all uncleanness and dross - in clearer aspect, the "house of Levi", those "joined to" Christ so that there may be offerings to be offered in righteousness. Pauline language again helps: Gal. 2:9, the apostles Peter and John were "pillars in the house of God". Jesus Himself clinches the argument in Rev. 3:12, saying the overcomers are to be "pillars in the temple of our God".

There were also cedar pillars in Solomon's Temple covered with silver and finally the splendour of gold (1 Kings 6:9, etc.), conveying further ideas to us of a redeemed priesthood - pillars in this wonderful house:

- (a) Pillars in the days of their flesh, in the ecclesias of their Lord;
- (b) Then eternal pillars in the eternal House of God.
- (c) It is interesting to note that "pillar" is s.w.a. "prop" or "support", and is s.w.a. "Rephidim" in Num. 33:15, Ex. 17:8, recalling the priestly intercession of Moses at Rephidim - prophet, priest and king, all combining to discomfort Amalek; a clear indication that the flesh (Amalek) would be overcome in the incessant war with the profanities of flesh as seen in Esau's brood. The hands of prayer (Heb. Targum) of Moses upheld now and vested in the Immortal Son who is Prophet, Priest and King in Himself - "Yahweh Nissi" = "The Lord My Banner" (Song 2:4) has denoted what this Banner represents - Love - the love of the Father for this Son and, in reciprocation, the Son's love for the Father and the chosen ones the Father had given Him

in each case to the "uttermost" (John 13:1, 3:16, 4:31-36).

It would appear, unless we are mistaken (and we stand to be corrected about this, as in all other suggestive matters where opinion can be rightly applied), that it is not recorded by John in his Gospel as a personal statement of Jesus Himself that He loved the Father. One quotation we did find, John 14:31, where Jesus states quite definitely in proof of this that He did love the Father. This we know as quotations abound in testimony to this fact. Here is the quotation: "Hereafter I will not talk much with you, for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise; let us go hence".

It is not that we ever question our Lord in these things - God forbid - but we want to discover the reason for the omission. As a sister just said, it was not necessary for Jesus to say this. His answer lay in His life of obedience. We have on record several statements saying that the Father loveth the Son, absolute testimony for all time (John 1:14-18, 13:34-36, 5:20-23, etc.). In the light of these tokens of the Father's love, the omission on the side of Jesus looms up quite startlingly. What is recorded, of course, is the undeniable proof that Jesus loved the Father to the uttermost in His utter obedience in all things to the Father's will (John 4:31-36, 5:30, 6:38, 7:14-18, 8:12-18, 10:14-17, 3:16, 12:8-28, 13:19-32, 15:9-10, etc.).

Was this apparent lack of outward sentiment to the Father occasioned to give driving force to this striking statement: "Not everyone that saith 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:11-13)? - In other ways laying claim to a knowledge of the Hebrew form of Yahweh is not sufficient, either calling upon God as our Adonai (Husband or Lord). This knowledge can be held at constant freezing-point within an ice cold refrigerator character: even claims to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength can be misinterpreted as our having a heart of love for God. Jesus had this in perfection, but a mere verbal claim on His behalf could never prove anything. The Pharisees were used to much speaking and praising God, but they were full of dead men's bones. As our sister said, He demonstrated His love by full obedience. Jesus said to His disciples, "If ye love me, keep my commandments". So a mere profession by us, because the grammatical precision of the Hebrew characters is probably better understood by us as a body, is no criterion that we personally love God or in reality "know His Name". Jesus proved His undeniable love by His performance in life of the sentiments of that Holy Name (Ex. 33 and 34). Just as, even in His case, a mere verbal profession could never prove that He loved God, saying, 'Lord, Lord', so neither can it in ours. Our utter obedience to the best of our ability in living out that Name is the only criterion.

In so doing, (to return to Ex. 17) we prove conclusively that we are true to that Banner ("Nissi") of Love, which is the Standard of the House of God that has adopted us. The victory over Amalek can be found alone in Love - "the love of Christ that dwelleth in us richly" and this alone through His grace. It is because the Bridegroom conquered the flesh in Himself, and Amalek was entirely vanquished in Himself, that Yahweh Nissi could become effective, and that Prophet, Priest and King could have His perfect work. In Song 3 it is memorialised for ever in these pillars of His chariot, and established for ever, as Peter and John, in the Temple of His Body. So much, then, for silver.

Song 3:10 "The bottom of gold", the structure resting on tried faith, Divine righteousness and immortal perfection, as taught in this precious metal.

Once again we are in Temple symbology, where the whole floor of the Temple was made of this metal (1 Kings 6:30), making in all a golden cube, the golden floor, ceiling and walls - absolute perfection, entirely remote from the Tabernacle, which had been erected and taken down time and time again, and where the floor was earthen and not gold.

The significance of the rent Veil could never have applied to the Tabernacle: as we said, earth covered the floor of the Most Holy. Only in a Temple where the innermost sanctuary was a golden cube of perfection could this action have taken place. Equally so, the Veil could not have been rent in Solomon's Temple, because that Veil represented perfection, God being All in All, and the Way by which this purpose had been accomplished seen in Song 1:5, the Curtains of Solomon.

A veil was necessary to be rent, as Heb. 6:19-20 reveals. Presumably not made by Bezaleel actually or in type, but by Herod, that "old fox", seeking to pacify the Jews along with the Temple that bears his name, and at the death of Jesus this veil was rent - a very poor and failing replica indeed, without cherubim, says Josephus.

When the officiating priest offered incense at that time when the veil was rent from top to bottom (Matt. 28:50-52) and his startled gaze penetrated into the Most Holy, he found it empty: no Ark, only this rent veil before him! Not of Bezaleel's making, nor Solomon's men of Tyre, only of Herod's men. But a Veil had been rent, and as such the Way into the Holiest not made by man was made wide open, and the True Ark of the Covenant in His beauty could ascend up to the Father - AT HIS APPOINTED TIME.

In keeping then, the bottom of the chariot, like the house of cedar (God's House), was of gold. The priests stood on gold to minister in that glad day - the City and the streets will be of gold, pure transparent gold (Rev. 21:21).

The Queen of Psalm 45, actually another portrait of the Shulamite herself, who is about to receive the eulogy of Christ in Song 4, is brought to Messiah in raiment of gold (Psalm 45:13), "all glorious within" as this chariot, this Temple of Solomon; her clothing, or character, is of wrought gold. Finely worked metal, in Bezaleel character:

- (a) Inwardly glorious, Heb. "penimah" = 1 Kings 6:18 used of interior cedar lining of the Holy Place in the Temple. 1 Kings 6:21 - Of the gold lining of the Most Holy Place. Psalm 45:13 - Wrought gold = Heb. "Mishbetsoth", used only of:
  - (b) Gold "ouches" on the shoulder pieces of the High Priest and the ephod (Ex. 29:1-13).
  - (c) Gold settings of the twelve precious stones in the breastplate of the High Priest (Ex. 29:1-13).

Inwardly glorious, the Bride has outward ornaments of corresponding value. For this Day we anxiously wait, when inward capacity will match outward show.

This teaching of the Golden state represents the bottom of the chariot of Solomon, the basis of immortality. Righteousness, tried faith, balance of inward character and outward performance - all based on the inherent Righteousness of Deity found in the Builder of Nazareth, Jesus.

We have a very interesting suggestion in the Septuagint and Vulgate: "Bottom" = back for resting or reclining on - the inference being to the floor of the Most Holy, where the mercy seat, the resting place of God, lay (Psalm 132:14); in the Temple, which we have seen was of gold.

Song 3:10 "The covering or seat of purple". Possibly "seat" as in Lev. 15:9 :  
indeed the seat which hereafter the  
Bride will share.

Rev. 3:21 The royal seat. "Shall sit with Me in My Throne", said Jesus. Purple is a mixture of blue, red and scarlet, the emblems of royalty and of His blood (compare John 5:10, Amos 3:12, Prov. 7:16. The covering of a seat. The atoning work done by the blood of our Lord memorialised or anticipated by the reclining disciples at the Last Supper, John 13:23).

Song 3:10 "The midst inlaid with love for the daughters of Jerusalem" or "by the daughters of Jerusalem".

What is this pavement of love? "Pavement" or "inlaid" has very interesting connections. This word is "ratsaph" in Hebrew, meaning tessellated as a pavement, mosaic work (Septuagint, "lithos proton" - a remarkable word occurring in our Lord's passion, John 19:5, where it means the paved area where judgment took place, Heb. "Gabbatha").

What a fascinating contrast! Pontius Pilate had his Pavement and sat on the royal coloured seat of Caesar, a pavement tessellated with worldly power and pomp, where he was ruler and judge. Christ on the cross as King - Pilate's own construction (John 19:19-22) - and Judge of All had His Royal Pavement also and that was tesselated with Love. What a beautiful mosaic was there!

We are taken away back to Ex. 24:9-10 in this exposition of the Inlaid Pavement of Song 3:10, to the ratifying of the Covenant with Israel on Sinai, complete with the vision of the God of Israel standing upon a paved work, s.w.a. Pavement (Heb. "ratsaph" or Aramaic "gabbatha"), a pavement of a sapphire stone, "as it were the body of heaven in its clearness". Here the word for "body" = "bone".

So we have the Elohim of Israel standing in judgment on the pavement upon the body (or bone) of the sapphire testimony ; as bone is to our bodies the whole framework upon which everything else is held in shape and attached, the Foundation in other words.

The Sapphire teaching, according to the elements of the Hebrew word, clearly represents :

1. The Spirit inspired commands of the Law of Moses and the effect of them.
2. The effect upon the Lord Jesus is seen in Psalm 40:8, the love of Jesus for the Father because "Thy law is within (sapphire) my heart". The Lord Jesus is seen here as the Elohim of Israel, and the pavement of judgment upon which He stands is governed by the commands and ordinances of the Mosaic Law because He Himself is the very bone or essence of these words, because He allowed these judgments to descend into his heart, they produced that love of God and man (that has occupied our attention a little while ago) and gave Him that urge to complete the will of Him that sent Him. All His judgments, based on the Spirit's inspired word, would be despatched in love. (For further exposition see the present writer's "What's in a Word? No. 1 - The Significance of Blue in Scripture").

So we have this tessellated Pavement of Love that covered the midst of the Chariot of the Bridegroom. And the basis of it all? - "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God" (1 John 4:16) - the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, from which, if we are faithful, we can never be separated.

This interweaving of Sapphire will come before us again as we contemplate the Lord's glorious body in Song 5:14. There we shall find, rather wonderfully we believe, its very intimate application to ourselves.

We have investigated the work of the Divine Builder, the Greater Bezaleel and Solomon too, in building the chariot of the Lord. It is our hope that we have made it manifestly clear as to why this chariot had to have precedence in the dispensational teaching of things, because it is upon these foundations of Truth that all the other works of the Kingdom, the coming Betrothal and Marriage of the Lamb and His Bride, are made or based. These chariot truths had to be revealed before the others could follow and Song 3:7-9 be revealed, along with His Bed, where we have a "Rest in Love":

- (1) 1 Chron. 22:9 "Behold a Son who shall be a Man of God" with
- (2) 1 Kings 5:4 "Rest on every side, adversary gone and evil dispersed
- (3) Isaiah 9:6 The Prince of Peace and Rest
- (4) The Greater Joshua, whose ultimate "Rest" is still waiting for fulfilment as yet, but it is sure to come!
- (5) Now we "rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him" (Psalm 37). Our rest is secure in the Lord.

The King has made quite sure that this Rest shall not be disturbed as His retinue carrying His Bride is taken to Jerusalem, "the Inheritance of the Possession of Peace".

Song 3:7-8 "Three score valiant men are about it".

- (a) Just as the angel compassed Jacob and his retinue about with two companies of angels at Jabbok (Gen. 32);
- (b) As the 30 mighties compassed David about during the darkness of Saul's bitter enmity (2 Sam. 23);
- (c) So now would the righteous compass the King and His loved ones about. Psalm 142:7, compare Psalm 7:7. The watchers over Israel slumber not nor sleep ; all are valiant ; all are watchful ; all hold swords, being expert in war. Compare David in Psalm 18:32-34, "God teacheth my hands to fight", so much so that the great Goliath falls before him, 1 Sam. 17, Psa. 8:4-9, Psa. 144:1-10, set to Goliath - Septuagint version of Hebrews 2:14, - a wonderful sequence for all who would trace out the parallels between Jesus and David, between death and Goliath. If the greatest of all enemies, Death, can be conquered, then we need have no personal fear of the Night, so long as we remain constantly on the alert, ready with the Sword of the Word on our side or thigh. The enemies which surround us, and would swiftly destroy our hopes of reaching Jerusalem and Jesus our Bridegroom, are exceedingly dangerous and sinister. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal (2 Cor. 10:4). Paul's exhortation on the accoutrement of a soldier is very necessary to us - "we must put on the whole armour of God" (Eph. 6:10-17).

Like Gideon's men of old at Ein Harod, we must not lightly esteem the prowess of the enemy, and must in all circumstances be alert and vigilant, ready to unsheathe

the sword of the Spirit to protect the King's peace.

Song 3:7 - Three score valiant men compassed Solomon about. David had thirty. The Man of Peace has two companies of thirty mighties (Heb. "gibbor"), s.w.a. Psalm 45:3, used even of the King Himself, in fact the Shulamite herself is seen as "two companies of Mahanaim" (Song 6:3), particularly in Song 6:12, where we have the chariots, and two companies of the chariots, of His willing people, each one instantly willing to hazard his life for his King, the Greater David.

This is the Day He bears for ever in memory, indeed; a day that has been much observed by ourselves: "Do this until I come". The still bright print of the nails in His hands and feet, the gash of the spear in His side, are a perpetual memory. It is the Day of His Espousals, dark though it may seem. Yet it was for Love and for ever the gladness of His heart. This Day is one for "much observance" personally, and our brother Haraldus has written a sonnet as it affected us on that dark day of espousals of Jesus our Lord:

Golgotha!

We all have sinned and so must share the shame;  
We helped to slay the sinless Son of God:  
Thus all must bear a portion of the blame;  
We spat, we cursed, we swung the chastening rod.  
It was not Jew alone that did the sin,  
Nor Roman host, or priest with baneful eye;  
'Twas we ourselves and all our kith and kin  
That shook the fist and shouted, "Crucify!",  
Drove home the nails, pressed down the prickly thorn,  
Sauntered before and mocked Him with the thief,  
Cast forth the lots to leave Him b'reft and shorn,  
Then wagged the head and watched Him in His grief:  
Thus all mankind do of the guilt partake,  
Must pardon seek through grace, for His dear sake. Haraldus.

This indictment is most severe, but true, and not very much to our stomach, yet rings very true to logic and life. Our sins crucified Christ just as much as the Romans' or the Jews' on the actual day, and all mankind from Adam downwards stand indicted.

There is a Day of Espousals, the Wedding Day still future, when the spotless Bride of His making is actually presented in marriage:

1. "The Bride hath made herself ready" (Rev. 21:2).
2. She had had fellowship in faithfulness = the thorny coronet,
3. In the shed blood of the bridal wine-cup, and
4. In the broken body of the bridal bread.
5. She had kept the vows of espousal, our engagement period, and
6. Now awaits the ring of marriage from the Man of Peace, the Greater Solomon.

It is noticeable that the chariot was "paved with love for the Daughters of Jerusalem", and the Daughters of Zion are asked to witness the ceremony of espousals. The Daughters of Jerusalem naturally did witness the evidence of the thorny crown (Luke 23:27) - "And there followed Him a great company of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children". These faithful witnesses who come before us in The Song are shown that His blood was shed for themselves, if they could but realise its significance. At that particular time they wailed for Mary, the actual mother of Jesus, in losing her son, as well as for His sufferings and untimely death; just as the world has sorrowed for Aberfan and the dead in the European countries - the bond of human sympathy. The Daughters of Jerusalem sorrowed with Mary, like her at that time apparently failing to grasp the true meaning of it all. It will come later to those of our own day when they see the holes in His hands. Mary saw the agony and humiliation and dereliction of her son, and the sword pierced her heart as Simeon prophesied (Luke 2:34-38). Little did the Daughters of Jerusalem think He did it for them, but they will do in the glad day ahead when they, as the companies of this glorious

Bride, follow her in being brought unto Messiah. "With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the King's palace" (Psalm 45:14-15).

The Daughters of Zion (= "established, sunny, set", etc.) are witnesses of this ceremony of Esponsals, in which their counterpart (Psalm 87) is the glorious Bride herself, as the seed of "Jerusalem from above" (Gal. 4:26), "the mother of us all". "That Man was born there" - spiritually, the King Himself and Jerusalem His Mother shall crown Him in the day of the gladness of His heart. "Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord!" Psalm 118:22, "The stone that the builders rejected is become the head of the corner". "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes". "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it". (Psalm 118: 23-24).

This day is defined in many ways. The idea put into our mind at the present moment is the fact that this rejoicing takes place when the Bride is brought to Jerusalem fittingly fulfilling her name in antitypical splendour = The Inheritance of the Possession of Peace (more later on in chapter 6). Compare Paul's prayer in Eph. 1:12-17, "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints". City and people agree, hence Song 6:4. The Bridegroom's ecstasy leads Him to cry, "Thou art beautiful, my love" - as comely (= "come hither-ness") an attraction as is Jerusalem. His Bride by the time Song 3:11 has come to pass will be at peace, both City and People. Also to the fore in the experience of gladness by Bride and Groom will be the satisfying knowledge that in particular "This is the DAY that the Lord hath made!" -

(a) Because the Divine foreknowledge and purpose had ordained it so to be. But, bringing it nearer home to the happy pair -

(b) This Day had been made through the love and obedience of the Son in sacrifice and service. This is THE DAY THE SON HAD MADE; otherwise it would never have come to pass. Pray God we may be there to appreciate this spiritual gladness. Song 3:11 Jerusalem, then, will crown Him in that day.

It was, we remember, Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, who pleaded for the crown of the kingdom to be given to Solomon (1 Kings 1:16-17). "Bathsheba" = "Daughter of the Oath", i.e. Daughter of Fulness, or Daughter of Seven. Now she is viewed having the signal honour of placing the Crown of Betrothal upon Solomon, no doubt symbolising her happy consent. We can (with Tom once again) thank God for Bathsheba. We will remember that Bathsheba, the one who pleads, is the one who is advanced to honour as Queen Mother. She can fittingly be placed alongside Jerusalem - another expression in the Jerusalem saga. The "Daughter of the Oath" = the Fulness or Consummation of the Yahweh Covenant with Israel, as expressed in the hymn, "Jerusalem the glorious" - yes, "wondrous things are spoken, Jerusalem, of thee: the oath cannot be broken, and we its joys shall see".

We look forward with assurance of faith to the forthcoming Marriage (Rev. 19:7) of the Lamb and His Bride. "Go forth and behold" calls to remembrance the joyous anticipation of the angels: "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh! Go ye out to meet Him" (Matt. 25:6). How soon shall we hear the cry? He shall come to be glorified and admired in all them that believe. May the heavens soon open and The Faithful and True, wearing on His head the many crowns appear (Rev. 19:11-12). May our meeting with Him be with joy and in mercy. May those "eyes of flame" finally cleanse us, that our preparation may be completed in Him.

The curse of the earth was the Saviour's dying crown (thorns) - Gen. 3:17-19. Yet Zion shall be "a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God" (Isaiah 62:1-12): "Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken."

We will, then, "give Him no rest till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Isaiah 62:6-7).

THE SONG OF SONGS, Chapter 4

Song 4:1 We arrive at the point of the King's eulogy of the charms of His loved one. It has been said that "love is blind", and at this time in a normal person's life it is usual for such to see through spectacles either "rosy red" or "a delightful shade of pink" when viewing the object of desire, and though the picture that we have unfolded here is undoubtedly portrayed in the most delightful technicolour of the Spirit in depth, yet we know this is no one-sided vision of an enraptured Bridegroom, but of a very real picture in poetic language of the Bride Mystical as she will appear to Christ on her wedding day.

The normal custom was for the Bridegroom to praise the charms of the bride and for her to respond on the virtues of his manly beauty. It is very necessary for us that we examine ourselves in the light of these verses on the Bride, and very important that we shape ourselves according to the pattern of them, so that it may truly be said of us:

1. The Bride hath prepared herself and made herself ready (Rev. 19:7);
2. That the Wedding Garment of Righteousness may be given to her at that day (Rev. 19:8).

Song 4:1 "Behold, thou art fair, my love; thou art fair".

This repeated emphasis of fairness or pleasantness (Song 1:15, 4:1, 5:9) can be understood in several ways at this time. She is fair because, as the Psalms say, (a) "The beauty of the Lord our God is upon us" or her (Psalm 90:17), and (b) "The king's daughter is all glorious within" (Psalm 45:13). Both her external comeliness and inward perfection, as we have observed, are of Christ, and if of Christ then of God - a trinity in unity, if we may put it this way, and a specific fulfilment of John 17. The Bride is made up of those called ones given to Jesus by the Father (John 17:6) to whom He had made all things known from God. The Bridegroom had interceded on their behalf that the Father would keep or guard them for Himself until that day (His Day), so that they all may be of one (John 17:21), as the Father is in Christ and Christ in the Father, that the Bride may be one in them.

In the Song the time has arrived for this to be manifested, this trinity in unity - Father, Son, Daughter (who is the Lamb's wife). The Bride perfection is only so because of Christ's comeliness which is upon her (Ezek. 16:14, John 15:3). So we receive "out of His fulness, grace for grace".

"As the fining pot for silver and the furnace for gold, so is a man to his praise" (Prov. 27:21). What a wonderful thing it is to have praise from Christ! This never hurts the child of God. The praise of man is usually injurious and to seek to flatter usually ends in disaster. "Verily they have their reward", said Jesus, and the word in Greek for "reward" means a "receipt". They have been paid in full. Nothing remains to come. (Matt. 6:2, 16). A seeking, then, of the plaudits of this world, and of the flattery that men usually call praise (likened in Proverbs to teeth like knives) can only issue in an account paid to the full in this life, and the only remark we may hear from the Lord will be, "I never knew you"!

The praise of men of the world, and sometimes in the ecclesia, is injurious, but, as we have said, we are never injured by the praise that cometh from God. Insofar as the commendation is applicable in any given case, it is a ground of gratitude and a source of strength, but actually the praise belongs to Christ, because it is He who has called us and made us Praise unto God. It is He that fashioned us to the praise and the glory of His grace, and, as we contemplate that Day when Christ will extol the virtues of His Bride, we know that our rejoicing will have been tempered with fear for what is found in us today.

"Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my Name" (Rev. 3:8) - possibly this did not characterise us yesterday, and may not be our character tomorrow; insofar as this praise is Christ's commendation of the ecclesia at large, or of the normal type of believer given as a model for all; and furnishes a test for self-examination as touching our own likeness to the Divine pattern and a ground for deep humility on account of our exceeding sinfulness (Stuart).

The parts and the comely proportions of the New Creation are described in this Song under seven distinct features, uniting perfection of number with perfection of beauty; and to each of these pictures is attached a separate similitude or emblem:

	<u>Seven Features</u>		<u>Seven Similitudes</u>
	1. The eyes	-	The dove
	2. The hair	-	The flock of goats
	3. The teeth	-	The flock of sheep
	4. The lips	-	The thread of scarlet
	5. The temples	-	The piece of pomegranate
	6. The neck	-	The tower of David
	7. The breasts	-	The young roe twins

In living reality they are the work of the Spirit's renewing and the discovery of their beauty is of the Spirit's renewing. The work of the Spirit as manifested forth - In Christ (Isa. 11 : 1-2) and found in Eph. 1 : 8-17 etc. as refining to His ecclesia, therefore the Bride herself. So we are back once again to our link in John 17, "that they may be (the ecclesia or the Bride) one in us." It is all of God.

Song 4 : 1 "Thou hast dove's eyes within thy locks". The first half of this phrase was encountered in Song 1 : 15 and we considered it there. The habitation of humanity in general has become scripturally 'a hold of every foul spirit' and 'a cage of every unclean and hateful bird'.

- (1) But amidst the moles and bats, Jesus recognises THE DOVE.
- (2) The bird so distinctly clear as no other species of bird is noticed as presented to the Lord in sacrifice.
- (3) The only species without gall bladder, naturally, we discovered.
- (4) The dove's eyes denote the character devoid of bitterness which is associated with it. Matt. 10 : 16 emphasises the simplicity which is attached to the dove state of the Bride - "Harmlessness" A.V.
- (5) The dove is remarkable for seeing her cot from far off distances, as Noah's dove knew the ark, keeping it in sight over the wilderness of waters, knowing where it was.
- (6) So do we by God's grace keep in view our Ark of Testimony, either amidst the waters of judgment - Jordan - or leading us through the wilderness, crossing Jordan to gain the victory over Jericho, the world city.
- (7) The dove's eyes constantly kept that ark in view; even so must we tenaciously hold on to that knowledge, enabling us to keep Christ in view. It is our ONE LIFELINE in these troublous days, however much we may fail in other directions.
- (8) They were enlightened eyes, as we saw from Eph. 1 : 18 - eyes of spirituality, gentle and loving.
- (9) Eyes of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2), a true reflection of Christ Himself, the Son of the dove, Matt. 3 : 16.
- (10) They are the eyes of the spiritually enlightened. A true effect of the imitation of Christ (1 Thess. 1 etc.) See Hall on Thessalonians. Closely following, observing and doing the Father's will in Christ etc.
- (11) The eyes of a person are recognised to be the index of the person's character. Christ indicated the identity of her character. The image of Himself is apparent in her eyes.
- (12) These eyes are only discernible through a veil, usually worn in the bridal procession. R.V. "Through the veil of thy locks" which lie in thick profusion down her shoulders "as a flock of goats on the side of Mount Gilead".

#### Feature 2

Regarding men The long hair of women is worn as a symbol of subjection (1 Cor. 11 : 15) "If a woman hath long hair it is a glory to her, given her for a covering, for the head of the woman is the man".

Looking higher The hair of woman mystical denotes her subjection at all times to her Lord. This is our glory - the glory that Christ had with the Father all His life on earth. His utter subjection always to the Father's will. "I have glorified Thy Name upon the earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do" (John 17 : 4). Such then must be our subjection to our Lord Jesus. The glory of subjection. It is amidst this background that the beauty of the dove's eyes character is outlined. Let the women subject themselves in holy subjection to the Lord of Life - AND LIVE.



In like manner of old time, to God the long hair of the Nazarite was the outward symbol of consecration to the Lord of Hosts of subjection and dedication to an unseen head.

(1) When the unseen Bridegroom was first manifested publicly and first met the Bride, it was in the person of John the Baptist, with his hairy vestments and leathern girdle and with his Nazarite locks flowing down his shoulders (Luke 1:15 etc.) and it was indeed the eyes of the dove that viewed THE LAMB through the veiled tresses of his hair. John the Baptist was at this time the true turtle dove that heralded the approaching summer of grace and truth as found in the rising Son of Righteousness.

(2) Again whilst the Bridegroom was present with the Bride on earth, twice she stooped down at His feet and wiped them with her hair in subjection of love. We see the whole of His disciples sitting at his feet in subjection to Him. He said, "Ye call me Lord and Master and so I am." By performing these actions they exalted their Lord and acknowledged their true position in subjection.

(3) So then, "Thy hair is like the goats on Gilead" (Song 4:1).

The black goats which from a distance seem to cling to the steep cliffs and butts of Gilead, giving an impression of the black hair falling from the brows to the shoulders of our Shulamite Maiden. Gilead's name means 'Heap of witness', so we find this clustering of the believers around God's greatest witness - Jesus.

(4) Think too of the simile of the flock of goats in harmony with the long hair of the Nazarite. The Nazarite with his whole person from head to foot presented a living sacrifice, and NO part of him was allowed to be marred by the hand of man. Not a hair of the head touched. As the altar was of unhewn stones (Ex.20:24-25) and the red heifer unstained by yoke (Num.19:2-22 etc.)

(5) Let Samson serve for illustration.

His unshorn locks were a sign (a) to himself (b) to Israel and (c) to the Philistines, of his unbroken vow of his accepted and abiding dedication to the Most High. In his long unshorn hair lay the secret of his strength because there waved in every hair the sign of his separation (Judges 13:3-7). "No razor shall come on his head, for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death". His great strength lay in his covenanted union to the God of Israel, but his hair, like the flock of goats on Mount Gilead, was the token of the covenant and therefore the secret of his strength. We know the exploits of this herculean judge of Israel, whilst his Nazariteship was undefiled. We sadly reflect upon the terrible humiliation and loss of strength, when that hair was 'cut off' and the covenant broken. So too we reflect that so it must be with the Bride, the Lamb's wife, from her baptism into Christ to the day of her death she is a Nazarite to Israel's God. Her hair as goats on Gilead is to be observed in her living in Nazariteship in sacrifice as a reasonable service - as the Nazarites did. She does this openly in presence of friends and foes. Being bought with a price, she determines to glorify her God in subjection (voluntary submission). Sisters in Christ have a great privilege to confess openly each time they wear a hat or covering over their hair, that they are in subjection in truth to their Lord Jesus.

The world looks on, and wonders, and hates. Their action tempts, objects, lures and interferes with this subjection and lowliness. This hair like goats on Gilead making her so lovely in the sight of her Lord in an affront of these onlookers. Because these things, if rightly applied, can, as they did in the first century, 'turn the world upside down'. So diverse are they from their ways of life. May the Lord grant that our part in this 'hair of the goats' be saved from mutilation and the strength of our separation be permanent in Him.

(6) The hair of goats covering from the well beloved's angle.

We know that the goat was used as a sin offering under the Law, particularly in Lev.16, the Day of Atonement. Again we see glory associated with atonement and sacrifice (see Song 1:13-14 on the cluster in the vineyards of En Gedi etc.) The glory of her Lord's sacrifice adorns her head for a covering. The same goats hair was woven into a hairy garment and worn next to the skin as a symbol of affliction that is afflicting the soul.

We know that goats hair formed one of the coverings of the tabernacle (Ex.26:7). Goats hair or skin of goats covered the hands and arms of Jacob when he obtained the blessing (Gen.27:16) showing that this covering could also be associated with deceit and trickery, far removed from the attitude of Jesus who as true Israel prevailed and had power with the Father, the antitype of the goat slain, by whom the blessing was actually bestowed, and by whom Jacob will receive life and the true blessing when He appeareth. Psa.24 will then receive completion. Study this Psalm in relation to Jacob, particularly verses 3 - 6.

- (7) This goats hair upon Gilead can truly be likened unto a crown of blessing on the head of the bride from her Lord, bought by sacrifice and affliction on His part (Isa.53).
- (8) Just as goats skins were a necessary covering for the sanctuary or dwelling place of God (Ex.25:8), so then it must be an individual covering for those in whom God dwells, or they who dwell in God by faith.
- (9) Perhaps a good illustration of the flock of goats on Gilead together with the eyes of a dove is to be seen in Nathanael, whose name has several applications but are all derivatives of the grace of God, viz. Grace of God, Given of God, Instructed of God and Rewarded of God. (John 1:45-51). The whole purpose of God can be reconstructed in this name alone. The day after John had testified "Behold the Lamb of God" Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him and Jesus said to Him, "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile". Jesus saw in Nathanael the character of the Bride - guileless and harmless as a dove, but not silly and foolish as the dove of Ephraim (Hosea 7:11). (We have to be fools for Christ's sake, but NOT TOO FOOLISH), and the bridal sense in Nathanael recognised in Jesus the glorious King to whom the church is betrothed. "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel", through whom the goats hair crown should come upon her and be covered in utter submission and subjection. May the lot of ours be with Nathanael in that day.

Song 4:2 Feature No.3 - The teeth of the Bride

"Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof everyone bear twins and none is barren among them."

Naturally we have before us a description of a perfect set of teeth complete, no blank spaces among them. Top and bottom in perfect unison, white and gleaming in appearance and strong and powerful in action. The symbology used by Christ here is that of the Bride's ability to avail herself of spiritual food, for it is by the teeth that food is masticated. Under grace we acquire the ability to feed and this is very attractive to the Lord. He will furnish food in abundance and His pleasure is found in seeing us able to make use of it. There are many forms of spiritual food for us to enjoy, providing we have the capacity to take it, such as the Passover Lamb; the manna; the flesh, priest's portion; the peace offering etc. - again providing that our spiritual digestion is equal to it. We know that there must be a moral kindred spirit between Christ and ourselves, to be able to partake and receive nourishment from this food, for when traced back to its source, we find it going way back to our Lord and further back still to the Father. The unregenerate cannot feed on Christ and receive strength from Him. There is nothing in Christ that appeals to the natural man, as the natural mind can never apprehend His words and worth. Consequently there is nothing in man (natural) to which spiritual food appeals (1 Peter 1:22 and 2:3-5). The Holy Priesthood portion was the shewbread, heave shoulder and wave breast of the Lord (Lev.10:12-19 etc.)

Milk does not require mastication before digestion takes place, so this stage was not envisaged particularly by Christ, at our stage in Song 4:2, or, should we say, these instruments of mastication have been "washed by the sincere milk of the Word and cleansed thereby".

The Bride has advanced beyond the Milk stage, or the basic principles, but has not departed from them, upholding the set pattern of doctrine believed (Rom. 6:17). She has not denied this basic teaching with every sleight and device of men, or bandied the teachings about, trying to fit them into the wisdom of this world. Her whole approach has been that "God is true and every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4, etc.).

The Bride has now whetted her appetite upon the food of God; the fundamental principles are to be substantiated over and over again. If we need to be re-taught the first principles of the oracles of God, then we have returned to babes in the Spirit. (Heb.5:12-13).

Jesus knew that His Bride had advanced to maturity of the word (Heb.5:14, 6:1-3). During this process a good appetite must have been constantly maintained. How and where was this privilege acquired? All the Bride possessed came from the Lord and in particular a good appetite comes from God (Ecc.5:18-20). We have a wonderful contrast here and a good hint as to why God gives a good appetite to His children. Ecc.5:18, "Behold that which I have seen, it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun, all the days of his life which God giveth him, for it is his portion, and to rejoice in his labour, this is the gift of God. For he shall not much remember the days of his life because God answereth him in the joy of his heart." Ecc.6:2 - another evil he beheld, "A man to whom God had given riches, wealth and honour so that he wanteth nothing for all his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him NOT the power to eat thereof - but - a stranger eateth it: this is vanity and an evil disease." Verse 7, "All the labour of man is for his mouth and yet the appetite is not filled." Again, "the sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much, but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep." Ecc.5:12.

What a true picture of the 'ulcers' of the financial wizard and the opulence of the rich - sleepless, fearful, that someone is going to relieve him of his treasure, whereas the labouring man, serf or slave in those days, had nothing to be relieved of financially, so slept in peace. If this position is true of the natural appetite, how much more so of the spiritual. The spiritual appetite, then, is from God. Why? Ecc.5:20. The word translated "answereth" is to be found in Deut.8:2-3, 16, and is s.w.a. "humbled thee". From these verses we extract the following (brief) information:

A. The forty year wilderness journey was to prove Israel, as a probation to see what was in their hearts, whether they would keep the commands of God or not.

B. It was for their humiliation to humble them, s.w.a. "answereth".

C. This process of humiliation was for their benefit and they were supplied with manna to eat (which they knew not). Heb. for manna = What is it? (Ex.16:15 etc.)

D. The objective - "That He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word (or command) that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live". Lev.1:6.

E. The end of the Lord "That He might humble (s.w.a. Answereth) thee and that He might prove thee - to do thee good at thy latter end". This is why God giveth to His children a good appetite and teeth, for the object of spiritual mastication, that we might feed on the Bread from Heaven with understanding. Masticating it thoroughly, in the sheep manner, chewing the cud, so that in the process, humility will come to us and the realisation that by the commands of God alone we live.

F. Example of eating the commands of God (i.e. Manna) Daniel 9:2. The prophet Daniel understood by books the writing of Jeremiah that 70 years were required to accomplish the desolations of Jerusalem.

G. What was the outcome of masticating these words? Dan.10:12. "Fear not Daniel, for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard and I am come for thy words." The word "chasten" is s.w.a. "answereth" in Ecc.5:20. So the teeth are given us for mastication, eating of the commands of God (1) to prove us (2) to chasten us (3) consequently to humble us.

H. "Therefore, my son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction, for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth". Prov.3:11-12. Among other variants in Paul's exposition of this verse in Heb.12:4-6 and whole context of this chapter, he adds "every son" in place of "the son". As the son in whom

the Father delighteth can only be Jesus - as the Pharisee taunted on the cross, "If He delighteth in Him let Him deliver Him now" "If He will have Him" etc. (Matt. 27:41-43 - strong allusion to this verse and others such as Matt.3:17, 17:5 etc.) - basing their remarks on the claims of Jesus that He was the Son of God, Matt. 27:43, "For he said, I am the son of God". By eating the Word, then, and letting it sink into our hearts, the effect is one of chastening, contrition = our sins hurt. We are humiliated in the process and we walk softly, humbly, before our God.

We who in God's mercy share in the term "every son", relating to the Bride of course, follow in the chastening of the Son, Who let the Word enter into His heart (Psalm 40:8), allowing it to do its chastening work upon Him (see "What's in a Word," No. 1, "Blue in Scripture", by the present writer for fuller exposition). So we follow Him in this experience and find our rest in Him when immortal mastication with the ivory teeth of immortality deepens our understanding and appreciation of these wondrous truths.

The greatest appetite of all, spiritually, of course belonged to Jesus. John 4:31-34, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of", viz. The Hidden Manna. Note the reference "ye know not of". As yet Jesus had not revealed to them the true significance of the Manna : John 6:48-51, "I am the living bread come down from heaven". John 4:34, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me" and to finish His work.

This appetite given from God was used solely to eat and masticate the commands of His Father. Right well did Jesus quote Deut. 8:3 in the Temptation in the Wilderness. The defeat of the devil was accomplished by a threefold quotation (Deut. 8:3, Deut. 6:16, and Deut. 6:13 & 10:20). The Word was the only source of spiritual food available (1) to satisfy Him; (2) to chasten and humble Him, and at the same time (3) to rout the enemy. We follow Him in these things and, as with Him, "the devil will flee from us" (James 4:7). Then our teeth can approximate to this wonderful description in Song 4:2.

We remember John 15:15 and its implication in Song 1:8. The Bride by this time in the marriage celebrations has learned this lesson, being both obedient and knowledgeable, knowledge that is born of commands - hence the praise of her Lord.

We note the perfection of symmetry, faultless in form and colour, and the number Twins (R.V. "all of them in pairs"), lower and upper teeth in exact correspondence (compare 1 Thess. 5:14, etc. Hall on Thessalonians). The New Testament allusion or application is that none of them is out of step or has broken rank in truancy. Because these twins work in unison, then there are two fruits abiding - faith and works. These are the products of the mastication of the Word of Life (James 2).

Again, her teeth are compared to "a flock of sheep, even (or "newly shorn" R.V.) which came up from the washing". "Even shorn" - something has been yielded up at personal cost for the One to whom they belong. Compare Song 8:11-12, the yield of the vineyard: she gives all the yield to Solomon. All the fruit of our labours belongs to the Lord Jesus or to the Father, whichever way we look at it. A fifth being donated to the keeper, herself, who finally did keep her vineyard, the part of grace and her inheritance in this Great Lord whom she loved so deeply.

1. That the ability to feed is born of a dependence on what we are prepared to yield, is answered for us in the quotation from Song 8:11-12.
2. We must be prepared to yield that our thoughts and ways tend only to death.
3. Yield our thoughts to God, and feed deeply on the Food of God.
4. All our seeking must yield up to Him.
5. Life and ways as a reasonable service.

These facts, we notice, were born or came up from the washing; tying it together so beautifully - because the sheep of Christ's flock (which is the Bride) yield or put off their burden of sin in the washing of Baptism, just as sheep put off the burden of an oppressive fleece of which they are shorn at the sheep washing.

We compare the washing of Aaron and his sons prior to Tabernacle duties. Lev. 8:1-4. Similar thoughts emerge here.

Song 4:2, "Come up". The only other time this appears is in 2 Kings 6:6, the axe head that had been borrowed, having sunk in Jordan, "came up" and cleaved to the handle held by Elisha - against all natural laws. Just as here the axe head was

attracted by the miraculous power in Elisha and cleaved fast to the Branch cut down and thrown into the river, so does the Bride react to the greater than Elisha and the Spirit without measure in Him.

Jesus, the Branch of Righteousness was 'cut down' in judgment as symbolized in His baptism in Jordan, yet was exalted to power in heaven and on earth at His resurrection (Matt.28:19), and as the Bride "runs to Him" (Song 1:4) in being drawn into the Palace where the festivities of espousals were taking place, so now in Song 4:2 she yields herself or "flees up to Him", having rid herself of the oppressions of sin (fleece). It would appear then that both 'teeth' and 'hair' are in unison of submission. In so doing she yields herself to Him, having shed her sins in the true washing to bear His love and service. All things are of Him and we note that in Gen.49:12 they are described as being 'white with milk', the milk of the Word as we understand it, and from Him she has learned the habit of

- (1) Rightly dividing the Word of Truth (2 Tim.3:15)
- (2) Constant rumination in spiritual things, of spiritual mastication, and assimilation of Him as the true manna, rightly knowing that He is the true bread that cometh down from heaven, of which, if a man eat, he shall live for ever (John 6:58).

It would appear then that the regularity of the teeth working in conjunction with each other should indicate to the members of that body or ecclesia the necessity of the integration of members working in unison to sustain the spiritual life of the community of the Bride.

It is noticeable that a clean animal is indicated here; the species, as we have found, ruminating, lacking the great eye teeth of the carnivora or beasts of prey. Nor have we prefigured the generation whose teeth are as sharp as swords. The tooth of anger and malice has no place here, for "the teeth of the ungodly shall be broken". These things can have no place in the portrayal of the Bride after the Spirit. May they never be found in us.

The Bride represented by these principles is not a little maiden, but a mature adult in spiritual things - teeth washed white with the washing of the Word - cleansed by the Word, by which the Bridegroom indicated that she was capable of mature digestion of the Word and the Ways of the Spirit. Therefore in the Master's eyes she is as -

Song 4:3 Her mouth (R.V.) or speech which issues therefrom, is comely.  
 Prov.10:21-22 is very much to the point here. "The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools (or empty ones) die for want of wisdom." "The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable", or Titus 2:8: "Sound speech that cannot be condemned".

Again our thoughts are retraced to the knowledge of foundation and basic principles, which we suggested earlier had its origin in the soundness of speech, arising from a stability in righteousness, that the child of wisdom rightly extracts from the Word of God. This consideration among other things, makes the Bride's speech or mouth 'comely', for with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation, says Paul (Rom.10:20, later).

In 1 Cor. 12:3 a vital essential of this confession is made by the lips of the Bride. "No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed, and no man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit". The word 'Lord' = master or husband, being the equivalent of the Heb. Adonai. The lips of the Bride know and accept Christ as the Lord and Master first, submitting to discipline. No one who does not possess this knowledge can acknowledge Christ as Lord, and, in contradiction, no one holding the precious knowledge of His Truth will ever call Christ 'the accursed one' (Ben Tolu in the Jewish Talmud), because, as Paul advances in 2 Tim. 2:19, R.V. "Howbeit the firm foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, 'The Lord knoweth them that are His' "; and because of this known fact the lesson to the Bride today is, Let everyone that nameth Christ Lord depart from iniquity or unrighteousness.

So the comeliness of the lips of the Bride is found way back in the inscrutable

foreknowledge of God, Whose foundations of purpose and eternity are based and "stand firm", knowing those that are His; Jesus having received them from the Father, down to the acknowledgment by these loved ones (who make up the Bride Mystical) of Christ as "The Lord" (R.V.), and undergo a purging of themselves as a practical proof of this "seal of God" in forthright discipline to Christ as the Lord (Adonai), before the final exaltation of the Bride of Christ (Adonai or husband). What has this got to do with lips like threads of scarlet; this seal, this accursed, etc.?

Song 4:3 "Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely".

This phrase, "thread of scarlet", appears only three times in Scripture (Gen. 38:28, Joshua 2:18, The Song 4:3).

"Scarlet" in Hebrew is the word "tolahane" = the worm" of Psalm 22:6 - applied to our Lord, who was "a worm", etc. and "no man", because He never married, and died without leaving issue. This worm is the "kokkus" or cochineal insect, which, having been processed through being subject to heat, crushing and grinding, brought forth the beautiful scarlet dye used for the Tabernacle coverings and so forth. Today it is used in the decorating of cakes, etc.

Again our thoughts are retraced to the basic principle of sacrifice, humiliation and affliction which Christ underwent, that, in being crushed as "a little worm", He might glorify the Tabernacle of His Father (Aholiab) and purchase this Bride for Himself. With these thoughts kept in mind shall we see why this Bride could never call Christ "The Accursed" or "Accursed One". The malicious tongues of the Jews even today use this saying in their liturgy against Jesus, as the Talmud shows; and this they do by simply changing the last character of the basic form of the word "Tola" by exchanging the letter "a" for the "u", making it read "Tolu" and the word becomes "The Accursed One". Our brother Paul is using the vast contrast to emphasise the distinction between Jewish scurrilous lips and the true knowledge in the lips of the Bride.

In Gen. 38:28 we find the scarlet thread used in a very practical way to determine whose are God's, and indicating which of the twins was the firstborn: "And it came to pass when she (Tamar) travailed, that one put out his hand and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first." So we can construe that the scarlet thread upon the hand of Tamar's firstborn graces the lips of the Bride as a kind of firstfruits.

The name of this son of Judah is very instructive: Zerah or Zarah (Gen. 38:30). It is found in Matt. 1:3. "Zarah" means "the rising or beginning of light". The birth of a child, the appearing, sunrise, brilliance, scattering rays, all these definitions confirm the root word of Zarah. So we understand that born to Judah, "The Praise of Yah", would be a child whose appearing would be the beginning of light, and whose appearing would bring or herald the sunrise, and whose brilliant rays would be scattered widespread, dispelling the darkness of night. We are reminded of the "clear shining after rain" of the "day without clouds", when, "unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Malachi 4:2). Matthew 4:16 is to the point here. Referring to the fulfilment of an ancient promise in Israel, Matthew wrote concerning Jesus, and the tremendous impact upon Israel: "They who sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up". We also gratefully realise that Jesus was given for "a light to the Gentiles" (Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, Luke 2:32, Acts 13:47). So then the Bride is of the Great Firstborn, the Praise of Yah, whose praise was of God (Rom. 2:29), and was given birth by Tamar, which name means to be Upright and Erect, i.e. a palm tree, as Judah himself admitted (Gen. 38:26). Much to his surprise, Judah found himself named and to his amazement realised that the securities demanded by Tamar of him were in lieu of marriage (Gen. 38:18-25), the signet or ring, cord or garment or staff. In the Jewish communities of many lands these three securities are binding in marriage: the ring for the finger, the garment and the staff to act as the Bride's canopy. "She hath been more righteous than I", he admitted.

But to press on, Zarah received the mark of the firstborn, the thread of scarlet. Tamar's midwife appreciated this symbol, and it had this significance, "The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. 2:19). But twins were born at this

time, and we know as a general principle in Scripture the firstborn usually lost his pre-eminence through one thing or another. We recall Reuben, who was disinherited: Esau, Cain, and so forth. In like manner Gen.38:28-30 revealed that, after Zarah had put in a partial and temporary appearance in the world, sufficient for identification of the firstborn, as we have seen, the order was swiftly reversed and Pharez his brother was born first, bringing forth these comments (Gen.38:29), "And it came to pass as he drew back his hand (Zarah) that, behold, his brother came out, and she said, How hast thou broken forth?; this breach be upon thee. Therefore was his name called Pharez", meaning The Breach Maker or The Breaker Forth.

By placing the order and names of the sons together or alongside, two other absorbing points or facts are found, and another completed picture of the Bridegroom's work on behalf of the Bride. The facts are these:

1. That Pharez and not Zarah was the real ancestor of Jesus in both genealogies, Matthew and Luke.
2. Matt. 1:3 The legal line through foster-father Joseph. The Solomonic line, heir to David's throne.
3. Luke 3:33 The actual line through Nathan, Solomon's younger brother, but through Bathsheba also. 1 Chron.3:5, giving added sparkle to Ezekiel 21:25 and Zechariah 12:12.
4. The harmonisation of these two genealogies is necessary to reveal to us the true position regarding Jesus and the throne of David, born of Mary, whose line went back to Nathan, son of David and Bathsheba, so actually of blood royal.
5. The heirship of the throne inherited through His position as firstborn of Joseph (first father) of Solomon's line, with NO blood connection with Solomon, which would have barred Him from the throne according to Ezekiel 21.

This twofold treatment of the genealogies of Jesus has made the second point we wished to make, namely, that on several occasions in the OLD-Testament two or more types are required to convey the full application to Jesus - double types. Types are but shadows, they give to us but an imperfect representation, and at times we have to examine several together to complete the idea of the substance itself: such as

- (a) The cleansing of the leper. Two birds, etc. Lev.14:49-53.
- (b) The Day of Atonement. Two goats, etc. Lev. 16:7-10.
- (c) David and Solomon, and so forth.

So then we consider the second born to Tamar who actually took first place in birth, Pharez = Heb. "A Breaker Through". Assaulted, torn asunder, defeated and as a result spread about, increased in abundance - all these ideas implicit in "Pharez". It is the Book of Micah ("Micah" = Him who is like unto Yah", Jesus Himself) that helps us here considerably - Micah 2:12. The sentiments have first to do with the Exodus from Babylon, but verse 13 pinpoints our information: "The breaker ('Pharez') is come up before them. They have broken up ('Pharez') and have passed through the gate and are gone out by it, and their king (Jesus Christ) shall pass before them and the Lord on the head of them."

1. Consider this application as The Breaker Forth first of all to Samson (Heb. Shimson) the famed judge of Israel, whose name means "The splendour of the of the sun", and in Judges 16:1-3 we find him prisoner in Gaza, which means "a fortified stronghold". Samson rose just after midnight whilst it was still dark, as did Jesus the Sun of Righteousness in the most forbidding stronghold of death, the tomb. Samson made a breach by taking the gates and bars of the city, which must have required Herculean strength, and actually carried them up to Bethel. Jesus, the true "splendour of the sun", is the breaker down of the strongest city, death; and, as Samson rendered the Gaza stronghold innocuous by taking the bars and gates and making an open triumph over that captivity, so -
2. did David when he took Goliath's armour into his tent and conveyed the giant's head to Jerusalem (which must be reserved for a future time).
3. So did Jesus "take away", "break through" or render powerless the gates and bar of hell or the grave; and not only did Jesus make this breaking forth for His own sake - firstly, of course - but also on behalf of the Bride, the Ecclesia

(Matt. 16:16-19), and to further encourage us should we ever think that those gates and bars still might provide an obstacle to our release from the captivity of death. Jesus mercifully and gladly reminds us that He holds the keys of the grave (Rev. 1:18), "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore. Amen, and have the keys of hell (or the grave) and of death". Jesus has the lot: keys, bars, gates. What more could we ask? As Micah said, "The breaker up, or the true Pharez, is 'gone up' before them". Correct order of sequence. They (at the time of this idyll), the Israel after the Spirit, the Ecclesia, the Lamb's Bride, have "broken up" and passed through the gates of death, following their Lord Yahweh, Who passed before them.

As we turn in a few moments to the second application of this thread of scarlet, we shall see how apt this simile is to tie up the threads there. It will have been observed how Samson took the symbols of his captivity as far as Hebron. From Gaza to Hebron, from the Fortified City to the City of Fellowships; from sea level to the heights of Hebron. Near to a Herculean feat to carry the heavy gates and bars on his shoulders (never mind removing them first from their position in the masonry), all this great climb up, 40 miles from Gaza at sea level to Hebron at 600 feet above sea level. But Jesus carried the marks of His experience. Samson's performance was only a veritable shadow when we consider the burden of the grave, the wounds in Christ's hands and feet and the scars of the thorny crown, which He carried far higher, to the heights of the heavenly Hebron, even to the Father Himself, the marks of His wounds plainly showing that He had left death and the grave in power and triumph. Because our Lord bore away the sins of the world through obedience, He was granted that inestimable privilege of "bearing away" the gates of hell or the grave after being the antitypical Pharez, "the breaker through". Because Jesus did this, then the Bride too will triumph openly over the grave (2 Cor. 10:4, compare the context of Judges 16 in allusion), because Hebron means by the grace of God that Christ and His Bride are united, joined together, welded or wedded, and bound by a common bond - all ideas in the Hebrew word "Hebron", and John 17 context, of course.

No doubt, then, that the order of the birth of the twins to Tamar was correct in spiritual application. After Zarah, "the bringer of light" had been partially manifested, Pharez, the younger, must first come to take away the stronghold of death to clear the way as a "breaker through" for Zarah, the sun of righteousness with healing in his beams to dispel the darkness of the night. The morning without clouds and the sunshine after rain, after the judgments of God have purged the earth. The time of the Marriage of the Lamb and His Bride.

Such are a few brief implications to be found in the thread of scarlet as defined within the Bride's lips. Married to the firstborn of Judah who was partially manifested, and given a blank refusal from Israel, but through the birth of Pharez will supply a complete refutation of their filthy assertions regarding not only Christ but also His mother; for His "breaking through" encompassed not only the grave but will include a breaking up and through of the stony hearts of Israel at His appearing - and as the true Zarah will take "Firstborn" to its highest consideration as the King higher than the kings of the earth, revealing Himself as the Firstborn of Yahweh, and will most certainly take His Bride unto Himself as the Lord's foundation has shown, "He knoweth them that are His."

But what of the other "thread of scarlet" that completes the Bride's lips? The other half: 2 Tim. 2:19, "Let everyone that nameth Christ (or accepts Christ as Lord) depart from iniquity". This principle we find fully met in Joshua 2:18 in --

1. The story of Rahab and her faith;
2. Representing the Gentile portion of the Bride who, upon hearing the Gospel and accepting the Truth, confess their belief by departing from iniquity (2 Cor. 6:19).

Whatever may be our modern prejudices against her profession (the oldest in the world, so we are told) - and of course we rightly denounce it - Paul's testimony in Hebrews 11:30-31 is inviolate. More 'squeamish stomachs' have tried to render "innkeepers" as an alternative rendering. Whether Paul anticipated this we are not



told, but the Greek word he uses can have no doubt ("porne") - Rahab was a harlot : "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace" (Heb. 11:31).

"Rahab" = Heb. "Rahhabh", meaning to be broad, wide, spacious (compare Job 30:14, Ex. 3:8, etc.), also unrestraint, liberty, freedom, etc., fully representative of her life and character. Originally a prostitute, whether or not a Kedeshah (one devoted to the moon goddess of Jericho) we are not told. Such of course could be the case, and in heathen life a very "holy woman" ! How different in Christ and the chastity of His Bride which has dominated our studies so far (1 Cor. 6:14, 7:15).

We briefly construe from Rahab, then, in her life before the spies came from the wilderness, that her life was in "unrestraint" and "licence", but after enlightenment it "broadened considerably" in Salmon. "Salmon" = Heb. "Salma", meaning "whole", sound, complete, enwrapped as a garment strong and peaceable. Entering into covenant relationship with Yahweh, Rahab became so "enlarged" as to have the distinction of being the ancestor of David and of our Lord Himself (Matt. 1:3, 5:16), finally becoming "enwrapped" in the garment of righteousness, truly demonstrable from Heb. 11:30-31. She is in the line of faith ! She entered the covenant of peace and received Divine strength. Thus in cameo we find life, character, truth in our sister Rahab. We have to follow her example. For "such were some of you" (1 Cor. 6:9-10) - written to the Corinthians, but in principle to us also in these last days.

Briefly we turn to Joshua 2 and trace the thread of scarlet in the context : Joshua 2:1, The two spies entered Jericho and lodged in Rahab's house. Verses 3 and 4, the hiding of the spies. Verse 6, they were hidden under the stalks of flax drying on the roof, a very natural thing to do at this time of the year in Israel. Spiritually, the white linen which is made from flax is in evident allusion here. White linen represents the righteousness of the saints (Rev. 19:7-8), and of the Lamb's Bride in particular ; and, as Rahab's action was drawn forth of faith, as Joshua 2:8-14 reveals, it would appear that this righteousness was evidently based upon faith in God's purpose ; and, as Paul advances in Hebrews 11:6, "God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him". Verse 12, Rahab, after confession of her faith, seeks the reward of active faith. Again Rahab's seeking is found in accord with "the faith" - "Swear unto me by Yahweh", a true token of their "faithfulness". Verse 18, this was granted to her. A covenant was entered into solemnly by both sides, and Rahab publicly exhibited her acceptance of it by binding this thread of scarlet, or scarlet line, in her window for all to see. A wonderful example of Rom. 10:11-18, "Their sound hath gone out unto the ends of the inhabited earth (R.V.) and they have come even unto us, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" ! - in that we, along with our forebear Rahab, have believed "the report" and have acted upon it in faith. Consequently, when Joshua and Israel came to Jericho the covenant was remembered. Verses 18 and 19, a lesson to all in these days of loosening ideals in fellowship is seen in the fact that "all Rahab's house were saved", because they obeyed the conditions of the covenant laid down as defined in these verses. Rahab's drive and sincerity in faith had already borne fruit : her preaching had saved her whole house - a lofty ideal for all to copy.

We have a similar command to Israel at Passover : "None of you shall go out of his house until the morning" (Ex. 12:22). Numbers 35, the manslayer had to keep within the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest peradventure the avenger of blood should find him and slay him . Only within the safety of the influence of the shed blood could there be safety, either in Rahab's house, in Egypt at the Passover, in the city of refuge or in Christ in this dispensation.

The thread of scarlet found in the Bride's lips denotes this ; and in the thread or line is also contained the idea of something sewn together. We see defined that binding together with her Lord that neither death nor life, etc., can separate - by this time glorious in nature and union, bound by the love of a Man, of the Man Christ Jesus, first of all in covenant, fellowship and sympathy, now in immortal youth and love.

Jericho, the moon city, has for ages been the symbol of this world in which we have to dwell, as Jesus recognised (John 17:14-17), and very shortly, we pray,

the Greater Joshua will come to compass it about and destroy it. Amidst this world, but not of it, the Bride, who has lipstreaded with scarlet, has to live and go about her business in it. As Rahab did, we must display the true token of the covenant in our windows, so to speak, for all to see, announcing very clearly that we too have heard the sound of the Gospel. We have believed and acted upon the information; now we must abide in Christ - in that scarlet-defined house or that blood-sprinkled house - the true Vine (John 15), so that when the cities of the nations fall, as they most surely will, then all that is within our house shall stand, because we have built on a sure foundation, on the knowledge that "the Lord knoweth them that are His" and will save them.

The lips of the Bride are as scarlet threads. Could they be otherwise? This thread, defined by Strong (ref. 2339) comes from Heb. "khoob" = to sew; a string, by implication a measuring tape. The evidence surrounding this tape used to measure the Bride has been strangely compelling, every single element of it:

- (a) This glorious creature has had to "frame up" to these requirements, and for this Christ's praise is most lavishly given in The Song.
- (b) She herself has answered her Lord, inasmuch as she herself has framed up to the requirements.

Song 4:3 No wonder the Bridegroom adds, "Thy speech is comely". Her lips are are dyed with the blood of the Lamb, therefore her speech is comely.

Paul showed the reason why in 1 Cor. 2:2, "For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified". How truly, then, are the Bride's lips the measuring tape of God's salvation. Her sins have been loosed by His own blood (Rev. 1:5) and as such her speech is comely formed by this medium. One of the old students of this Song remarked, "And oh! may a deep scarlet line: thread its way through all thy conversation. So shall thy speech be comely to the Wellbeloved!"

(a) How different were the lips of the leper! and such indeed are natural lips to God. Leprosy is a striking figure of sin in our nature. The leper had to put a covering on his upper lip, which was white, thick and loathsome. He had to dwell alone, outside the camp (Lev. 13).

(b) Compare also the difference from the uncircumcised lips which are an abomination to God (Ex. 6:12). Only lips of scarlet thread and the comely speech of Christ's Bride are acceptable to the Father. They complete the family - the Daughter brought to Him by the Son and of the Son.

(c) Great is the change that has come to this Shulamite. Before her relationship to her Lord, Romans 3:13 applied to her, as to the rest of mankind not in relationship with God through this covenant of blood we have been stressing: "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips". Read the whole indictment of human nature and in confirmation of the Divine law and promises, then look around particularly as the "days of Noah" close in upon the day of opportunity; yea, verily, the days of Noah are fast upon us. We exhort those of our readers who have had the patience to follow our thoughts to make haste to enter within the scope of the all-embracing scarlet thread. Returning to our verse, we find the asp-like definition removed only, and the scarlet thread aspect emerging through conversing with the King.

(d) Every real Christian has lips like a thread of scarlet by gladly making confession in everything to this atoning blood.

(e) Finally under this heading, a warning of the scarlet lips which are a throw-back to Egyptian darkness - a rather trenchant exposition of these words very strongly advanced by H.A. Ironside, "This is different from that abominable custom of today that leads so many women, of course no consistent Christian women, but those of the world, and Christians living on the edge of the world, to put that filthy stuff on their lips that makes them look like a cross between poor women of the street and circus performers". While we have no desire to go to these lengths of denunciation, we think the lesson is very important and absolutely to the point. Whenever the Bride's complexion is mentioned in this Song we find no artificial means applied; only the beauty of her Lord is upon her. Her rouge (henna) applied to face, hands and hair, was born of her Lord's sacrifice, as we saw in Song 1:13-14. The true adorning of a sister in Christ is not of outward appearance, but the hidden beauty

of a quiet spirit in submission to her Lord, as Sarah to Abraham (1 Pet. 3:1-6), and as Ironside follows on to say, "Here are the red lips of spiritual health", and of course precious in the eyes of the Great Physician her Lord. It is understandable that a sister should desire to look her best, in many ways better for the brethren also. We like to see this sign of character, but not in the way of the House of Arden Cosmetics Ltd. Perhaps not many will see it this way. One instance comes to mind, when many years ago an old and loved brother said to a sister who had looked into "the paint pot", "Have you been eating beetroot or has your knife slipped?". However this may be, could we ask that sisters refrain from these beauty adornments when taking the cup at the remembrance of Christ? The smear of lipstick is rather incongruous with the emblem of the blood of Christ. These words are not said in anger or in malice, but rather with meekness and in the hope that our sisters will choose the better thing and prefer the beauty of their Lord.

Again we see with Tom (James 2:25) the combination of faith and works self-evident in Rahab's actions. It is pin-pointed yet again in the thread-like lips, and we look forward to the wonder and joy of singing with immortal voices, "Unto Him that washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. 1:5).

Twice in vision the lips of the Bride have been touched:

- (1) In Isaiah 6:7, where the seraphim brought a live coal and touched the prophet's lips.
- (2) In Daniel 10:16-19, where the lips of the prophet "greatly beloved" were touched by the angel's hand.

Purged in the first case and strengthened in the second, to receive a revelation with words that delight the heart. How wonderfully in harmony is the twice tender touch upon the lips of the prophet with the joyous character of the Bride: "Thou art all fair, my love" (Song 4:1).

Again with our twin, we determine in Exodus 35:26 we have women of wisdom spinning with their hands goats' hair for the Tabernacle, symbolically Tamar and Rahab with whom the scarlet thread was associated, threading the lips of their Son's Bride (who, of course, includes their own two selves). Thus with prophetic hands these two have made the lips of the Bride with scarlet thread, sewing them together in faith and works, secure in the love of the Lamb.

Song 4:3 "Thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate within thy locks". The symbology is that of a piece or broken part of a pomegranate, presenting us once again with a bright red colour, but this time mingled with white, the seeds found therein being of a multitudinous variety. The temple really means the upper part of the cheek where it meets the temple itself just protruding above the veil, giving the idea of blushing and modesty. It would appear, because this feature is connected with a broken piece of pomegranate, that this modesty goes far deeper than the surface, but is inwardly discerned by Christ, her Lord (1 Pet. 3:4, which verse we have already alluded to under "the lips"), "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price". The many seeds of the fruit speak of the many parts and the many ways of this glorious creature. In earlier Scriptures they are portrayed around the hem of the high-priestly garment (Ex. 39, etc.).

(1) How different from the Israel of old who had the brow of brass and the adamant forehead and who refused to be ashamed. "Were they ashamed?" complained Jeremiah, "when they committed abomination. Nay, they were not ashamed, neither could they blush" (Jer. 6:15).

(2) The conduct of the Bride is found in Ezra the ready scribe, who said, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God" (Ezra 9:6).

(3) The publican in his penance admitted his shame in that he would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner" (Luke 18:10-14). Of such is the modesty and shamefaced blushing of the Bride depicted as a piece of pomegranate. Her shamefacedness is brought about in the figure of the red and white aspect of the pomegranate.

(4) The Bride remembered that at one time she was as unclean as a leper, and by the blood of Jesus she had been purged of her filthiness (see Law relating to leprosy in Lev. 13 and notice verses 4 and 5, the scarlet and the running water used in the ceremonial cleansing - the colour of the inner part of the pomegranate).

(B) John the Beloved gave us the Christian counterpart in 1 John 5:6, "This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood". 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins", as Ezra and the publican did, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from our sins", in keeping with what we have already learned in truth, as we meditate on what we were and what we are now in Christ, and by what means the transition was accomplished. What can we do but blush in shame, realising our utter unworthiness for such signal honour?

(C) As the temple to us denotes the dome of thought, we have seen the very practical use to which this dome has been put. The Bride loves to meditate upon the treasures found in the Word and her self-effacing thoughts are well pleasing to Him. All this detail comes within the setting of "within thy locks". They are all found within the compass of a voluntary Nazariteship, a freewill service to God, which we mentioned earlier.

May we then strive to follow the example given to us in these spiritual principles, that our lips may be "threads of scarlet" indeed, and that through rehearsing our redemption found in the blood of Jesus to those in Jericho surrounding us. Granting that our temples be truly likened to the pomegranate, full of the good seed of the Kingdom of God, full of juice likened unto wine, full to bursting with the Word of God; praying that when the Good Husbandman cometh, to gather His harvest of corn, wine and fruits (Song 7:13), upon cutting open our fruit, our witness may be self-evident, safe in the treasure house, the mind of the spirit.

Song 4:4 'Thy neck is like the Tower of David'.

The cloven pomegranate is in beautiful harmony, yet in marked contrast with, this Tower of David, under which the Bride's neck is characterised. In the eyes of the Bridegroom, the blushing temples only discernible to Himself and the upright neck are mutually becoming. They cannot be separated one from the other; each in turn adding grace to the other. The neck, in Scriptural symbology is used for the most part to describe the attitude of that nation or individual to whom or of whom it is applied.

Like the woman "made straight" by the Lord Jesus, and once "bowed together and could in no wise lift herself" (Luke 13:11-13), the Bride's glorious Lord has broken the bars of her yoke and made her go 'upright' (Lev. 26:13); so that He likens her neck to a tower. Yet she is so pliable in His hands that she is the contrary of the one described in Isaiah 48:4, "Obstinate thy neck as an iron sinew, and thy brow brass", neither is she among the daughters who are "haughty" and "walk with stretched forth necks" Isaiah 3:16).

The neck in Scripture is portrayed in every conceivable attitude, very searching to our spiritual life. We present a few for your consideration:

1. Gen. 27:40 The symbol of servitude and bondage = the yoke.
2. Deut. 31:27 Cbduracy (stiffnecked).
3. Isaiah 3:16 Wantonness (already reviewed).
4. Matt. 18:6 Retribution.
5. Joshua 10:24 Victory.
6. Song 4:4 Watchfulness (under consideration at the present).
7. Dan. 5:7-16 Honour.
8. Gen. 33:4 Reconciliation. Also Gen. 45:14-15, Luke 15:20.
9. Rom. 16:4 Sacrifice. Priscilla and Aquila laying down their necks for Paul.
10. Isaiah 52:1-2 Liberty. A loosing from the bonds of sin and a clothing with priestly garments: s.w.a. for Aaron's priestly robes (Ex.28.21).

(A) The neck of pride and wantonness, as we have indicated, cannot be found in the Bride, or else it would clash violently with the blushing temples of humility already expressed.

(B) The servitude of the yoke of bondage once held sway (Ephes. 2:1-3), but she obtained her loosing of this bondage of sin through Jesus Himself (Luke 13: 11-13), and now she stands in the liberty wherewith Jesus has set her free, and the warning of the Spirit is, "Be ye not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1).

(C) Isaiah 52:1-2. The neck of the Bride can be lifted gracefully, and yet purposefully erected like the Tower of David, because her Lord has reconciled

and redeemed her with the blood of His own sacrifice. In her repentance victory has come to her. Her Lord has honoured her indeed because she has been vigilant and watchful for the honour of her God. This being her whole attitude and purpose in life, to safeguard and uphold the honour of her God, then upon this graceful yet purposeful neck hang the golden jewels of her faith (Song 1: 10-11); and now as Christ her Lord views this faithful and practical aspect of His Bride, he compares her neck to the tower built for David as an armoury, upon whose walls hang the shields of the mighties of David, indicating their feats of prowess in the faith.

Song 4:4 "The tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers".

The militant nature of the Bride is again depicted, her ceaseless vigil being maintained throughout the night of Gentile darkness, and whose sword is kept on the thigh ready for instant use - "for fear in the night" (Song 3:8).

This armoury of David was adorned with the trophies of his victories. He was a mighty man of war, so the symbology is found applying to him and not to Solomon (man of peace) in the context. The Lord delivered David out of the hand of all his enemies and out of the hand of Saul. He subdued his enemies on all sides and paved the way for the reign of peace under Solomon his son. But the victory was not obtained by David alone. His people fought with him to this end, and none so mighty as the corps elite of the valiant men who formed the spearhead of his might. Their shields were placed for all to see on this Tower of David. So would Christ have us to know and to recognise the concerted effort put forth first by Himself as the Captain of our Salvation, the File Leader who went before (Heb. 2:1-2), and the purposeful efforts to whom this great salvation was offered. As Christ raised upon the neck of His Bride, it represented the dual effort of Himself and His Bride in defence and advancement of the Kingdom of His Father.

Daniel 11:32 prophesied that "the people that know their God shall be strong and do exploits". Note this word for "strong" = Heb. "kazuk", meaning to prove themselves. Strong for endurance or resisting all temptations to apostatise. The day of the King of the North is upon us! - the 'time of the end' when the "vision shall speak and not lie". Where are our sympathies? Are we on the Bride's side? Are our exploits today directed to keep the purity of the faith once delivered? Could the directive and citation be applied to us, that our deeds in defence of the Lord's truth may find a memorial on the walls of the Tower of David? If we are to be found within the Bride, then they must do!

Turn back to the Bride Militant at the time of David from whence this symbology is taken. What do we find there? We have seen the militant nature of the Bride rightly placed alongside David, the man of war who fought the enemies of the Lord, and with the thousand shields of his mighties, who through the power of the Spirit wrought mightily for the Lord and their king. Some of their deeds are outlined in 1 Chron. 11:10-47 and 2 Sam. 23:8-39. A rather interesting thought emerges as we compare the two narratives of the mighties:

(a) 1 Chron. 11:10-47. This catalogue of David's worthies is introduced at the commencement of David's reign.

(b) 2 Sam. 23:8-39. Here it is reserved for the close of the book. It would appear to make the point that David's mighties not only strengthened themselves with David or (R.V.) held strongly with David in his cause; but also strengthened him to make him king. (1 Chron. 11:10 margin, comparing with Song 4:9 in due course, according to the word of the Lord to Samuel in 1 Sam. 16:1-12). This "holding strongly" with the king and the purpose of God was seen most readily first of all in the Greater David Himself, Who at all times held strongly with the Father's will, even though it issued forth in humiliation and suffering (Luke 10:48-53) that even aroused Gentile enmity also, of which the prophetic anticipation is seen in Isaiah 50:1-11.

(a) The Bride, as seen in Rahab, Ruth and Elisha, stedfastly set her face to follow her Lord.

(b) Thomas strongly held with Jesus even to the point of suggesting following Jesus to death as Jesus stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem (John 11:16).

(c) Stephen held strongly with the Lord and His purpose when he faced the Council at Jerusalem (Acts 6:15), and it would appear that Stephen's face, to the confusion of Paul at least, appeared like that of an angel. Privations, floggings, ostracism,

were unable to deter Paul himself when after repentance he held strongly with the Greater David. 2 Cor. 11 is a fair testimony. Time would fail us to tell of that host of mighties in Hebrews 11, "of whom the world was not worthy", and whose shields adorn the Tower of David as seen in the golden ornaments suspended from the uplifted neck of the Bride. She is, as we shall find in Song 6:10, "fair as the moon, clear (or pure) as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners".

The deeds and exploits are never forced or unreal, not forced in necessity or yet in bondage, but her banner is always that of love (Song 2:4), of that we are quite certain, combined with the instrumentality of the sword of the Spirit and under the protection of the helmet of salvation, and the shield is that of faith. The shield meant in Ephes. 6 is the large shield, which entirely covered the whole body. The Bride has always been careful to use and not neglect "the whole armour of God" (Ephes. 6:11-18).

Jesus no doubt is pleased to recall and announce these deeds of love and faith as He sees the white neck replete with jewels! Quite probably these expressions of love and companionship known to Him from the Scriptures of truth in Israel's history and later diverted to Himself would give Him great heart to face the afflictions that came upon Him.

Song 4:9 "Thou hast given me courage" (R.V.), "my sister, my spouse" --

1. "With one look from thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck".
2. This chain of grace which ornamented the Bride's neck revealed the motives behind these exploits of the Spirit (Prov. 1:9) --
3. The fear of the Lord that dominated and directed the efforts.

These tokens of love gave Jesus the courage to face Jerusalem, humiliation and a horrible death, knowing that the Bride would help fill up the afflictions of Christ that remained (Col. 1:24). This work is still proceeding as generation follows generation 'in Christ' - a very gracious Lord that we may be allowed this privilege of His afflictions and sorrows, in keeping, we believe, with the bonds of love, as found when two people are united as one, weep with each other and rejoice as one. For instance, Rom. 8:17-18, where Paul lays stress on this angle: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together". The attitude of the Bride fully bears out that of the mighties of David.

Many trophies adorned the walls of the Tower of David and, as we have seen, the deeds of the mighties of that age are carefully listed in 2 Sam. 23 and more so in 1 Chron. 11 and 12, notably in 1 Chron. 11:22-24 --

(A) Benaiah means "built up and edified of Yah". He was the son of Jehoiada = "Yah knows". It is recorded that he slew two sons of Ariel = lion-like sons of Moab, exceeding fierce warriors, and had the supreme courage to combat a lion in a pit in the time of snow, signifying that once the battle was joined in the confined space of a pit with the exit made slippery with snow, in those conditions there would be no place for flight or retreat. In faith Benaiah joined the battle and overcame. He also slew a giant Egyptian of five cubits high and with a spear like a weaver's beam. Benaiah plucked the spear from his grasp and slew him with his own spear. Benaiah followed on his master's conquest of Goliath (1 Sam. 17) and claimed victory in somewhat similar circumstances.

(B) 1 Chron. 12:8-15 The Mighty Men of God. These men separated themselves unto David. Fit for war, that could handle shield and buckler. They had faces like lions and were swift as roes upon the mountains. These mighties went over Jordan in the first months, when the river treacherously overflowed its banks. Such was the temperament and courage of these warriors of David. The overflowing Jordan, the river of judgment or death, held no fear for them. They were absolutely undaunted. 1 Chron. 12:14 (R.V.) states that one of the least of these men could resist, or was equal to, a hundred men, and the greatest a thousand, the inference being that these men were not only mighty warriors but also men of obedience to the Divine requirements, keeping the sabbaths, walking in the statutes and the commandments of the Lord. This we deduce from Lev. 26:7-8, "Five of you shall chase a hundred and a hundred of you shall put 10 thousand to flight". The value and preciousness is indicated in that one Gadite is equal to a hundred enemies at least, and the greatest is equal to a thousand - "if ye walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them" (Lev. 26: 3).

Could this possibly be the Troop that was prophetically revealed in the giving of the name Gad, meaning "A Troop"?

The future fulfilment is very near, we believe, at the present moment, in the saints and Israel subduing the enemies of the Kingdom. If we 'strongly hold' with Jesus our Bridegroom NOW, then we shall be found within that glorious Bride of whom these things speak.

The Men of Zebulun Expert in war, with 50,000 men that could 'keep rank' with single purpose and not of double heart (1 Chron.11:33).

The Men of Issachar These men had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do. Perhaps the dawning of the first politicians among Israel (1 Chron.11:32). All of these men of war that could keep rank, came with perfect heart to Hebron (the place of fellowship) and along with the rest of Israel these were of ONE HEART to make David King (1 Chron.11:38).

Such were the mighties of David, and 1 Chron.11:22 informs us - "For at that time 'day by day' there came to David to help him until it was like a great host, like the Host of God." In Rev.19:13-16 we have the latter-day counterpart, when these mighties will again do exploits for their Lord and King along with these even of our day and age, Jesus and the saints, the Word of God and the Armies of Heaven; prosecuting the war of God against all human opposition, strongly holding with the Greater David, to place Him on the restored throne of David as King of kings and Lord of Lords. (Luke 1:30-33, Rev.17:14, 19:11-16) and the combined result of Jesus and His Mighties, Rev.20:6, and their praise of the Christ Husband. (Rev.5:5-14, particularly in 9-10). The sight of the Bride's neck replete with jewels causes the Bridegroom to recall and memorialise these warriors of the Lord and these stirring events.

Song 4:4 "The tower of David builded for an armoury"

In Nehemiah's time this was known as the House of the Mighties (Neh.3:16) and one very intriguing use of the weapons of these men stored therein we find in the days of Jehoida, the High Priest, as he conspired to remove Athaliah (meaning 'the distress of Yah', 'Yah suspends', 'Yah constrains', 'Affliction of Yah', 'Yah is exalted'). This wicked woman, the spawn of the devil, evilly reveals the selfish nature entirely given over to greed, just the opposite to the humble yielding creature, the Bride of the Lamb. Its dominant ambition is to rule and it destroys everything that stands in the way of its attaining this ambition (2 Kings 11:1-16). The selfishness of Athaliah was engendered through love for her son, and when he was slain (Ahaziah) it shrunk more tightly in vicious egotism around herself (all this is distressing to Yah). The rest of the story is fascinating. Joash, saved from her wrath, means 'Yah supports', hidden by Jehosheba - 'whose oath Yah is' and to us represents the oath of Yah. Faithful to Yah she protected the young child and had in her the gracious 'support of Yah'. Yah indeed will be exalted and therefore Yah suspended judgment for a little while upon Athaliah. The forces were at work to remove her from the kingdom. How distressing it is, also, for the Bride to learn that Omri, the name of Athaliah's grandfather, means 'Pupil of Yah', 'taught of Yah', measure of Yah'.

What a vast chasm between the pollutions of this wicked woman and one who had a 'measure of Yah', and was the 'pupil of Yah'. Such is human nature and it makes us realise a little of the consternation and distress of 1 Sam.25:3, where we read of the foolish Nabal (actually he was of the house of Caleb). The gap is even wider between Nabal and Caleb. There is nothing to boast of in the flesh, only the Grace of God that blessed the faith of Caleb, 'the Gentile dog', who followed wholly after his Lord, true to his name (Num.14).

The native foolishness of Nabal is but the common round of all that say in their hearts that there is no God (Psa.14:1 etc.) Thank God that our eyes have been opened by His mercy to see His Law!

However, to return to the Tower of the Mighties at the time of the revolt of Jehoida against Athaliah. The weapons of this armoury were given to the captains etc. for this insurrection (2 Kings 11:10, 2 Chron.23:9) making doubly

sure that these were the actual weapons. Both quotations make the point that they were kept in the House of God. Have we indicated here that David's Tower actually formed part of the Temple Precincts? It was supposed to be situated in David's Tower or Zion! However this may be, these weapons housed in the Armoury of David were used to destroy falsehood and apostacy and to uphold the Truth of God.

Joash, only seven years old at this time, followed the ways of the Lord all the days of Jehoida (2 Chron.24 :2), but grievously departed afterwards, when the Spirit of Yahweh raised up Zechariah, the son of Jehoida to rebuke him (2 Chron. 24 ;20-22), thus becoming the generation infamous in Israel as indicated by Jesus, along with His own untoward generation. Luke 11:37, Matt.23 :25.

Second Chronicles is the last book in the Jewish Bible. Therefore, Abel being the first martyr and Zechariah the last, according to the Jewish canon, encompassed the whole of the worthies slain for the Testimony of God. See Luke 11:51 and Matt.23 in this wise. Note the name theme here -

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (1) Zechariah = Yah will remember  | } The Lord look upon it<br>and require it! |
| (2) Jehoida = Yah knows  |  |
| (3) While Joash = Yah gave, he had quickly forgotten his origin and calling. |  |

We briefly note the difference in the names of Nehemiah's men in Neh.3 :16, who built this part of the wall in their days.

- A. Nehemiah = Yah comforts and has compassion. He was son of
- B. Azbuk = Strong desolation and devastation. He was Ruler of
- C. Beth-Zur = House of Rock, the shelter of God.

Here the story is clear. In the days of Azbuk, Nehemiah's father, the scene was of devastation and desolation, even then the weapons of the mighties were stored in Nehemiah's days. The God of compassion and comfort called attention to these memories, and the past deeds of the mighties of David. Nehemiah proceeded with the work, certain that his God was a House of Rock : he rested in the very shelter of God and prevailed in the work. Cp. also Neh.3 :19. Other workers mentioned together with this armoury :

- A. Ezer = Surround, envelop, unite, succour, son of -
- B. Jeshua = Yah's salvation, deliverance, safety and freedom, Ruler of
- C. Mizpah = Broad vision, giving increased vision, observation, etc.

Ezer had seen in his father, Yahweh's deliverance from Babylon. He felt assured of safety and rejoiced in the freedom obtained from Yahweh. He united himself and his people in the work and was secure in the succour and the enveloping love of Yah.

This broad vision had given him increased confidence. He was quite sure that Yahweh's watch over Jerusalem and his work would be constant. He was convinced of this as the work fastened on to the House of David's Mighties and in faith he prevailed in the work of building the wall to secure peace for Jerusalem. May we, as the latter-day Bride, work mightily for the defence of the Truth in our day, that its rampart may be built again, although in troublous times.

Mizpah (note first mention Gen.21 :49) presumably not trust, but distrust, appeared to be the motive! We are afraid that the Mighties have prevailed in chasing time (Tempus fugit!) and space away, and another mention must suffice - 1 Chron.11:15-19.

The three mighties who broke through the host of the Philistines that were encamped in Rephaim (very significant name indeed - The Valley of Giants). David was encamped in the cave of Adullam, meaning 'justice and equity of the people' - a wonderful undesigned coincidence (worthy of Blunt's best) and obviously an indication as to why the people had come out to David - on behalf of justice.

David thirsted for the water of the Well at Bethlehem. The three brought this water and David rightly sensed that they had literally hazarded their lives for him, and poured out the water before the Lord as a libation offering (2 Samuel 23 :13-17). Such was their love for David.

We read of Zebulun and Naphtali that they were a people that hazarded or jeopardised their lives unto the death or the high places at the call of Deborah and



Barak, in vivid contrast to Reuben and Dan and Asher. They busied themselves about their own affairs, heedless of the Divine summons. (Judges 5:18). We think of their counterpart in the disciples of Jesus, who were men of Zebulun and Naphtali, who indeed hazarded or put their lives in jeopardy upon the high places of the earth, having (as we saw earlier on in this exposition) "their feet shod with the gospel of peace". Luke points out that this description applied to Barnabas and Paul (Acts 15:26) and among others at this time Prisca and Aquila (Rom.16:3-4), "who for my sake", says Paul, "laid down their own necks" - hazarded their lives for my sake. What a wonderful couple they must have been!

Finally, Epaphroditus, the signal example of this exploit of the Lord (Phil. 2:25-30). Paul says, "Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, hazarding (R.V.) or putting in jeopardy his life to supply that which was lacking in your service towards me". The greatest example was provided by David himself when he defeated Goliath and was even then but a faint shadow of the fight of the Bridegroom Himself against the 'ghostly Goliath' - death itself - concerning which contest Paul writes - Heb.2:14-15 - "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood He likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (cp. Psa.8, used here of Jesus instead of David, i.e. Psa.8 is the Goliath Psalm in particular).

These are the contemplations of our feeble mind, as we muse upon the neck, erect and strong as the Tower of David, replete with the shields of the mighties. What are the findings of the Immortal eyes of Glory? What can they see? In that day, if we are worthy we shall know. What were our exploits, if any? They are all known to Jesus. Maybe we shall be surprised, as some will be, that the exploits we think that we have performed for our Lord are not mentioned by Him, and be greatly surprised, as others will be, that the Lord has taken heed of what we may conceive to be not worthy of notice. Remember Matt.25:31-46. It is vital for our SALVATION.

The Well Beloved then, compared her neck to the Tower of David which contained the shields of the mighty men of Israel. Her steadfast uprightness in union with the Lord "mighty in battle" makes her invincible, for her shield is God Himself (Gen.15:1 etc.) She is thus prepared for that war with the hosts of darkness which increases in force, and intensity, as she goes forward in her spiritual exploits. Her happiness at this present moment in The Song lies in the fact that they are now over for her. She has prevailed through the strength resident in her Lord. She too can look back in reminiscence with Him and as her part (individual) comes under survey, she is glad and rejoices in The Lord her Shield and High Tower of defence.

Song 4:5 provides us with the seventh and last feature of the Bride as described by the Well Beloved.

"Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies".

We note the treble emphasis here:

(1) Two breasts      (2) Two young fawns or roes      (3) that are twins.

We recall Proverbs 5:19-20 first of all, as in Song 2:9, 7:3. Proverbs 5:18 speaks of the Bride or wife of thy youth = Song 4:5 - the Bride of the eternal youth of the Spirit (Song 5:11): here the Bride portrays Christ at this time in eternal youth.

The fountain of Christ and the Bride will be blessed during the time of the millennial kingdom, when the children, then begotten through their love, will be as the "stars of the heaven and as the sand of the seashore" (Gen.22:17). From this will lead to the conclusion, when the Father will gather all the harvest in Christ, when the Kingdom is given up to Him or back to Him by the Son, when the Father will be all and in all things (1 Cor.15), and it will be clearly evident that the Son took the Spirit's advice in Prov.5:19 - "Let her be as the loving hind or pleasant roe, let her breasts satisfy thee at all times and be thou ravished always with her love".

So Christ followed this advice. Why? Because He found that her love was true! and He found delight and satisfaction in this wonderful Bride which the Father had prepared for Him. Naturally we agree that the breast is the symbol of compassion, consolation and nourishment. All this is revealed spiritually for us in Isa.66:10-13, and is no doubt, as we are all aware, the subject of the beatitudes in Matt.5:4, "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted." "Mourn over Zion" (Isa.66:10) and be comforted in Jerusalem (Isa.66:13).

The Bride herself had followed this process in obedience to her Lord. She had mourned over Zion, as seen in Anna the daughter of Phanuel of Asher, and received her temporary blessing in beholding Jesus as a babe. She was comforted (Luke 2:38, see the context in Isa.66:7-14 along with Luke 2:36-38 and also compare Simeon in this light, Luke 2:25-37). She had also "fed among the lilies", meaning that she appreciated that the consolations that she herself would enjoy, could only be brought to pass through the Shoshannim way; the way of sacrifice only seen in her Lord. This is self-evident as we find in Song 5:13. The whole setting of this verse is found in the sacrificial element of symbol.

The Bitter Myrrh In her belief and obedience, the Shulamite has loved and followed her Lord. He too had "fed among the lilies", Song 2:16. Both found their joy described as "double", as if this were their most marked characteristic. Why?

Paul on one occasion in 1 Thess.5:8, in obvious context with what he has already said in this first letter to a European ecclesia, probably the very first epistle, "Put on the breastplate of faith and love". Faith and love are the mailed breasts of the soldiers' armour (spiritual, of course), to guard the heart, and faith and love are equally the twin roes of the Bride of Jesus. Stuart.

Jesus Himself contrasted the natural with the spiritual in - "Blessed are the breasts which thou hast sucked", when He said, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it".

These twins are called elsewhere in the New Testament, faith working by love and faith and a good conscience, for the keeping of the Law is love. Stuart also rather beautifully said:

- "(1) Faith without love is hypocrisy  
 (2) Love without faith is legality  
 (3) Either without the other is dead  
 (4) and either cherished to the injury of the other is nourished to its own hurt."

No doubt these words are a kind of paraphrase on James 2. However, to make sure, chase them up for yourselves and gain real benefit! They are roes that feed among the lilies, finding no pasture either among the thorns of the world that choke the green pastures of the Word or yet amongst the barren prickly briars of contention and strife! These two are twins - i.e. breasts - 1. born together, 2. feeding together, 3. growing together, 4. beautiful together, and yet "feeding among thorns" it must be, lacerated by them and many times obstructed in her progress (for which in later years she truly thanks God). In affliction she is chastened and humbled, yet grows sturdy and strong in the Lord, bearing, though rather belatedly, her share of the crown of thorns (Song 2:1-2).

They are truly identical twins. "Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies". As we have looked reverently into this beautiful symbology, once again we have detected the two qualities of knowledge and discernment. These two are again identical twins.

1. She knew where to find the food which had delighted her Lord - "among the lilies" (2:16, 6:3).
2. She also possessed the necessary discernment to satisfy her own hunger from the same source.
3. Because she knew that her Lord delighted in it.
4. In following His ways her taste was similar.

We have in this verse the two breasts of even balance. The grace of God governing the heart, speaking practically to ourselves that (1) if we love God (2) then we love our brother also. One cannot exist without the other. 1 John 4:20-21,

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, That he that loveth God love his brother also". Also Deut. 6:5, and its outward expression Luke 10: 25-37, with particular reference to verse 27, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself", the last clause being the proof of the others. These items are the burden of 1 John 4:20-21. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

We must covet earnestly the balance of Christ and seek after it in prayer and word and life, and seek not to be one-sided. To have "the power of a sound mind" and a "single eye" is one thing, but it must issue in a two-breasted balance in the things of God. In this way there will be no partialities in the narrow egotistical way as to the Truth in which we dwell within the Lord; no attaching ourselves to one aspect of the Truth in such a way as to lose interest in the whole circle of the Truth. By all means develop that one talent given to each one from on high, but avoid the habit of getting a one-sided view and becoming more of an "odd fellow" than one ought. We are apt from our peculiar tastes to get one-sided, which we glibly pass off as "specialising". Some of us are more disposed by temperament and ability to certain offices in ecclesial affairs, but these have to be performed within the wider aspect of the Truth. "Do one thing and do it well" is sound advice as to concentration; but "Do not neglect the others" is equally sound (as this twin aspect of the fawns would suggest) and to be interested in the whole round of the Truth wherever our personal talents may lie.

We must strive to attain and maintain an even balance, for unbalanced affections are really a deformity, and they could never be accepted as twin fawns of the breasts. How could they be? for they are not the counterpart of the affections of Christ. Let our goal be the "perfections of Christ" beforementioned, as portrayed in Psalm 45:8, "He loved righteousness" perfectly and "hated iniquity" equally perfectly. If we "feed among the lilies" of Christ's experience, we shall "grow in grace" and in the knowledge of Him. True Divine knowledge is experimental in nature. Experience in Him results in 1 John 3:2, "We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" - we pray so in that Great Day of Espousals and of the Marriage of the Lamb in the mercy of God because we have loved and have tried. Then our personal breasts may be found in her as "twin fawns feeding among the lilies".

Song 4:6 Apparently this seven-fold eulogy of Perfection calls forth this reaction from the Bride. Song 2:17 was used by her and we take it that this verse (4:6) along with the completion of the chapter are the only words spoken by the Bride in the chapter.

"Until the day break and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense".

These words were apparently spoken for three reasons:

- (a) She was really overcome by the praise offered to her, and spoken before all the guests by the Wellbeloved, and, consistent with her personal feelings all through this Song, she has realised her utter unworthiness and that they are entirely unwarranted. She has no illusion about this, however. Anything she ever had came from her Beloved, Unlike natural Israel, who failed to remember and appreciate the fact that all she ever had came from God (see the whole context of Ezekiel 16). Therefore she feels it necessary to withdraw for a short while, to a retreat where to her satisfaction she may purify herself anew and anoint herself with the ointments of The Name, so that she may feel within herself the purity and love that becometh holiness as the Bride of the Lamb.
- (b) No doubt the attitude of Isaiah the prophet long ago, and now resident in her through himself being within this glorious creature, will be found in her as she looks back to that day when he saw this very scene (Isaiah 6:1), "In the year that (the leprous) king Uzziah died, I saw also the LORD .. high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple". The prophet's reaction to this vision was (6:5), "'Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips' (leprous!). What a sharp contrast between this Lord of Hosts, Jesus in immortal purity of holiness, and himself with unclean lips like the smitten Uzziah! Though this human aspect has now left the Bride, the memory remains with her.

(c) What will be the personal reactions of Daniel the man greatly beloved at this time, may we ask?

Dan. 10:16-18 appears to sum it up for us. He said to the Angel before whom (verse 15) he set his face towards the ground, "O my Lord, by thy vision my sorrows are turned upon me and I retained no strength. For how can the servant of this my Lord talk with this my Lord, for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me." Such like thoughts ever possess the breast of the Bride and as we advanced, although the day of humiliation is past and gone like the lodger of Psa. 31:5, joy has come with the Morning she will remember, and in the fuller appreciation of immortal nature the remembrance will be more acute, and although the day of purgings had passed, with all its chastenings and separations, this compulsion to withdraw was found 'in her thoughts'. Cp. an allusion to this kind of experience in Isa. 6:2, viz. The covered face and feet of the Seraphim, the Bride herself in another manifestation, that of judgment, etc. The idea then of this purging from herself, we can understand, from what she had experienced in the days of her flesh!

Esther 2:12. We have Esther herself a very noble part of the Bride, undertaking the purifying necessary for the consort of an earthly king. Can this be compared to the purification required by the King of Kings, only a faint indication of such purifyings? Although we may have heard of the Lord's summary and the gracious words which began it - "Behold, thou art fair, my love, thou art fair", Song 4:1, yet the reaction we have just seen must represent the searchings of each individual person in the Multitudinous Bride at this time.

Not only did the Bride wish for this retreat to just purify herself only! She remembered her anticipation of the dawning of day when the shadows would flee away. All the saints will be like Christ, as we have already seen; they will bear the image of the Heavenly one; with this great anticipation she remembered her great anxiety to gain as many impressions of Him as were possible then. Therefore she chose the place of her purifyings and impressions for this spiritual assignment as Song 4:6, the Mountain of Myrrh and the Hill of Frankincense. What wonderful discernment this is - the place of both in this life for the Bride.

- (1) The Hebrew for myrrh is Mor, and the literal meaning of 'the mountain of myrrh' is Moriah (Gen. 22) the Myrrh of Yah.
- (2) and where can we find the Hill of Frankincense rather than at Jerusalem - the Temple on Moriah which was Solomon's which later took place in the dispensational aspect of the purpose of God!

The whole plan of redemption through Christ was revealed to Abraham on Moriah (and in the Land of Moriah, Gen. 22:2), and curiously enough, as usual with God's mercy, the end had been revealed to Abraham before the myrrh aspect had to be faced by him, that is, the offering of Isaac. Well before it would seem! (Gen. 14:17-18). The meeting with Melchizedek (shown we believe at the king's dale, later containing Gethsemane, with bread and wine (the emblems of completed sacrifice) after Abraham's victory over the king etc. Abraham was assured that the sacrifice of his 'seed' would not be in vain etc. in Gen. 22. Abraham was tested. Would he rise to the occasion and offer Isaac his son, his his only son whom he loved? As the knife began to descend his faith was rewarded. Isaac was only the type and faint shadow of the son, the only begotten Son, whom the Father loved, who was the substance and not the shadow. There was no reprieve for Him. "Yah had seen" and provided Yireh and through Isaac God declared that He had seen it. Indeed, the Father's own attitude towards the Son. It was necessarily His will that the Son should die for the sins of the world. The Son was His providing, and He, God, would carry it through. The gist of this message was understood by Abraham, as John 8 shows plainly - "He saw my day" said Jesus, "and seeing it was glad". A most beautiful allusion to the Yireh sequences in Gen. 22, of which there are five. Can you find them?

Yes indeed, in the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen! During those precious moments on Moriah the whole plan was revealed to Abraham, 'the friend of God' Cp under Song 1:7-8 and Jn. 15:14-15. "Ye are my friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." Ages before on Moriah

Yahweh had made known to His friend Abraham these things, wherefore we are glad! The day in reality is the one at this marriage feast under consideration at the present moment. This was Christ's day when the Bride is received by the Son from the Father. The travail of His soul has been satisfied! and the Bride of His making is before Him at the wedding feast.

Moriah on that day so long ago was a Mountain of Myrrh, as we have seen, to Abraham, and because he saw Christ's day it was also a Hill of Frankincense. The result of completed sacrifice once again, because frankincense could only be ignited by the coals of the burnt altar. Frankincense spiritually defined means prayers, praises of the Bride, which ascend to the Father through the accepted sacrifice and priestly exercises of the Lamb Himself.

During the days when this Song was composed or written, the temple of Solomon was erected on the site of the very place of sacrifice where Isaac was offered to God by faithful Abraham. The temple spoke of perfection, the completing of this work of redemption foretold in Isaac. Wherever one trod, gleamed the gold of perfection, above, below, before and behind, all gold of perfection. That veil which in the tabernacle spoke of His flesh and the sacrificial aspect has now given way to that shining whiteness of which the clothing in the transfiguration was the counterpart. The scarlet of sacrifice has been taken away in fulfilment, and crimson, the emblem of fruitfulness of Carmel, a Hebrew word, has replaced it (1 Kings 6:17-22, 28-35, 2 Chron.1:14, 2:14). All is perfection in this temple, as indicated in the references. This is the day longed for from Eve's true awakening down to our own day - at the end of the ages!

Abraham saw it - AND WAS GLAD!

Could we then say these reminiscences belonged primarily to the Abrahamic element of the Bride at the marriage supper? The Bride has in general always wished to drink deeply of these spiritual riches of the spirit of the love of the Father and of the Son, her Lord and redeemer. Before her will pass in review the whole panorama of redemption. She had followed the Lamb whithersoever He went. Her own unworthiness came before her as now with immortal eyes her understanding was truly opened and Song 4:6 burst forth from her, and if, through the mercy of God, we reach this stage, surely they will be our personal reaction! Can we imagine the joy and gladness of this day, that glow of immortal health which will fill us? That inner glow of which we can faintly discern in the two disciples on the Emmaus walk, as Jesus spoke to them of these things - they became suffused in the glow of the spirit. The Beloved's reassuring voice comes to us, breaking into our reverie and in our days at the present.

Song 4:7 "Thou art all fair my love, there is NO-spot in thee"

What a difference three letters can make - "ALL fair and NO spot in thee" - these words are lacking in Song 4:1. Did Jesus leave them out on purpose until now because He knew what our reactions would be to the first list of spiritual virtues that He found within the Bride, of sevenfold perfection? Knowing Him and His loving considerate ways, we would like to think that He did. The full wonders of His redemption are not fully grasped in this life, no matter how spiritual-minded we may be. Immortality alone will be able to grasp this and so He reserved it until now! A real wedding gift if there ever was one! 1 John 3:2 again, "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him even (R.V.) as He is." This is the reason why she is "all fair" without wrinkle or spot - she has been "made like unto Him".

First the Bride was 'fair' to the Son because she was found blameless in Him, a favourite expression of another noble constituent of the Bride, Paul, regarding the ecclesias (1 Thess.3:13). He prays that the Thessalonians would be found 'blameless' or 'unblameable' in holiness at the coming of Jesus. Summed up beautifully by Paul in 1 Thess.5:23 that the whole personality of the ecclesia first and the individual secondly, might be preserved blameless in holiness at the coming of Christ. R.V. Entire without blame. But not without blemish, as the Bride is acutely aware. Blameless because with the help of Christ she had done her best against the nature of sin she bore. This is why the Mountain of Myrrh and the Hill of Frankincense came into her mind; they belonged to the past.

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 3 But now she is without spot, "the King's daughter all glorious within", perfected in immortality, the final stage in her redemption has been completed, the redemption of her body has now been accomplished. Therefore she can be presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24).

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 The Paul again to Titus (2:13-14) said, "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works". Marking back, no doubt, to Jacob and his experience in Gen.30:30-43, when no longer conceived and reared spotted or speckled under the chastening rod of affliction - his own method of child-training into the image of the Son. It is Paul, of course, who takes hold of this quotation "without spot" in Eph.5:27 and applies it very forcibly to the bonds of marriage in the ecclesia in the beautiful language of Eph.5:22-33 and their responsibility to show to the world this relationship towards Christ, through the medium of marriage between a man and woman in Christ, at the present time. The example to portray is that of Christ Himself who gave Himself for His church or Bride (Eph.5:24-25). It is brought down to the husband and wife and the love they have for each other, to show the existing link between Christ and His Bride -

- (1) The husband as Christ loved the Bride, and
- (2) The woman to love and reverence her husband as the Bride does Christ.

This is our witness today, and both parties are taken back to the point in Eph. 5:23 - Christ is the head of the body of which they are part. Paul develops the theme and finally takes them back to Gen.2:24 and the fact that in marriage, bride and bridegroom are bound together in one body (Eph.5:30-31). The same is "a great mystery", says Paul, but by this quotation from Song 4:7 He pointed to the answer and its opening up as the word 'mystery' really means.

It should be noticed that Christ immediately addresses the Shulamite as spouse in Song 4:9 for the first time. The Hebrew word means 'bride' or 'crowned one' as Fausset advances (Ez.16:12, the marital crown, no doubt) and Sister Bride in Song 4:9 - "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse or Bride".

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 3 She is now His by assimilation and eternal union, just as Rebekah was to Isaac. The Shulamite is a Sister Bride, having come from His Father's kindred through adoption into the family of God (Rom.8:14-16) and Christ invites her to enter fully into the new life which He has prepared for her. As in Psa.45:10-11, "hearken O Daughter and consider and incline thine ear. Forget also thine own people and thy father's house. So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty. For he is thy Lord, worship thou him".

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 1 Forgetting our own people and our father's house is far from easy. Naturally we might say almost an impossibility. Have we ever considered that this problem may become very real to us in the very near future? Where will our loyalties lie when Christ comes? Shall we be able to leave those whom we love dearly within our father's house, among our own people and kindred? Christ's words will dig deep in that day, "Whosoever loveth father or mother, sister or brother, before me, is not worthy of me." We have to face up to the ideal of Jesus and also in many ways trial of Jesus under these conditions, and must return the same answer as He did when He said, "My mother, sisters and brothers are those who do the will of my Father" (Mk.3:31-35).

1, There is another reason for the Sister Bride of Song 4:9, because she had loved the commands of God more than her natural relations. Ruth, of course, is the sterling example. How will it find us in that day? If we are part of this Bride, then the Ruth sequence will be ours. The call will come to us as it came to the glorified Shulamite.

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Song 4:8 "Come with me from ..."

- (A) Lebanon = Heb. - to be white, clean, pure from Lebanon. Purity frankincense  
 (B) Amanah = Constant, permanent, integrity, a covenant seal of verity  
 (C) Hermon = Sacred, high mountain  
 (D) Shemir = Coat of mail, interwoven, glistening

Instead of the Shulamite isolating herself to consider the wonders of this eternal union with her Lord, Jesus says "Come" and not only so, but "Come with ME"! Hebrew - "Thou shalt come with me". The bridal union has been celebrated. The word for wife or spouse has been used by Jesus. Now in keeping for the first time Jesus says, "Come with me"! No longer any separation - the Lamb's Bride shall be with Him for ever more. He does not say where actually, but the indication is to Jerusalem, in antitype to Psa.133. It is most significant to note that no rest is found for the Bride in Lebanon. True rest for her can only be found in the Kingdom of the Father.

The chosen one is called to a contemplation with Christ (not alone as she had wished, Song 4:6), from the heights of Lebanon, to see the glorious land of promise, that with her King she will inherit in the day when Isaiah's prophecy will be fulfilled, Isa.62:3-4 - No more forsaken etc., but Beulah, that is married.

As we have already hinted, Hermon is linked up by the Psalmist with the resurrection. Psa.133 - "As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore"! Here for our purpose the dew antitypically speaking representing the sons of the resurrection, will descend upon Zion to bless natural Israel, "The remnant that remaineth", and with the arrival of the true ark of testimony, pronounce the blessing from Zion, Brother Tom delightfully says.

From the top of Pisgah Moses saw the inheritance and there died, but now Moses enfolded in the multitudinous Bride from on high, yea, higher than Pisgah = from Lebanon - Hermon, beholds the inheritance and lives! The dew is as the dew of youth upon Hermon, even life for evermore. Psa.133:3. Coming from Lebanon with the Messiah her Groom, viewing the tender one from the cedar tree to be planted upon the mountain of the height of Israel (Ez.17:22-23). The significance is clear - the Bride coming from Lebanon is a Cedar - Queen.

All the ravenous beasts of prey are removed from out of the beauty of all the kingdoms. The terrible lions and leopards of Dan.7:1-10 have come and gone. The Son of Man has come with the clouds of heaven and has swept away like chaff the terrible ones of the earth. The Babylonish and Romish adversaries are bruised beneath the feet of the Holy One. Closed for ever is the northern boundary, that sender forth of judgment upon God's people. As Tom says, the Chariot Bride has quieted God's spirit in the north (Zech.6:8). The spouse is with the man Christ Jesus, who makes up the hedge and stands in the gap (Ez.22:30). Violence shall no more be heard in the land. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain". Far different, we may add, at the time of writing - the Syrian northern border is once again aflame with incident and rumour of war. Pray the Lord to come to finish this exposition for us!

No more, says Tom, shall the Assyrian find Israel's gates open (Zech.11:4). The doors of Lebanon are closed for ever. This will be the day when we may view the land with immortal eyes, knowing full well that the wild beasts in our nature have been subdued and that we ourselves have been redeemed from this fearsome slavery and that forever more we shall be like Him, the harmless Lamb of God! She has had full opportunity to explore and enjoy the beauty and fulness of "that goodly mountain of Lebanon", the smell of Lebanon and the cedars of Lebanon and the fragrance of Lebanon! But no Canaan of this world was to be her resting place. There remaineth a rest for the people of God (Heb.4:9). Canaan's fairest scenes were lions' dens and its most beautiful hills but mountains of leopards. Not Canaan, but Christ Himself, is the believers' resting place. "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon".

1. We come to Christ as sinners invited to be saved by His grace (Matt.11:23)

2. Then we come with Him as saints to be glorified (John 17:24).

It is first "Come to me" and then "Come with me". The Bride then had overcome the natural instincts comparable to the ferocity of carnivorous flesh. Again she would claim not of herself, but rather in the words of one of the great ones enfolded within the multitudinous Bride - "I can do all things through Christ who

strengtheneth me", and by their combined assault the dragon, and the beast like to a leopardess, together with their retreat as a city, upon the seven hills; have done down into perdition, drowned like a great millstone in the depths of the sea. Their great fury and wrath will have been swept away and overcome by the judgment of the great white throne. Rev.20 :1-15, when the anger of the Lord is kindled but a little : Psa.2 - these scenes are a shot in retrospect in that future wedding day, and both Bride and Groom look back upon that moment. From now on there will be no more partings. She will be forever with her Lord!

It is to be noticed that we have increased warmth and intensity of affection in the words addressed by the Beloved to His spouse.

Song 4 :9 "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse. Thou hast ravished my heart with ONE chain of thy neck".

This is obviously the language of fervent love! But it is not exaggerated! It does but express the true feelings of the affections of Christ that are called forth as He surveys the WORK OF GOD taking form in His saints as they are depicted here in this wonderful Bride, and conveys to us the deep sense of delight and pleasure in that which is the product of Divine Grace at work.

This particular expression is earmarked for special mention. Why? We see how Jesus is completely overcome by this seemingly little thing. "One of thine eyes" or "glance from one of thine eyes". She had ravished His heart, so said her Lord. The phrase "Thou hast ravished my heart" is one word only in Hebrew and would appear to be specially invented for this purpose. It occurs nowhere else, but here it is repeated lest we might suppose it accidental. Jewish writers render the word in five different ways which we lay before you as follows :

- (1) "Thou hast unhearted me". Could we imagine the Son of God saying this to us? "Unhearted me", left me no heart, taken it all away!
- (2) Thou hast "enchained" my heart. Cast fetters about it!
- (3) "Thou hast overpowered my heart". Thou hast carried my heart captive and overpowered it!
- (4) "Thou hast given me a heart". Supplied me with something to love!
- (5) "Thou hast given Me courage" - "For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross and despised the shame"! (Heb.12 :2).

This joy and gladness was depicted in Song 3 :11 this very day, the day of espousals and, as the translations have supplied, a fivefold day of grace. How completely did this single glance of the eye overwhelm her Lord!

Whatever may have been contained in this communication of the eye (i.e. the mirror of the soul) absolutely won the love of Jesus. Gave Him something worthwhile to love and had given Him courage to endure. Again they were looking back to those days of the Son of Man in the PAST, for courage can only be found where the opposite - FEAR - is in operation. Both have their context in human nature, and at the time of this wedding feast in God's dispensational plan, both Bridegroom and Bride are resplendent in glory or Divine nature.

These things implicit in this glance from one eye of the Bride constitute, we believe, as we have already said, the joy that was set before Him, in which glance Jesus beheld an earnest, a firstfruits of the travail of His soul, which alone would find complete satisfaction, when the children of the millennium of the kingdom, and begotten of His union with this glorious bride, should be gathered in one into the third heaven, when the Father would be all in all things. But why should this particular aspect give Him such great joy?

We believe the reason is in the context before us. We could never conceive that fleshly lust or passion could provide the Lord's thinking. He would most certainly know of its power, for being man of the seed of Abraham and David, He would not be ignorant of its devices. He knew what was in man - that is sufficient for us to know that these symptoms of deep emotion had not passed Him by without notice. However, in Song 4 :9 His beloved is called 'sister' besides 'wife, spouse or crowned one', or my sister Bride of the same Father, for "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of ONE, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren."



Back we go in allusionary type to Eden. Adam was a type of Christ and Eve was a portion of Adam before she became his bride. God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and He took one of his ribs and the Lord God made it a woman (Gen.2:21-25).

1. "My sister" - united to Him by nature, to the earthly and now heavenly. "My spouse" - united to Him again twofold.
2. By love and law (Eph.5:30-32).

Psa.45 and the Song agree once again regarding the King's daughter. "My sister, my bride, my spouse"(Song 4:9) or spouse, my crowned one, and in the wedding ode the King's daughter (Psa.45:13) and in one sense Christ's daughter (Psa.45:16).

"Thy fathers" contained Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and so forth. All are contained within this glorious one, the Bride. So Christ is joined to His Bride by all these ties of tenderness and affection. He is - her husband, her brother, her father, her lover, her shepherd and her king, all in one, or could we say all contained within all.

The inclusion of this word sister removes any idea of a carnal union depicted here, as many people prefer to think. But a truly spiritual union. Typically we have to hark back to Rebekah and Isaac. "Thou shalt go to my land and to my kindred and take a wife for my son Isaac". The thought has just entered our mind - Why did not Isaac fetch his own bride? No doubt the dispensational viewpoint will answer for us. For only 33½ years - 3½ years of ministry - was permitted to the Lord to seek His wife personally in the days of His flesh. The rest were gathered by other means - the Word of God in the prophets and apostles, or through the Holy Spirit etc. See on Gen.24 earlier in this study. So Eliezer, when 'God succours or helps', 'God my help, or God is help', can rightly be viewed, we believe, as the work of the Holy Spirit in the Word making known the Bridegroom and also the drawing power to Him concerning the Bride.

So with the great Isaac, only his sister would do of the family of those who do the will of the Father (Matt.12:50). Nothing could be united to him that was not morally of kindred nature to Him.

1. Why then did the glance from the eye captivate Jesus and give Him such pleasure and courage? She was of moral kindred to Him!
2. This is proved by the last phrase in Song 4:9 - "with one chain of thy neck".

That is simply with obedience. As we have already seen, the neck is part of the body which is symbolical of the will. A proud neck, a stiff neck, are well known scriptural terms for haughty rebellion and stubborn obstinacy, but a neck bending itself to the yoke of God's law is a type of godly submission. The chain about the neck is God's law clasped by the faithful Bride and worn with joy as a golden necklace (Prov.1:9, 3:3, 6:21-22). The old Jewish commentators, in regard to the last quotation, say that Solomon expounds this chain himself in Prov.1:9 to signify that faithful obedience to the Divine will with which the Lord is especially pleased.

Christ's love is not to be gained by the glance of the eye, unless that glance is accompanied by steady resolve to do God's will, and a rejoicing in the performance of that will. But ONE chain of the neck, united with ONE glance of the eye, wins the favour of the Lord. This apparently is the reason why one eye could delight the Lord and give Him so much pleasure. It is the single heart of purpose as reflected in the eye or glance in the single eye which He Himself advised (Matt.6:22). "The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light".

It is a reflection of His own will, that He is able to discern within this most glorious creature of His own making. The eye is set and sees only her Lord and in Him "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily". As John, a most honoured member of this mystic Bride declared, "full of grace and truth as of the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14). Thomas rightly declared to the resurrected Lord, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:26-29). See "What is in a Word No.1, The Significance of Blue" under this heading. May we not then rightly discern in this statement the approbation of Jesus of the statement and faith of Thomas (for whom we thank God) and his attitude of requiring similar evidence of this resurrected Lord to his

fellow disciples (John 20:19-21). But had he been at the meeting when the Lord appeared to them, this insistence would not have been necessary. A very strong warning against non-attendance. "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them".

- (1) Was it urgency of business?
- (2) Surely not the pursuit of pleasure?
- (3) Could it be through sickness?
- (4) Had there been friction among the disciples?

These and other possibilities come to mind as we ponder the situation. Let us take the necessary instruction to mind regarding attendance (it is always very timely, never out of season), and rejoice with Thomas that the glance of the single eye produced such pleasing developments in our Lord. Compare Psa.123:2 - "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of the maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God until that He have mercy upon us" !

Thomas wouldn't have long to wait. James the half brother of the Lord knew from experience this to be true. He lived probably almost thirty years in the same household as His Lord (James 3:13-18). The following verses if understood as a contrast between James himself and Jesus his elder brother in the home at Nazareth, are very revealing. Brief analysis only -

James 3:13 - Jesus exemplified this condition.

3:14-17 The reaction of James to this elder brother who did no wrong. It must have been a terrifying experience under normal conditions to cope with. These words would well express the varying emotions of James which carried him along with the other members of the household to say "Thou art beside thyself" - mad - when Jesus opposed the priesthood and civil leaders of His day.

James 3:17-18 revealed the opinion of James as he looked back from the vantage point of being in Christ. "But the wisdom from above (Jesus) is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" etc.

The glance of the single eye as found in James when the Lord appeared to him after the resurrection must have given Jesus tremendous joy, we are sure. (1 Cor.15:7). When Jesus read the Song during the days of His flesh these words must have given Him great heart and courage in the realisation that His work would not be in vain and that a faithful and loving Bride would be born out of His sufferings. Thomas and James and many more after seeing their example would be there. This joy SET before Him, gave Him courage, enabling Him to endure the cross and despise the shame (Heb.12:2 etc.)

Matt.15:28. Here we find the heart of Jesus ravished and stolen by a woman! "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt". May we as hopeful units of this multitudinous body, so wear upon our necks the Law of the Lord as a golden necklace, bringing our necks into Godly submission to it, and let us be joyful about it all, so that other people may see that being a Christian is a joyful matter. "Rejoice always", said Paul, "and again I say rejoice" (Phil.4:4). A long face is no good either physically or spiritually, for the witness of the Truth.

From time to time we have to go "to and fro" throughout the land in the Master's work, and if we are not careful we shall get lost in the 'Bog of Gashmu'. Neh.6:5 "Gashmu saith it, That thou and the Jews seek to rebel". The spirit of 'condoning' that has caused so much devastation in the Truth of God - really gatherers of ecclesial waste and should be confined in the main to the incinerator etc. They apparently seem to thrive on contention, usually under the pretence that they are valiant for the Lord. Personally I have never seen one of the 'men of Gashmu' with a cheerful face! Have you?

Now whilst we have to defend our faith steadfastly, let us be very wary of this 'Gashmu brigade' and serve our Master with joy both explicit and implicit, remembering that physically 41 muscles in the main are in use when we frown Gashmu fashion, and only 13 in action when smiling, and that according to Prov.17:22, "A merry heart doeth good like medicine". Refrain from being collectors and purveyors of ecclesial garbage, etc. All the Gashmu armies can be rebuked

effectively with the joy of the necklace of obedience on our part to the Word of God and added strength will be at hand for the fray when the issues are really joined.

A further note on 'my sister bride' from Tom, who comments: "Cannot refer to Pharoah's daughter (nor have we any record of So, omron marrying his sister in the flesh). The Priest King (Melchizedek) marries His sister, one of his own people. A virgin etc. (Lev.24:14) particularly in regard to the Aaronic Priesthood, but a type of the Great Aaron etc. as we have already suggested."

Song 4:10 "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse" (wife). Again particularly so because this love is a reciprocation of His love for herself, which we encountered in Song 1:2.

Consequently, "How much better is thy love than wine" and the smell of her ointments than all spices (margin, all manner of). In short, concerning the wine, the substance is much greater than the shadow, the performance of love joyfully performed, as seen in the life and work of sacrifice of Jesus and His Bride who has followed in His footsteps (1 Pet.2:21) than any type or symbol. Both have taken part in the work of atonement. The bread and wine of fellowship outline this point very well. Jesus gave His life and shed His blood because "He loved to the uttermost". The drink offering also identified with the wine revealed the voluntary performance gladly undertaken by Jesus. His Beloved had followed her Lord and now joyfully helped to fill up that affliction that was lacking in His body (Col.1:24). She had been blameless in this, consequently in her case, as Jesus said, the substance was greater than the shadow, "Her love was better than wine", indeed much better. Also, the smell of her ointments more than all manner of spices, because her ointments were chosen with discretion and they were 'costly' both to the giver and also the receiver.

(A) Luke 7:47 is a very obvious passage, but devastating in application to those of us "who would seem to be religious". The setting is that of a religious home. Ultra religious, so to speak, of Pharisee origin, Simon asked Jesus to his home and with the annoyance of such a persuasion and disposition, forgot, or brushed aside, the common courtesy given to honoured guests, thinking that it was not necessary to wash the feet of this Galilean upstart. It was left for a woman who was a sinner, or of doubtful origin, to bring precious ointment to wash his feet with her tears and wipe them with the hair of her head. Simon showed disdain inwardly and came under the criticism of Jesus. Finally Jesus said to this sister of ours, "Wherefore I say unto thee, Simon, her sins which are many are forgiven: for she loved much, but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little". And He said unto her, "Thy sins are forgiven". Read the whole sequence prayerfully. You will find that this sequence is a real gem of practical exposition of the smell of the Bride's ointments.

(B) John 12:1-7. Mary's ointment of costly spikenard was of inestimable value to Jesus, because she had discerned His forthcoming death (unlike Peter who had said, "Far be it from Thee, Lord"). Mary was convinced of this and had revealed her belief in this costly and loving action towards her Lord! To Oxford thinking it must come as a surprise that Jesus estimated Mary's action of far greater value and significance to Himself than relieving quite a few or rather a number of poor people at this time. The price, 300 pence, represented a man's wage for a whole year! And it was one of the values which must be taken into account when we equate our money and service today - in the Lord.

Perhaps we may advance the thought, that Mary's costly ointments, or spikenard, was of greater value than those used for Christ's burial in Luke 24, because she had given her testimony before Gethsemane, and, as Jesus said, 'it would be her memorial throughout eternity'. It was prophesied in Song 1:2, as we know, and the memory of that coming death would remain with the members of the Bride in all ages. As each age succeeded age, this memorial would remain to her (1/k.14:9). Apparently the ONLY ONE who could receive and appreciate the death of the Lord, her ointment and its smell, the fragrance which has filled the whole House of God until this present time, was indeed better than all manner of spices, no matter how costly they may be, for their fragrance is only fleeting and

d transitory, and is soon lost and gone forever. Mary's remembrance of spikenard, very costly, is repeated every first day of the week, and Jesus, as the bag of myrrh, should be hid in every believer's 'bosom' from that day forward.

(C) Perhaps because of the circumstances we are apt to overlook one of the finest examples of this kind of thing, the circumstances being, that no actual ointments are mentioned in this transaction of the Spirit, and the person involved, the thief on the cross, our brother indeed. A brief enquiry reveals that he not only believed (1) that Jesus was the Christ, (2) that Jesus would die (he could hardly miss this with the refusal of Jesus to descend from the cross, at the taunts of the Jews), (3) he believed that Jesus would rise from the dead, (4) return to set up the Kingdom of God, (5) that, because he asked in faith, Jesus would remember him in that day, (6) his faith and belief outshone, presumably, all that shown by the disciples at that time, (7) in principle the smell of his ointments was indeed better than all manner of spices (Luke 23:39-43).

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John 19:38, "And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night" (v.39-40). Now these reluctant disciples will face ceremonial defilement, and therefore would be unable to eat the Jews' Passover at this time, and furthermore they would be excommunicated out of the temple and Sanhedrin because they had openly joined forces with the Crucified! Joseph and Nicodemus were completely ostracised from their people through this identification with the Crucified Lord.

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John 19:42 informs us that "this was the preparation day". How beautifully this fits the case. For Jesus the preparation was over - finished as He had declared, because the flesh was no 'entirely cast out' and His next conscious moment would be that realisation had been attained! It also was the day when all Jews had searched their homes and belongings for any 'sour dough' or 'leaven' - the fermentings of the previous baking used for the next batch of baking. Paul revealed the typical significance of this substance in 1 Cor.5:6-8 in direct contrast with the sincerity and truth of Christ, the malice and wickedness of the old nature with all its working fermentation and unseen activity. No doubt Annas and Caiaphas and the rest of that wicked assembly had only that very day searched their houses, and belongings, for even the tiniest bit of this substance. A bird's feather etc., used to strain out even the tiniest morsel of leaven and piously 'cast it out' forthwith, but ONLY Joseph and Nicodemus of their number had 'cast it out of their hearts'. Although the Sanhedrin had cast out malice and wickedness symbolically, they had not done so actually, for therein at the same time they had perpetrated the most malicious and wicked act ever attempted - the murder of the Son of God.

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John would appear to help us in his context (John 19:38). Here we find a 'catch phrase' - "After this or these things". The sequence begins with this statement. After what things, may we ask?

John 19:28 commences with this catch phrase. We find on consulting this verse that the prophetic testimony to Christ on the cross begins Psa.22, Psa.69 and the final significance of Ex.12:46 - "A bone of Him shall not be broken" and the last cry - "It is finished". Trace them out carefully for yourselves and note the cumulative effect of this prophetic witness, and of course, the effect it must have had on Joseph, already convinced but not sufficient to stand out openly!

Had the realisation that Jesus was the true pascal lamb pricked his conscience and stung him into action? This would appear to be the indication. However this may be, Joseph had 'prepared' his heart to make this supreme stand. Another man, as we have mentioned, had prepared his heart also to make an open stand alongside the 'open shame' of Christ the Crucified - Nicodemus. We read concerning him, "he came by night secretly for fear of the Jews", and Jesus had shocked him to his very roots when He informed Nicodemus that his knowledge of the ways of God (although he was a master in Israel) was not equal to a babe in Christ! In fact he had to be born again. Cp. the following sequence - John 3:1-21 (catch phrase once again - 'after these things'). Note also within the context of Jesus being 'lifted up' as the brazen serpent was in Num.21:9.

John 7:46-53, where we find the retort - "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?" - brought the compelling answer from Nicodemus, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?" The fascination of Jesus is beginning to work on Nicodemus. John 12:42-43 reveals this incipient belief common among the Sanhedrin itself - "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God".

John 19:19-42 brings complete fulfilment - the praises of men no longer hold sway and Nicodemus identifies himself with the crucified one. Had Nicodemus remembered that first searing meeting with Jesus by night and now fully comprehended the significance of the lifting up, and cast away forever the stigma of loving the cover of darkness rather than the clear sincerity of the Truth as it is found in Jesus? Thus we find the preparing of the heart of Nicodemus for this moment when he stood by his Lord, using very precious spices etc. So it was the day of preparation for all concerned - both for Jesus and His Bride.

The Jewish preparation day, the shadow revealing the general insincerity of the rulers in general, with the sincerity and death of Jesus as a preparation for future glory, brought to the surface the belief and belated courage of these two great men - Joseph and Nicodemus.

It is easy to see why their ointments were better than all other spices. Their choice, though natural under the circumstances, was very apt. Myrrh and aloes, the spices of death and preservation, wrapped in the robe of linen - righteousness - but not of cassia 'the spice of resurrection', again in keeping with Scripture which cannot be broken; because as yet (with the exception of the thief) no one knew of the impending resurrection until it had taken place and His appearing brought conviction. So it resolves into a very precious thought for Jesus regarding the ointments of His Bride (that have followed this pattern down the ages of time).

We have pointed these things out in the first chapter of the Song. However, Nicodemus and Joseph, at the least, were not sufficiently cleansed to eat either 'the Jews' Passover' nor yet the first recorded instance of the breaking of bread. In the first instance they defiled themselves through touching the dead body of the Lord and they had not sufficiently prepared their hearts to partake of the Lord's Passover with the disciples. What happened, we wonder? Perhaps 2 Chron.30 can help to explain.

The time is Hezekiah's great Passover etc. The Passover was held in the second month because the priests were not sufficiently sanctified or prepared in number to serve at the first month. So the Passover was kept in the second month, on the fourteenth day of the month. We read, "All who had prepared their hearts to seek the Lord their God". And the good Lord heard them and healed them all! Why, may we ask?

2 Chron.30:18 - "But Hezekiah prayed for them saying, the good Lord pardon every one". In the case of Joseph and Nicodemus the good Lord Jesus had prayed for them also in John 17, and they were pardoned and in that great day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-2 etc.) no doubt these two rulers felt that the two loaves baked with leaven had personal reference to themselves, and the fine flour - the righteousness of that Lord who had (1) called (2) separated (3) drawn to Him and (4) accepted them and (5) pardoned their sins. Such are the processes of preparation in the Lord.

Just a little insight as to why 'the ointments of the Bride were far better than all manner of spices to her Lord'.

Song 4:11 "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".

Grace was poured into the lips of Christ (Psa.45 :2 etc.) and by communication of that grace 'the Bride's lips drop sweetness as the honeycomb, to them that have ears to hear' (Psa.119;11, 103), because the Psalmist (Ezra we believe) pointing forward to Christ, said that 'he hid the Word in his heart' that He might not sin against God, and because this Word had worked like a sapphire cutting stone upon his heart, then Ezra could say "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes". His words dropped sweetness like unto the honey and the honeycomb. When this word is spiritually digested, then we have discernment and appreciation of God's ways - cp an Old Testament lead in these thoughts -

1 Sam.14 :27-28, where we find Saul's foolish oath concerning food. Jonathan unwittingly ate honey, and so we read 'his eyes were enlightened'. Cp also Psa. 13:3-4, Psa.19:8-10. This discerning element is revealed for all to see in Psa.119:7-14. "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold, sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned and in keeping of them is there great reward." If this is the Bride's reaction to the honey, then our lips should drop as the honeycomb, for this is the estimation of the Lord and we shall never make the fatal mistake of using Jehoiakim's penknife on this most precious of all treasures.

The Bride has come to know the ways of the Lord. She has had the kiss of the Lord upon her lips (Song 1:2). "Grace unto grace", John says, "for His grace we have all received" (Jno.1:16). Grace rightly means the free bestowal of kindness on one who had neither claim on His bounty nor adequate compensation to make for it. In the New Testament the word for grace is 'charis': 'favour' rightly expresses the word, and we have to be on our guard against the supposition that grace is an abstract quality. Like 'agape' 'love', it is an active working principle, showing in our dealing with those by whom we are surrounded. In her appreciation of the great things done for her and through absorption of the principles of the Word, then the lips of the Bride "drop as the honeycomb for sweetness", and because the outcome of the pouring of grace into Messiah's mouth or upon His lips was outwardly manifested and seen in His speaking and actions (Luke 4:22) "they wondered at the 'gracious words' that proceeded out of His mouth". Note the context. These things are attributed to the Spirit of the Lord being upon Him (Isa.61:1). So the call comes to the Bride apparent in our days, "Let your speech be with grace seasoned with salt", or with the sweetness of Divine counsel and the stability of the covenant of salt.

The lips we saw a little earlier in the chapter were as a 'thread of scarlet', which taught us so much of the covenant of sacrifice, of the firstborn and of the Gentile entry into it, through Tamar and Rahab. Because, then, the lips of the Bride speak of these things with discerning grace, they are as the droppings of the honeycomb to the Father and the Son, in particular revealing that oneness of spirit providing it all.

Honey and milk are under her tongue, bringing prayer and praise to God, and testimony to those around who will hear, such as 'the daughters of Jerusalem will do in that glorious day' and to be observed in the speech of the daily life of the Bride. "No poison of asps" in her lips, grumbling or complaint. No criticism of the carping variety: constructive criticism, yes, comparative to the honey and milk of the Word.

Our thoughts link with "Tom" once again in a series of passages concerning the honey and milk of the excellent things written and which are fitting in the lips (Prov. 22:17-21).

1. Prov.16:24 "Pleasant words are as the honeycomb"
  2. 1 Pet.2:2 "Sincere milk of the word"
  3. Prov.10:21 "The lips of the righteous feed many"
  4. Mal.2:6-7 "The law of truth was in his mouth"
  5. Isa.50:4 "Sustain with words, him that is weary"
  6. Prov.15:4 "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life"
- Tom also points to a record of such in Romans 16 - "Indeed her lips are fashioned as a priest's from which drop the honey sweet".

Song 4:11 "and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon". As she moved near Him the scent of the incorruptible cedar was scattered round. The garments represent what is outward; our habits, ways, associations and characteristics, as they can be observed publicly.

1. The cedars carry the smell of higher regions, of the clearness of the eternal snows of Lebanon.
2. The pure keen air of the tree whose roots reach down to the very depths of the mountains,
3. upon whose trunks the storms and seasons make little impression,
4. whose leaves are always green,
5. whose wood is never worm-eaten, and
6. whose smell is as the smell of life.

These are but a few of the special ingredients which make up the 'smell of Lebanon'. They tell us that we as members of the Bride must present to the world one of separation, something to indicate that we come from a region elevated in principle far above the level of this world.

- (A) A way of purity and holiness,
- (B) motivated by a faith whose roots reach right down to the bed rock of truth,
- (C) a faith upon which the storms and changes of season of thought and opinion tear and rend without any real effect,
- (D) not moved about by every wind and sleight of man's doctrine, because it is this faith that became built into the rock of God's truth, the Scripture of Truth,
- (E) a faith which is as resistant to the devil as the cedar is to worms, and at the same time giving off that fragrance delighting both the Father and the Son. What a task for each one of us to have this good report before God and man which is so essential.

In the figurative language of the Psalms (Psa.104) "The trees of the Lord are full of sap". "The cedars of Lebanon which He hath planted". Truly as we have witnessed the fragrance of the Spirit in these character garments of the Bride. Closely connected with this symbology in particular speaking of the 'smell' or fragrance we have -

Gen.27:27-29, where the smell of the firstborn in the thoughts of Isaac was compared to the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed. Consequently the blessing of the firstborn comes down to Jacob (caused by the default of Esau etc.) Gen.49:25-26 We find the position of firstborn given to Joseph through the default of Reuben who defiled his father's bed. This section is further expanded in Deut.33:13-17

We note among other details mention of "the precious things of the fruits of the sun and of the growth of the moons" (more later). Turning now to Hosea, who was prophet to Ephraim, firstborn of Joseph - again by Divine choice (Manasseh actually being the eldest son). After falling away in apostasy and idolatry, Israel or Ephraim returns to his God and we find upon careful scrutiny of Hosea 14:4-7, together with the precious fruits put forth by God's grace, we have the firstborn revealed as the "smell of Lebanon" - none other than the cedars of course, and we note, not without considerable excitement, that His Memorial shall be as the wine of Lebanon, meaning the scent and heady perfume of the fragrant cedar.

Song 4:11. As the fragrance of the cedar is continuous because it is an evergreen, so the memorial is also perpetual because the Bride at the time of speaking is immortal. The character garments of the Bride are an eternal

pleasure to Christ, the firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. These blessings have come from God, and doubly so (as in the case of the birthright) because these garments really belong to the firstborn Himself, as we have insisted throughout this exposition. The Bride has nothing of herself, it comes, stems, from her Lord. It is when we take the time to examine these findings that we realise why the firstborn had this double portion - the Bride herself was reckoned also.

The precious fruits of plant, tree, spices and the fountains of water also contained within the heritage of the true Joseph, as we find in the remaining verses of Song 4 - 5 : 1. All of Him and descend to her. It is all of grace and not of ourselves (Eph.2 : 5-8).

Enfolded wonderfully within those early promises to Jacob, Joseph and Ephraim (all younger sons promoted by God to the firstborn) we have the Bride taking her part. She was in all her beauty and loveliness born out of the Greater Firstborn's sufferings and afflictions, even of the mystic Rachel whom the Great Jacob loved so devoutly through all his troubles and afflictions: giving his life that He might see in her the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Now in this moment as He admires this most lovely creature openly as she dances before Him, He continues :

Song 4 : 12-15 "A garden inclosed (or barred) is my sister, my wife".

R.V.M. "A paradise" from Septuagint rendering. So the meaning behind these words is 'a park' as Eden was, absolutely private for the royal usage only. We think of it as the King's garden, Eden originally being God's own private park or garden retreat (Adam being the gardener) (Gen.2 : 15).

The Church of Christ is fitly likened to a garden, a piece of territory separated from the rest, enclosed from the beaten road of this world's traffic. The distinguishing mark of the ecclesia is -

1. Separation, that is separation from evil
2. Separation to Christ for His delight
3. Separation for her blessing
4. In these days when this separation is being challenged let us remember -
5. that the Bride to Christ is as a garden inclosed and barred to all

outsiders. The boards of the forest around would soon lay it waste. It must be made inaccessible to thieves, to cattle and to wild beasts, even the little foxes. All these things come upon us daily. We let them penetrate our separation at our peril !

The chosen of God, the Bride, His daughter and His Son's beloved, is separated by God's eternal decree, speaking of her in multitudinous form -

- (1) She or their names found in her are registered in the Book of Life
- (2) They have been separated by redemption (Rev. 5 : 9).
- (3) They are separated by virtue of the new birth.
- (4) They are separated by their own personal choice.
- (5) They have gone to Christ without the gate bearing His reproach.

In fact the idea of secrecy born out of this separation is revealed by Paul when he affirms that the new life of a Christian is "hid with Christ - in God" ! What wider separation from the world could we have ?

A. The Bride is a 'garden' shut up, barred against intruders, kept sacred for its master's use.

B. A spring shut up, a fountain sealed, as with the royal signet which none but the King may touch.

This garden or paradise is full of the choicest fruits, flowers and spice-bearing plants, the produce of many countries - Arabia, India etc - because this Bride is representative of all countries or all quarters of the world - "For many shall come from the north, east, south and west and sit down in the Kingdom of God (Luke 13 : 29). They are all found in her, and of her.

The fountain is a well of living waters, fresh as the gushing mountain torrents and the streams of Lebanon. Here we find the Bride praised by her Lord, not alone for her beauty and her rare endowments, but also her purity and faithfulness.



The garden inclosed, the fountain sealed, reminds us of our marriage vows - "Wilt thou, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?" This, of course, is the basic view behind these words, and looking back from the marriage supper, both had the pleasure of knowing that she had been faithful to Christ and she had done this successfully by barring herself to all intrusion, her fountain sealed to all others with the exception of her Lord. So the Bridegroom can detail with intense delight these pleasures of priceless faith, love and obedience found within His Shulamite. At peace indeed, in Song 4:13-15, we are considering

(a) Magdalene, our sister, did not really make a mistake when she thought that Jesus was a gardener! Did she? Only in that Jesus is THE GARDENER and not a gardener.

(b) Again, it is one of those exquisite incidental coincidences that this tentative definition regarding Jesus should take place after his resurrection, is it not?

(c) The first Adam was placed in Eden, the Garden of Delight

(d) The second Adam is found in a garden by His Bride, and afterwards, as we are now witnessing

(d) He is praising this beautiful creature of whom Mary Magdalene forms an honoured part - to Him expressed in this spiritual eulogy as a Paradise, or literally The Paradise. All the teaching binds the details together from Gen.2 to Rev.22.

(e) The land of this royal pair will likewise have gone towards perfection, and what more can it mean than in those lovely words - "This land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden."

(f) That is the fifth and concluding sequence to consummate all we have seen - Rev.22:1-2. The Bride is the dispensary of all manner of fruits for the feeding of the nations and the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations, the curse being removed etc (Rev.22:1-5 and verse 14 expressing the fact that the way to the tree of life will again be open to whomsoever will, in that glad day).

What a precious garden we find expressed in the Song! The trees and the plants of the Lord differ much from each other in glory and beauty (Song 4:13-15).

1. The pomegranates with their pleasant fruit and multitudinous seed, sweet to the taste and refreshing to the palate, stimulating to Christ as the collective fruit of His labours now revealed in this Bride of His love.

2. Henna or camphire with its fragrant flowers, depicted in the beauty make up, on hands, hair and complexion, speaking to Him of that most costly covering of all - His atoning work.

3. Spikenard of costly price and exotic perfume. A constant reminder of the fragrance of Mary of Bethany who anointed Him beforehand for His burial, its lingering scent still filling the house as He sits, the King splendid, memory that has thrilled every generation of the formation of the Bride. They share the sweetness of that treasured spikenard now together for always.

4. Myrrh recalling sharply to His mind the bitterness of Gethsemane and the utter dereliction of the cross, and the forgetfulness of rest in the tomb. Moriah, the mountain of myrrh past and gone, of His waking moments on that first day, sorrow and pain all banished forever, and the reassuring power of accomplishment through the glory of the Father (Rom.6:4).

The thought of Joseph and Nicodemus now 'prepared' and fear dispelled, the old leaven well and truly 'cast out' and the happy thought of reconciling James, His half brother, and the family, who would understand at the last; and most of all that sword that had pierced His mother's heart and now spent its cutting power, and the healing solace of Divine balm of certainty and faith in the house of John Zebedee, would temporarily grant her sustenance and love. Can we indeed enter into these thoughts of our Lord as He rose from that sepulchre in the breathing of the day? The happiness of obedience to the Father? The gathering again of His scattered band? All these things, no doubt, would be in the mind of our Lord in these dramatic moments, and now He recalled them again as He viewed this wonderful Bride before Him.

5. Frankincense His constant work of intercession for her before the

Father, and the praise that would occupy them both throughout eternity, could also be seen in this garden Bride (Heb.2:11-14). All combined in one small verse. Perfection through suffering and then eternal praise leading the praising Bride (2 Pet.1:1-8). If it is possible to find solace in the immortal state, we are certain that Jesus along with His Beloved will find great comfort in the fruits of this garden (Isa.53:10-11).

These are the fruits which are delectable to the Lord because they are born out of the work of the Father through Himself and represent the family fruits of the House of God. How true this is!

Song 4:14 reveals spices which are ingredients not only of the anointing oil (myrrh, cinnamon, calamus etc.) (Ex.30:22-25), but also the sweet incense or perfume, frankincense etc. (Ex.30:34-38) - in other words the name and praises of the Holy One of Israel Himself!

We are brought back to the stark reality of our own unworthiness at the present time in our thoughts.

A. What have we personally to offer in the concept of this most wonderful and holy Bride, truly the daughter of Yah?

B. Do our character garments give off the pleasant fragrance so pleasing to our Lord?

C. Have we given our wealth to secure that spikenard of costly price like our sister, Mary of Bethany, on the principle of our wages for a whole year?

D. Used our energies and money to provide myrrh and aloes and a resting place for our Lord? - as Joseph did in honour and reverence of the Lord's body as we prepared our hearts to follow in His footsteps of reproach - and at the expense of public and religious ostracism, the extent of the love of Joseph and Nicodemus that they lavished sufficient spices to embalm 300 bodies, so we are informed.

E. What have we contributed to this garden of delight for our Master's pleasure? Most of us have very little to offer, being, as we say, very ordinary folk, but Abraham Lincoln said, "God must have loved ordinary folk, because He made so many" - to which we heartily agree.

F. We can, as the old hymn puts it, give our life, our days, feet, hands, hearts, minds and our love, money (if any), but at the least OUR ALL, and like David "we will not give to the Lord that which has cost us nothing" or that which is cheap and "lame and useless" (Mal.3:8, 1:8).

G. What can we withhold from our Lord, seeing that He has wrought so much for us? The Bride has considered this question all down the ages of time, and this garden surveyed by Christ is full of what has been offered to Him by this thankful Bride.

H. Could it be possible that we are able to distinguish our tokens of love and appreciation among the fruits and spices thereof? OR really perish the day!

I. We can in our own strength produce nothing of value or pure in God's sight, "but we can do all things through Christ which strengthens us". Which things? - The all things of the Christ life of which there is a profusion in this garden Bride!

J. This is born out in Song 4:15. Christ says, "She is - a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon."

These sources are sufficient to fructify any garden. As we have seen, contained within the garden Bride is the water of life which makes fruitbearing possible (Rev.22:1-2, taking us immediately to John 4:1-14 etc. v.10 - "If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water!" The fountain of waters (Song 4:15). Note the order here:

(1) The Bride has asked of Jesus living water and received it. This is very obvious from the information in Song 4:15 - "She is a fountain of living waters".

(2) She is a bearer of this living water in herself.

(3) Then in turn she herself becomes a fountain of gardens, those barren gardens around her.

- (4) Prov.11:25 states - "He that is watered of God must water the thirsty ground".
- (5) Paul received the water of life from his Lord and passed on the living waters to Apollos.
- (6) And accordingly Apollos watered the garden of the Lord at Corinth (1 Cor. 3:6) and
- (7) God would give the increase.

This is a very happy work and the Divine family circle -

- (a) the Bride must remain a fountain sealed for her Lord  
 (b) and the work of the Lord  
 (c) and at the last be seen, and sealed with the seal of the living God  
 (d) standing on Mount Zion among the 144 thousand having the Lamb's Name and the Father's Name written in her forehead (Rev.7:13-17).

These then are the ramifications of the garden Bride, the place where her Lord most loves to dwell, and feed deeply, of these things, and as they really are His own characteristics, faintly discerned in His Beloved, we are caused to think of the blessing of the firstborn again in Gen.49:22-26, given to Joseph (v.22) - "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well whose branches have run over the wall". John 4:4-42 beautifully fulfils this prophecy in the Greater Joseph who was truly separated from his brethren (Gen.49:26). (Brief skeleton: fill in the flesh of the Word at your leisure!)

1. John 4:5 "Then cometh Jesus to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph." The branch of Joseph coming over the separating wall of Jew and Gentile (Gen.49:22).
2. Jacob's well was there. By a well (Gen.49:22).
3. John 4:35-36 - already white unto harvest. Gen.49:22 - "A fruitful bough".
4. John 4:14 - Jesus the living fountain of water - well of Jacob, Gen.49:22.
5. John 4:15 - "Sir, Give me this water that I thirst not neither come hither to draw." We ask for living water that in turn our fountains may bless other barren ground and parched gardens.
6. John 4:28 - Many were attracted by her testimony, but they believed in truth (Jn.4:42) when they had heard Him themselves - "Now we believe, not because of thy sayings, for we have heard Him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ the Saviour of the world". What a wonderful confession and gratifying result for all of this Bride who follow on this system of immigration - the percolating of the Spirit Word into barren ground, causing blossom and fruitfulness and the expectation of harvest home.
7. cp also the rather lovely pun "The Christ, the Saviour of the world", because one of the meanings of Joseph's Egyptian name, Zaphnath Paaneah, was exactly 'Saviour of the world'. As Joseph was in those days of famine, so Christ our Lord is the true saviour of the world for those who seek the corn of the Word in this world of famine, not of bread, but of seeking the Word of the Lord (Amos 7:11-13).

The source of these living fountains of water, then, stems from the Great Joseph, and the result already envisaged within the Greater Bride. We find it contained within the Deut. blessing given to Joseph (Deut.33:13-16), with rather surprising, yet satisfying and gratifying information for the Bride today; 33:13-16 gives us the direct link with the Song, i.e. blessings contained in the "precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush". "The precious things of the earth" are contained within our context at the moment in the products of the garden Bride which have given our Lord so much satisfaction and pleasure (and let us never keep out of our contextual thought wherever we may be seeking within the Scriptures of Truth, that all depends upon the good will of Him, Yahweh, the Father Himself, being with the project scripturally. However, this is certain, because in the words of Jesus (John 8:28-29) "The Son did nothing of Himself, never acts separately, and always did those things that please the Father."

The joy of both Father and Son is very apparent in the harvest of the fruits and spices taken from this garden Bride, in fact both of them work in unison as

usual to attain to this end. Deut.33:13, "And of Joseph he said, blessed of the Lord be his land for the precious things of heaven, for the dew and for the deep that coucheth beneath."

Really summing up the situation in very tight cameo for us here, we have the first of the fivefold precious things contained in this promise to the firstborn the quintessence of preciousness. The precious things of heaven - the dew - Psa. 133:3 - "As the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Sion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore", in the continuance of the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush (consuming fire, Heb.12:29); along with the streams from Lebanon, and fountains of living waters, these fruits are brought to the harvest. Actually once again we see the threefold perfection, spiritual perfection of the Holy Spirit at work. Dew, streams, fountains, all provided in the good will of the Father for the Son in His purpose.

(1) Precious things of heaven indeed, so that the land, both naturally of Joseph and spiritually of Christ, should be blessed. Two other vital factors are found in Deut.33:14.

(2) For the precious things brought forth by the sun, and for the

(3) Precious things put forth by the moon or the growth of the moons.

It is very obvious again that Christ who is "the Sun of Righteousness" or the light of the world is in context here (Mal.4:2, John 9:5) and the Bride is the moon in Song 6:10, where she is spoken of as being "as fair as the moon" by Jesus Himself. The burden of this verse, then, would appear to draw attention to the precious things put forth by Jesus as the Sun of Righteousness, just as the moon is a satellite of the sun, illuminated by the sun and a faint reflection of the sun. In fact, for her fairness or purity the moon depends upon the Son and as in natural conditions the moon 'waxes and wanes' we are given to understand that the increase is solely due to the influence of the Sun of Righteousness upon the moon Bride of Song 6:10 etc.

This has already been amply demonstrated. She has nothing of her own: it belongs entirely to the Son, just as He can do nothing of Himself, but what the Father doeth, indeed the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush.

Threefold perfection: (1) The Father, the source of all things, (2) Given without measure to the Son (John 3:34), and (3) Descending down to the Bride as a reflection of these things, as from the sun to the moon.

Where does our exposition take us from here, but to Isaiah 58, in itself the lesson from the prophets known as the Haftarah on Lev. 16, The Day of Atonement, proving that at the least the old rabbis appreciated the spirit of atonement. Our Bride has partaken of this final cleansing at the time of this eulogy by Jesus, and the outlook is way back to the Atoning Sacrifice, a principle that has never left our thoughts, nor can it even in that glad day and beyond. The fruits precious indeed all come once again from this basic principle of sacrifice and atonement in Christ. Again outlined only -

Isaiah 58:1-8. -- The hypocritical approach to "the fast" by Israel in general, giving the outward appearance of law-keeping and respectability; but - (verse 3), "Wherefore have we fasted, and Thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and Thou takest no knowledge?" Comes the answer of Yahweh, "Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours." But see the fruits of atonement that we have received in the Bride's heritage. "The fast" in its true perception is to loose the bonds of wickedness, etc. This has come to pass in our experience if we are truly in Christ. What, then, are we to do? - voluntarily, of course - Isa. 58:7, "To deal thy bread to the hungry", receive the poor into our houses, cover the naked, "hide not thyself from thine own flesh". The voice of the Bridegroom has pleaded all down the ages to His Bride to let these fruits grow in her garden. Compare Luke 10:25-37 and the Good Samaritan, providing the universal approach beyond the confines of Israel, even to despised Samaria. The answer to "Who is my neighbour?" is beyond religion, race and creed - "Go thou and do likewise" in the context of 1 Cor. 13. The Bride is not to hide herself from her own flesh but to shew the compassion of her Lord.

James has some very trenchant words to say about "covering the naked"

(James 1:27). The combination of loving the Lord utterly must also include "the royal law", "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself", and James goes on to say in practical exposition that, if both are in agreement, then faith and works combine in perfection (Jas. 2:5, 7-26). The verses in particular that we are thinking of are 15 and 16, "If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace (Shalom), be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" - in other words, it is useless to say "The Lord bless thee, my brother or sister," and if we have the wherewithal to leave it out. We have to play the part of the Lord when we have it in our power to do good. That is why the opportunity is presented to us. But, with these practical words of James in mind, back we go to Isaiah 58:8, "If we do these things, then shall thy light break forth as the morning" (verse 10). The reflection of light from the sun is on the Bride (Song 6:10). As the morning is likened to the Son Himself, so is she "fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners". How wonderful are these thoughts, these sweet things of the Word!

We have mentioned that the Banner of the Song is Love (Song 2:4, John 15:9-17), all found within the larger concept of "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" John 15:13).

These principles outline to us "the precious things" of the sun and the growth or waxing of the moon at the dictates of the sun, and what wonders take place when the earth and the precious things thereof, co-operate willingly! Look at the case of one of the shining elements in the Bride - our brother Paul in the days of his flesh (1 Tim. 1:13) speaks of the grace of God that had led him from being injurious and blasphemous to a faithful brother of the Lord, from being chief of sinners to a very dear servant and foremost in the ranks to defend the faith. How does he describe his experiences? - "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus". The words "exceeding abundant" are rendered as follows in other translations, helping us to grasp just what he meant: (a) "overflowing fulness" (Weymouth); (b) "overflowing measure" (A. Way); (c) "flooded my life" - Spring (Moffatt); (d) "I was borne on the flood(tide) of faith" (R. Knox).

This is what happens when heaven and earth work in conjunction with each other, when the growth of the moon takes place, "exceeding abundant" with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 1:12-17). When this takes place in the Lord, then, as Paul himself advanced, good will be done to all men, but especially to those of the Truth. Isaiah 58:10 automatically follows in sequence, "And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted, then shall thy sun rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday", or the sun at its strength, the hottest part of the day. We remember the shepherds rest their flocks at this time (Song 1:7). Drawn out from all this detail of spiritual wealth we find that the moon is shining brightly and in this particular sense is walking in the footsteps of her Lord. Compare also Isa. 58:11, "Thou shalt be like a watered garden and like a spring or fountain of water whose waters fail not" = Song 4:15, precisely the same thoughts as the Song.

The Scriptures have combined to open the mystery of the quintessence of preciousness - Deut. 33 plus Isaiah 58 plus Song 4. How may they affect us at the present moment? Matt. 25:35:46 puts it plainly but beautifully before us, "I (the Bridegroom) was hungered and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink, naked and ye clothed me, sick and ye visited me, in prison and ye came unto me." Astonished, the Bride asks, When? "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Just as the moon looks to the sun for beauty, so the Bride reflects the character of her Lord.

We have observed, then, very carefully that no great talents are necessary to use these precious things of the sun and moon of the Firstborn. Academic qualities are useful, but not of supreme value. Faith is, love is, and obedience is essential. If the talents of speaking, studying expression in the knowledgable sense, have passed us by, let us not fear, neither be weary of well-doing. Faithful obedience and heartfelt thankfulness are the qualities outlined here out of a sympathetic disposition, holding to the set pattern of the teaching once delivered (Rom. 6:17).

These indeed are the precious things highly prized in the sight of the Father. How practical is this Song in the things of the Spirit. May the word of life fructify our barren gardens so that all manner of fruits may be gathered for the Master's use. Love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance (Gal.5:22) - all these virtues are found within the teaching already expressed.

If we allow these sweet influences to grow within us, we shall look back with Jesus on our experiences at the wedding day; otherwise John 15:6 will apply to us. To abide in Jesus, as we have seen, is to bring forth much fruit, but if a man "abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered and cast into the fire and they are burned". How awful! Pray God that it may never come upon us.

So the fruits of the garden Bride are all ready for the King. They have been brought to their ripeness, their fertility has been invigorated by the precious things of the sun and in herself as the moon's putting forth fruit in her seasons, a true reflection of what she has received from the sun - the mind of Christ working in her to bring forth these works of the Spirit, fit for His use and food. Her garden has been watered by the water of life, springing up within herself as a fountain of gardens - other gardens - a well of living water to those who, like herself, have thirsted for righteousness. Cp Acts 8:26 etc - Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. Her trees are full of the sap of life, the myrrh is already underneath the bark of the tree, but two things are necessary before the freely running myrrh may be produced.

Song 4:16 Here we find the Bride interjecting into the Bridegroom's speech the following plea:

"Awake O north wind and come thou O south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow". Two opposing factors work together to cause this voluntary sacrifice from the Bride. She asked for - (A) the north wind and (B) the south wind. Why? We have definite scriptural teaching in relation to the four winds, namely:

- (1) the east wind of devastation
- (2) the west wind of deliverance
- (3) the north wind of clearing
- (4) the south wind of pleasantness.

Briefly there are many references to disaster brought and wrought by the east wind:

The east wind

- |     |   |                 |
|-----|---|-----------------|
| (a) | the blasted ears of corn in Pharaoh's dream   | Gen.41:6, 23-27 |
| (b) | brought the locusts upon the land of Egypt    | Ex.10:13        |
| (c) | the east wind would carry the wicked away     | Job 27:21       |
| (d) | the ships of Tarshish are broken by this wind | Psa.48:7        |
| (e) | God's withering judgment on fruit trees       | Ezek.17:10      |
| (f) | cause of Tyre's powers being broken           | Ezek.27:26      |
| (g) | which caused the discomfiture of Jonah        | Jonah 4:8       |

The east wind scripturally defined means the wind of devastation. It is obvious that our Bride would never have asked for this devastation to come upon her garden.

The west wind

- |     |  |          |
|-----|--|----------|
| (a) | Took away the locusts from Egypt                         | Ex.10:19 |
| (b) | from the west wind cometh the refreshing shower (Christ) |          |

The Shulamite had already been delivered from this present evil world through the blood of the Lamb. This deliverance was "once for all" in Jesus. The lesson of Moses was always before her: Moses who smote the rock twice for the life giving water and because of this had to die outside the goodly land. The Bride, conscious of this, would never call twice for deliverance. Peter himself received this lesson in John 13:3-12. He had to realise, and we ourselves also, that the deliverance which began at baptism would continue until this time at the wedding feast of the Lamb!

She did ask for the north wind. Three things are said about the north:

- |     |   |            |
|-----|---|------------|
| (a) | cold cometh out of the north              | Job 37:9   |
| (b) | fair weather also cometh out of the north | Job 37:22  |
| (c) | driveth away rain                         | Prov.25:23 |

The north also speaks of "chastening" cp. Ez.1:4

The stormy whirlwind comes from the north also Ez.38

Russian Soviet hordes come from the north to add the final chastisement to Israel in the great day of Jacob's trouble, now so near at hand (Jer.30 etc.) Thinking of north, that mysterious person is still awaited from Syria to attack Israel etc.

The Bride calls for this north wind of clearing to come to her aid. This cold wind of chastening which with its icy blast will clear her branches from that which might prevent her voluntary submission, and although this process is not joyous but grievous (Heb.12), nevertheless it holds the promise of better things. In fact she knows full well that it is a harbinger of good tidings, because fair weather will follow, and in its wake can be discerned the sheer blue of sapphire in the heavens, proving to her that God will surely finish, accomplish His work in her.

This sign is just as potent as the one given to Jeremiah, that of day and night being a continual reminder to Israel that God has not forgotten His promises to David (Jer.33:17-26). The passage from Hebrews 12 goes on to say, "Nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb.12:11).

Having had preparation made and the branches of the garden Bride shed of all that which is undesirable by the north wind of clearing, only one more item is required to bring forth voluntarily those fruits, that freely flowing myrrh of living sacrifice.

#### The south wind that bloweth softly

(a) Elihu said of the south wind in Job 37:17, speaking to Job: "How thy garments are warm when He quieteth the earth by the south wind which breatheth" (R.V. margin).

(b) We find the Greek word for the south wind always used in relation with the Holy Spirit. It is always the south wind which breatheth (R.V. margin).

(c) Used for the new birth of the Jewish nation in Ez.37:1-4. We think also of the Spirit that came like a wind at Pentecost (Acts 2:1) and find these sweet influences in wonderful harmony with the dove having no gall bladder or root of bitterness, the result in her of that mind of the Spirit or the mind of Christ, and then through Him and Him alone the spices will run freely for His partaking. Have we not the goodness and severity of God wonderfully apparent in the south and north winds of the Song?

Now all is ready!

Song 4:16 "Let my beloved come into His garden and eat His pleasant fruits".

We find her Lord none the less reluctant (Song 5:1) "I have gathered my myrrh" and in keeping with what has already been said, Heb. "freely running myrrh". "The moon" in her precious things put forth has faithfully reflected "the sun". His supreme sacrifice has not been in vain. Her living sacrifice has followed the honey and honeycomb. The pleasant words of life (Prov.22:17-21) have been heeded and are now returned to Him for His pleasure, the milk of the Word having given way to the wine and the abundant gladness of the Spirit, and the invitation to the Bride and her companions is "Eat O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved".

The Bride hath made herself ready and the time that we all long for has come. Before Jesus suffered He said (Matt.26:29) "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom."

The Song in 5:1 takes us to that day. Happy our lot if we are found at the King of Kings' Garden Party. Four gardens play a large part in God's redemptive purpose:

(1) Eden, where paradise was lost through sin and disobedience through Eve listening to another voice, other than her creator.

(2) Gethsemane, the Garden of the Olive Press, where obedience and suffering opened the way back to paradise.

(3) The garden of the tomb, where paradise regained became a practical certainty. Keeping these three stages in mind we can rightly assess the words of the risen

Lord - "Woman, why weepest thou?" (John 20:15). WHY indeed? The serpent's head had been wounded to the death (Heb.2:14), the seed of the woman is triumphant! Why weepest thou - indeed?!

(4) The garden of the Song - The garden Bride, where the Son is rewarded, having seen the travail of His soul and is SATISFIED in the FIRST but not FINAL sense. "We are nearer God's heart in a garden than anywhere else on earth" the old song has it. In these scriptural gardens - Yes!

The highly spiritual exercises that have occupied our thoughts in contemplating this Bride that Christ has presented before us, and the insight that we have gained regarding the personal relationship that Christ will have with His spouse at the wedding feast, should gladden our hearts in anticipation, and at the same time prove to us that our separation to Him is a vital necessity. Other aspects of this garden Bride enclosed, only serve to emphasize this truth more strongly.

(5) The final phase is seen in Rev.21:8, where the Virgin Bride is paradise enclosed within the wall of jasper.

(6) Going back to the tabernacle, our Bride is the antitype of the tabernacle enclosed. No stranger could draw nigh (Num.1:51).

(7) Ex.25:8 we have the Bride as the Sanctuary - a redeemed people enclosed.

(8) In Ez.48:10 we have the application of the Holy oblation.

Tom expressed our thoughts when he said, "The prophecy of Balaam is then realised to the full" (Num.23:9). "From the top of the rocks I see Him. Lo, the people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations". The tabernacles of Israel are as gardens by the river side! The garden Bride is the good ground that has borne fruit (Matt.13:23). Now she is a fragrant paradise of trees that symbolizes the Bride, who has come to birth by the Spirit of Holiness.

In this enclosed garden of immortals, the air breathes as from a living tabernacle made after the art of the perfumer. My sister, my spouse, is the aromatised Bride of the camphor with spikenard. In all, eight fragrant plants and trees. No.8 - the number of the new birth and creation!

To give emphasis upon the eye and the sense of smell, the Spirit gathers the sweetest fragrant trees with the chief spices, denoting the freshness and joy of the Bride immortalised. She is also a paradise of pomegranates, the only fruit blessed with its spiritual significance to hang from the blue priestly robe (Ex.28:33). How exclusive is the pomegranate Bride upon the robe of blue enclosed with the priest within the tabernacle - along and only for THE LORD.

To conclude this idyll - the betrothal day (3:6 - 5:1), we find the Bride happy to invite Christ to come and eat His pleasant fruit in His garden of her production. Again we emphasize that Christ waits for the invitation - He does not command her, or enter unbidden, but waits without the door of His own garden. He does not at this time care to come as an unexpected visitor, but when His presence is desired and where there are conditions to give Him pleasure. A. In this sense Christ will never come unexpected to His Bride. She will always be ready and prepared and watching. Compare another setting but of similar application (Luke 12:35-37). "Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like men that wait for their Lord, that when He knocketh they may open to Him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching". (1 Peter 1:13).

B. In all three cases they could not be said to be waiting and watching with loins girt about and lights burning, unless they were prepared with something to offer of the fruits grown in this garden of the Spirit.

We have mentioned before the woman of Shunem - herself undoubtedly part of the glorious throng of the garden Bride (2 Kings 4:8-11). Elisha, although of similar direction, was also a type of the Lord Jesus, and the happenings in the portion of Scripture alluded to represent this very type of incident that takes place between Christ and His Beloved. Elisha = God will save, or in this incident Emmanuel = God with us, or Elisha represented Jesus, and the Shunammite represented the Shulamite of the Song. She not only invited, but indeed laid hold on Elisha, to come and dwell with her household and in her home, having made full preparation for him. Christ, like Elisha, will be pleased to dwell or come into His garden and eat His fruits when the invitation is ardent and sincere and



We said that Christ would never come unexpectedly to His Bride in this respect. Surely we have the essence of this aspect in the Song at 4:16 as we have observed and in Matt. 24:36 - 25:1. This latter discourse is part of Christ's last preaching day (trace it out carefully for yourselves). It is largely taken up with preparation and watching for His return in glory, fitting neatly into the scope of our present theme of Song 4:16 etc.

(1) We have presented the evidence that Matt. 25:34-45 really refers back to Deut. 33, being the substance of the precious things of the sun and those things put forth by the moon.

(2) The thought is conveyed in Matt. 25:34-35 - parallel thought with Song 4:16 in that the Bride has produced these fruits for her Lord.

(3) In the talents we have the teaching regarding the activity and attention of the Bride towards this garden while He remains away.

(4) Matt. 25:31-45 outlines the true identity and separation of the Bride at HIS COMING in the fact that the sheep of both the Song and John 10 are identified by Him as those who have "put forth" those pleasant fruits of the Spirit, such as love, mercy and grace.

Contained within the same last teaching Jesus also appointed the Bride her food, while He remained away, to give her strength, and courage, to bring forth the necessary fruits, which He would delight to receive when the invitation to eat would be given to Him.

Matt. 24:45-47. Wise servants would be provided to give her meat in due season. Paul was a very diligent servant in this way - the strong meat of maturity or full age that by reason of use (use is the operative word) was provided by him for us, so that we might be able to discern both good and evil. This was the intention of Jesus to provide such food, because the Bride shews true discernment all through these parables. Milk is necessary to all infant stages of spiritual growth, but, as Paul indicates, it must not stay there. As new-born babes, yes; but no new-born babe ever kept a garden and brought forth fruits. Growth, strength, learning and intelligence are necessary before this activity can begin. ONLY the meat of Hebrews 5:11-14 can do this. The Lord knew and has rightly provided, but this food has to be wisely administered. This has been the case all down the ages. It is our task today.

The parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) gives the result of this Word wisely administered and received by the Bride, once more providing a picture of the splendid isolation of the True Bride. She is portrayed in the five wise virgins, who, through being unaware of the actual time of the approaching marriage, is shewn as sleeping along with the spurious part of the apparent Bride (the pseudo-Bride, so to speak). Immediately the cry is heard, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him!" they arise, trim their lamps and are ready. They have watched, prepared and made themselves fully ready. Those who are not ready and have not made preparation receive that awful rebuff, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not". The Greek "oida" is used here, the greek perfect, meaning true knowledge through experience. What you have experienced, and seen, and know to be absolutely true. When applied to the foolish virgins the negative is used, "I know you not". Absolutely no recognition, so far as Christ was concerned they had never existed! How truly terrible it will be for those to whom it may apply; but how highly exalted is this Garden Bride to whom the positive must equally apply - we hope to ourselves in that day!

Song 4:16 "Pleasant. We came across this word in Song 1:16, where the beloved herself is spoken of as pleasant.

- (a) Psalm 133 brings out the blessings of undivided fellowship, unity. How very pleasant this would be today. Could it be possible?
- (b) Psalm 16:6 mentions that our "lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places".
- (c) Psalm 147:1 underlines the "pleasantness of praising our God".
- (d) Among others Proverbs 3:17 reminds us that "the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness and peace".

The pleasantness of His fair Bride, the loving intimacy of fellowship, the united  
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praises to God, the deep satisfaction of Divine wisdom, and the knowledge that His lines have fallen out to Him in pleasant places, will no doubt form part of that feast and delight the Lord in His love feast of garden fruits.

### THE SONG OF SONGS, Chapter 5

So Christ answers the invitation of the Bride.

Song 5 : 1 "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse. I have gathered my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honey with my honeycomb, I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved".

Note the nine occurrences of "my" in the text. Nine is the number of the fruits of the Spirit, according to Paul (Gal. 5 : 22-23), rounding off and inclusive of all we have advanced under this section. The fairness, beauty and fruits are all of Christ and Christ of God.

"Myrrh with spice". All from Abel downwards who have fellowshipped the sufferings of Christ in the days of His flesh have identified themselves with Him and have offered their supplications through Him with strong crying and tears when in their extremity - all those who have followed Him spiritually over Kidron, as Hushai, Ittai and others followed David, when he too fled over this dark Kidron, pursued for his life by Absalom and Ahithophel - those who have continued with Him in His trials or temptations, as did the Twelve. The myrrh and spices of their part of the garden would act as a spiritual aperitif for our Lord.

"Honeycomb and honey". Honeycomb in the New Testament setting is the surety that our Lord passed through death and could eat of the honeycomb in the spirit nature, just as He was able to do in the flesh (Luke 24 : 36-43), that wisdom given Him at birth for spiritual discernment (Isaiah 7 : 14-16): "Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good". In Song 5 : 1 we have this honey and milk or curds again, because the Son had obeyed Proverbs 24 : 15, "My son, eat thou honey, because it is good, and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste; so shall the knowledge of wisdom be to thy soul". Because the Lord had done this, then, as surely as Samson before Him had brought forth sweetness out of the eater, the lion (Judges 14 : 8-9), so the Greater Samson, Jesus, had by His resurrection brought forth the sweetness of Divine wisdom in Himself out of that most incorrigible of all eaters, Death itself.

"In all things get wisdom" has ever been the Father's advice. Jesus had experienced the truth of this advice. Not only so, but His Bride had followed His example. She was indeed His sister, the Bride of His own making, through the power of the Father dwelling in Him. No doubt He will feast deeply on these things. He would satisfy His thirst with the wine He would find. A fitting emblem of the Bride's wish to follow Him - again an ember of the fire of His own spirit - "Not my will, but Thine be done". So in Song 5 : 1 Jesus asks His Bride to partake with Him returning the compliment. The antitypical peace offering in consummation. This is the ideal meal for Jerusalem - the City of Peace (Chalom). The Lord's thirst is ended. He will now with her partake of the fruit of the vine in newness with the New Creation.

Who are the "friends"? We need no longer be embarrassed by the question. "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15 : 14). The faithful who make up the Bride have done so, therefore they constitute the beloved found in this verse. This feast can be celebrated only by those who have passed through death, because, according as they were able, they have been obedient unto death. Now Jesus invites them (or her) to share with Him in the fruits of their combined labours. This is the consummation of the Last Supper that commemorated the work alone - this new Supper outlines their combined labours in the Lord. So we echo these gracious words of invitation in the fervent hope that they may be found in us: "Eat, O friends; drink abundantly, O beloved!"

#### IDYLL No. 4. The Troubled Dream. Song 5 : 2 - 6 : 3.

There are two sections to this Idyll, namely :

- (a) The transient cloud of estrangement      Song 5 : 2 - 5 : 8
- (b) The Bride's description of her Lover      ,, 5 : 9 - 6 : 3.

Again we are taken back in time far away from the happiness and joy of the betrothal day. G. Williams has a very apt summary of verses 2 - 5, "Every Christian heart knows, alas, the discipline of this chapter. There can be sufficient spiritual life to hear the Shepherd's voice (or the Bridegroom's voice), but the soul is drowsy and there is not energy enough to open to the heavenly visitant. There is, therefore, the loss of the conscious presence of the Lord, and the loss of the rest (verse 6) and of power (verse 7) and of dignity (verse 7), and there is, also, the loss of a true testimony to Christ, for it discredits a husband if his wife is found searching for him at night time".

The spiritual condition of a church may be pictured by verses 2 - 5 together with Rev. 3:20. The door is duly fastened so as to exclude evil, and inside all is beauty and order. The robe is laid aside, the feet are washed, the hands drop with myrrh; but the Lord stands without, and the very order and beauty of the church occasion His exclusion. Many churches today could not afford to open the door to Him, for His entrance would disturb their stately ritual. (Dare we insert "ecclesias" for "churches" ? - could this be said of us today ?)

However warm and fervent may be the love of the Christian for Christ, yet is it imperfect. Christ's love is a perfect love; hence, in this Song there is no failure in affection on the part of the Bridegroom, but there is on the part of the Bride. We are taken back from the happiness and joy of the betrothal day to a seemingly troubled dream, or was it a dream and not reality? No doubt we all have experienced the icy chill and grip of a nightmare and awakened with a start, wet through with perspiration and with a sense of genuine relief when all has proved to be just a dream. Was this alarming experience only a dream to the different constituents of the Bride, or was it realistically true? Perhaps we have this answer within ourselves and in our own experience, that is, if we are in truth enclosed within the Bride. If we are in truth then it falls that this experience has been ours, either by dream, nightmare, or within the context of our actual life.

Song 5:2 - 5:8. What lay behind this troubled experience? It must have a very searching basis somewhere. So far we have seen several spiritual transparencies thrown upon the scene of this Divine Love Song, the flashing light of the beam of the Spirit illuminating them for us with the clarity and beauty of Divine Truth, in light of which the most powerful projector known to man is outer darkness. In Song 1:6 our Lord Jesus is revealed to us as:

- (1) The King taking possession of the throne of the heart, from our angle in the Song, verse 7
- (2) As the Good Shepherd feeding and finding shelter for His flocks; and, among other aspects, briefly, He has been unveiled as
- (3) "The Risen One" approaching her from resurrectional glory, inviting her to come out of herself into her "hiding place" in the cleft of the rock to realise that she might know that she is joined to Him that was raised from the dead.
- (4) Again we have the happy portrayal of Christ as the Rejoicing Lover, rejoicing over His "hidden" one in the newness of life. From His life we are privileged to hear the characteristics of this life and the way of its manifestation to others.

In this Idyll we come to a dark portrait pregnant with pathos and frigid in anxiety, fraught with pain and brimming over with sorrow; because Jesus reveals Himself as the "man of sorrows fully acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53, etc.), and the beloved is invited to prove her heavenly calling by choosing of her own free will to follow the path, His path, of rejection and dereliction, to be conformed to the likeness of the Lamb of God. She had already learned by experience that the Only Begotten Son was appointed Heir of All Things, and she had undeniable proof that He was the effulgence of the Father's glory and the very image of His substance (Heb. 1:1-3). Yet being found in the fashion of a man, and that of a bondservant (Phil. 2:7), he had learned obedience by the things that He had suffered, and reached perfection through suffering (Heb. 2:17-18). She knew this, and realised full well that the disciple is not above his master and that she must seek perfection by walking in the steps of her Master (1 Pet. 2:19-25, etc.). We are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" IF SO BE that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified with Him (Rom. 8:17). This is one of the most important lessons in this section of the Song. We do well to heed it.

We also note, in keeping with the rest of Scripture protocol that the vision of glory is first given, so that the joy set before us may so fortify and stimulate us that,

through the strength of Christ, we along with Him may be able with courage and hope to face the rejection, dereliction and humiliation which must inevitably overtake us in our discipleship (compare Rev. 6:9-11).

This appeal had not come at the beginning of the Bride's spiritual relationship for the reasons just advanced. A babe in Christ has neither the knowledge, experience nor maturity to undertake this assignment of shame. The experience usually comes when maturity is attained or very near. Think of Abraham (Gen. 22); many experiences had befallen him before (a) the son was born and (b) he was asked to sacrifice him on Moriah (trace this line of thought through the Scriptures and you will find this statement true). Had not Abraham already met Melchizedek in Genesis 14 on Moriah and received bread and wine from his hands, the symbols of the supreme sacrifice of Christ, the Seed that should come? (1 Cor. 11:23-29). Incidentally, Gethsemane can be approximated within the King's Dale of this chapter. Suffering and sorrow first, but joy and triumph too. No doubt Melchizedek (and it would appear so far as the purpose of God is concerned) was realised in Shem = The Name of Renown, his great ancestor who came through the Flood, the one in whose house Yahweh would dwell, and who was the only person alive to whom Abraham, the Friend of God, would be required to pay tithes. Again the symbol of the remnant of the faithful down the ages of time. Of that remnant came Abraham, and his Seed offered to his Lord -- now the "name above all names" as that of Shem was in the age that succeeded the Flood until the death of this great and revered High Priest of the Name during the lifetime of Esau and Jacob.

As the father of the race of the Hebrews, Shem according to the law of God officiated as high priest over his house. Abraham, one of his sons, was included under this clause and was subject to this Priest of the Most High God. Jewish tradition has it, so far as the writer's investigations have proved, without a discordant voice, that the territory of Shem was Moriah, and the teaching of Moriah certainly supports this idea (however it must remain for other consideration). We advance it solely to illustrate the fact that Abraham was well educated in the ways of God and was given sufficient proof to realise that Isaac would be restored to him in resurrection if his death was required. Abraham's seeing the day of Christ (John 8:56), although spoken of by Jesus in terms of the offering of Isaac and His own death and resurrection, was, we believe, a concept that grew by experience in the mind and heart of Abraham during God's dealings with him until the climax came. What was revealed to him by grace fitted most accurately and wonderfully into the concept of that Day vouchsafed to him by the Father. This was no snap decision by the Almighty but the object of careful preparation for nigh on 100 years in the life of His friend Abraham. Again the advice for all is, trace these things out in the Scriptures for yourselves and connection will prove the better part, and remember that if you are found within the scope of this great Bride, as Abraham was, and Shem himself (when we think of these names what small fry we feel in ourselves!), nevertheless all are included in her who faithfully follow the Lord), then you too will have this teaching within the scope of your educational experience. This is the true higher education. Would to God that it were so upheld in this present evil world in which we dwell!

Our point, returning to our context in Song 5, is the fact that this call to Moriah, to Christ, Abraham and Isaac, does not come to us unless the Father knows that we are capable of dealing with it as He would wish; therefore it is the greater dishonour both to Himself and the Son if we refuse to come with alacrity and courage to stand with our Lord as the Man of Sorrows.

This gracious invitation by Christ is the supreme test for the beloved to really cement her position as the true mate of the Man of Sorrows (Song 5:2-6, 6:3). This is the final separation of the Song. Afterwards they are always together. It is indeed the acid test for us all --

- (1) In one sense, the usual way in which we approach this matter, we know that at baptism we have to take up our cross and follow Jesus continually, making our way to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach; and this, we may add, is the only way - that of living sacrifice, "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:1-7).
- (2) But it is viewed in the Song as the concluding act. We have just stressed the fact that Abraham had nigh on 100 years' experience in the ways of God before the

final call came to him for the supreme test of faith (Gen. 22:1-2).

(3) Jesus lived the life of rejection and reproach for 33½ years as a prelude to His final crisis and sharp agony. All the worthies of God followed this way, and we must too, if we would gain perfection at the last and see the end of the Lord! Compare Hebrews 11 and the list of those of whom the world was not worthy.

The perspective of the Song in 5:2-6 is indeed correct and conveys to us the whole process as being recalled in the minds of countless saints in that Day of Espousals, which will no doubt cause them, as the Seraphim, to cover their heads and their feet (Isaiah 6:2). No doubt Joseph and Nicodemus will remember, and so shall we, in that Day. We slept and heeded not when our Lord called for our love, sympathy and fellowship.

We can but think in the forefront of our minds of Gethsemane, with Jesus and the Three after supper (Mark 14:27-31, 33), and with the protests of Peter in our ears, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I", and Jesus saith unto him, "Verily I say unto thee, that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice". But Peter spoke the more more vehemently, "If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise". Likewise said they all. Spoken obviously in the context of their inconsistent flesh and with sincere love on their behalf; but who can say how we shall react to this kind of circumstance of life in the future, be it immediate or remote, apart from Inspiration? We are found with the Twelve in spirit with all the inconsistency of human nature. Our protests are loud in what we will do in the Master's behalf! Sincere love, no doubt, but when the crisis arises are we ready to prove our point? or do we, like Peter and the disciples, forget and sleep, or flee regardless? Of course we do! We are found most truly in this context of Song 5, if we are honest with ourselves. But Jesus prayed on another occasion when Peter again proffered his love, "I have prayed for thee ... and when thou art converted (i.e. turned again), strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32). The Master knows what is in man and his limits. He understands. Burnt into the memory of Peter and John and James Zebedee were the happenings that followed swiftly and inevitably after their words.

In Gethsemane (the Garden of the Olive Press), Mark 14:33 records that Jesus began to be sore amazed and to be very heavy, and He said unto them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here and watch. After praying to the Father, Jesus cometh and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, "Simon, why sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour? The lesson we all require to learn - "thou shalt say, If the Lord will, thou shalt do this or that" (Jas. 4:15). Peter will remember in that Day and so shall we. But let us be fair to the Three. Let Luke give the doctor's verdict on this occasion when sleep overtook and vanquished watching. It is he who records the agony and blood-sweat of our Lord, and also says (Luke 22:45), "And when He rose up from prayer and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow - in modern parlance, "worn out through anxiety", and when we are overtaken by sleep in these conditions it resembles more a coma than ordinary sleep. It would appear, then, that the Garden at night would generalise our application to Song 5 as the moment when Christ knocked on the hearts of His disciples, but not in the strictest sense in the particular, as we believe the mental condition, and no doubt the physical, was entirely different:

(a) Peter and James and John were unable to partake in this exercise of fellowship with their afflicted Lord, first of all because the issue was between the Father and the Son, and had its application prophetically foretold in the Day of Atonement ritual in the fact that no man must be found within the confines of the Tabernacle when Aaron performed the duties of the atonement, the processes involving the act of covering the sins of the nation, of which their reconciliation to God was the outcome! Gethsemane was the testing ground of Christ's fitness to perform this duty first for Himself and then for the seed of Abraham. See Leviticus 16 and the Chart on Atonement by the present writer.

(b) From this angle there could be no sharing. There could be sympathy, but the Three were in no physical condition to attempt this and their knowledge was incomplete and hazy regarding this application of the death of the Son. Jesus knew that He must wait for this fellowship of sympathy, and was sure that, when they were converted, or turned again, they would understand and fully enter into this experience, as Paul did in Colossians 1:11, etc.

So, although the historic aspect of this part of the Idyll took place in Gethsemane, there were extenuating circumstances that gave it a far wider significance, in fact we are being educated in the spirit of this occasion today.

Song 5:2 "I was asleep, but my heart awakened" (R.V.), neither waking nor sleeping,

or rather both asleep and awake, the sleep not lulling watchfulness and removing all the sleep. It is a state in which both are balanced, neither overcoming the other, exercising the sleep of the body by the wakefulness of the heart - showing in a very real way that, even when grace has produced spiritual fruit in the Bride, there can come about a state of self-complacency in her, if we fail to yield to the Lord what He seeks to find. Perhaps a contrast between this section, 5:2-8, and the previous one in chapter 4, corresponding with a similar contrast found in Paul's epistle to the Ephesians and the letter to the Ephesian ecclesia in Revelation 2:1-7: (1) The Letter to the Ephesians is that essentially revealing the grace of God and the presence of the working of the Spirit is seen in her (all the epistle).

(2) Rev. 2:2-6 witnesses an assembly fallen from this high standard of spirituality; many fruits of grace are remaining to which Christ makes reference, but the spring is absent which could yield to Him what He desires from her. Song 4 taught us to see the spouse as a spring, a fountain of living waters. The contrast is more evidently seen in comparison with the Thessalonians when in their first love, approximately 18 months after formation. Paul commends their fervour in these words (1 Thess. 1:2, (3) "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope". In Rev. 2:2-3 work remains, faith is absent. Labour remains, love has gone. Patience can be found, hope has vanished.

(4) There is a flow of energy of affection still in the ecclesia, but with the omission of the three graces. Christ points out that it is no longer spiritual or tied up with Himself. What a sad thing it is to have such workers within the ecclesia, working very hard yet without this motivating force that moved Thessalonica; the point being that, unless it is work that is of faith, and labour that issues from love, and patience which is founded on hope (see "Thessalonians" by A. Hall), then it is not acceptable to the Lord, and we shall find ourselves in the state of the Bride in Song 5:2-8; and yet a difference is definitely perceivable here. There is true affection for Him but it has ceased to be the energetic motive in her.

"I sleep". The wakeful and watching spirit that had all its desires and hopes centred in the Beloved was no longer there. Sleep had taken over. Rainford puts this situation in very trite words, "It was a restless and disturbed sleep, unrefreshing, comfortless and unhappy, guilty slumber. And it was by Almighty Grace only that it was the sleep of the couch and not of the grave. The child of God at his worst state is conscious of life, but a slumbering Christian is a useless Christian. Sleep is moreover a dangerous state, a partly insensible state, the mind wanders in sleep and strange distressing dreams often trouble the sleeper. Does the Bride here mean to excuse her slothful inactivity and neglect of duty by the consciousness of her knowledge of spiritual "I sleep but my heart waketh"? The Christian motto is, "We are children of the day. Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. 5:5-8)".

The basis of these thoughts, to the writer's mind, goes back to the Psalms which speak of the Lord God of Israel Who never slumbers or sleeps, and although we would not be so bold as to think that we have this ability inherent in ourselves as the Holy One of Israel, yet we are called upon to be His children, and consequently as Jesus on many occasions "watched all night in prayer", we must endeavour in a spiritual sense to watch with prayer during the Gentile night, that we may not be overcome with drowsiness because our Lord delays His coming, and so the Day overtake us as a thief.

It would appear that there is a specific cause why a child of God is overcome by spiritual slumber (or an ecclesia for that matter) as found within this Bride; the absence of being watchful unto prayer. Conceivably it is the basis of many failures. The Lord Himself said, "watch and pray", and Paul, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12) -

- (1) Take heed of resting on the privileges of yesterday;
- (2) Take heed of neglecting God's Word;
- (3) Take heed of shirking known duty when reading, prayer and meditation become a

burden and are hurried over or neglected ("we can't fit them in"). If these backslidings are permitted to find lodgment within us, then we shall soon be in this wretched balancing act that befell the Bride: "I sleep, but my heart waketh". What a poor subterfuge is this balancing and looking within!

We are reminded of the ecclesia which said she was "content" when all the evidence of our last section lay fully exposed in her. How can any ecclesia be content in the context of today and the present evil world around us? Also in this "contented" church advertisements for conventions and so forth are to be observed, but if five are found at the Bible Class then are we happy? "I sleep but my heart waketh". It is so easy to fall into this spiritual stupor, and in that Day when this situation comes under review at the Wedding Feast no doubt, like the Seraphim of Isaiah 6:1-3, we shall hide our faces in the remembrance of it all.

Alas! it is possible even for the fruits of grace to become the occasion of self-complacency - could we detect an inkling of the trouble of Job? All that was good in him was of God's mercy, but it turned possibly to self-complacency and indeed to self-righteousness. God has undoubtedly been very good to us and gracious. He may have given us light above many; He may have conferred spiritual gifts and graces upon us; He may have led us into a path of separation, and given us the enjoyment of many privileges that are the peculiar marks of His favour; He may have enabled us to serve the Lord faithfully, and yet Christ Himself may not have taken the place due to Him as sole Lord of our hearts. The Lord is very jealous as to the place He would have with us. His love cannot suffer us to be at rest without Him. He would not have us to be content even with that which we have received from Him - He would be Himself the one object of our desire and delight, and He knows only too well when He is really "out in the cold" so far as our hearts are concerned, and He does not fail to call our attention to this in a way that is appealing and effective. It must be noted that in this chapter it is not that the Lord is outside a great worldly profession like Laodicea; but could we say that He is seen outside and in the cold when His love is very comfortable without His company? In such a case first love has been let slip or left, and the beloved has entered on a course which, if not broken in upon by the Lord in His ever faithful love, would lead to Laodicean self-satisfaction.

We need only to compare this situation with the previous one in Song 3, where we find the Bride in bed at night: "By night on my bed I sought Him". She was on her bed but not asleep then, and she "sought Him", but she is not seeking Him now: "I sleep, but my heart waketh", and yet there is no response when He knocks! Before, as Rainford says, she was all alive when she missed her Beloved: "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 found Him not". She was in agony. What a contrast between her feelings then and now! What a contrast to this careless sleep at ease while He suffered in the cold with dew of affection on His head! Note, however, how the Wellbeloved broke into this spiritual coma, which attacks us many times in our life in Christ. Chiding? Wrathful? No, indeed!

Song 5:2 "Open to me, my sister, my love, my undefiled one".

A new name of tenderness is added here and seems to have been reserved for the Bride's hour of failure. He calls her His undefiled, or, as the original signifies, his "perfect one". Of a truth, were it not that we as God's children, have been accepted in the Beloved and are complete only in Him, our sinful slumbering would issue in death, the death slumber of the grave.

While Jesus adds the new name or title, "Perfect of Undefiled One", we note that He omits the name of "Bride" and repeats for emphasis "my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled" --

- (a) His "sister", as doing the will of God in the same family - God, Son and daughter.
- (b) His "friend", because she is in His counsels (John 15:14-16) and that of choice: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit". Compare also Rev. 17:4, the complete version, "And with Him (the Lamb) are many that are called and chosen and faithful".
- (c) His "perfect one", because her heart was wholly His. As she looked back from her security of perfection, of her undefiled nature at the Wedding Feast, she realised that the omission was made that her answer might determine whether or not she understood

her calling; whether or not she "apprehended that for which she had been apprehended by Christ" (Phil. 3:7-15). She understood from the position of experiencing the end of the Lord that, at that time, she had failed to grasp the need for a fuller conformity to His death, for her own sake, so that she might play her part in the atoning work, filling up the afflictions of the Body (Col. 1:24).

She is in danger of appropriating to herself what God has manifested through her, as if it were her own: Miriam, Aaron and Moses in particular will remember her very vividly. The first two said, "Has God only spoken by Moses and not by us?" The last two said, "Shall we bring forth water" in the wilderness? Hazards are fully observed in this Bride. There is a tendency to appropriate to herself what God has manifested to her or through her as if it were her own, as, in this case, if it were something that she had to guard jealously from defilement, and it is fundamental that she keep herself unspotted from the world (James 1:27). Paul's words in 1 Cor. 1:29-30 must be kept constantly in mind, "that no flesh should glory in His presence", (as keeping oneself by one's own strength from sin and defilement); "but of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption; that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord".

Our sanctification is not her own - had not the voice of Jesus called her "His undefiled" ? - but the flesh has a great capacity for misunderstanding the point for its own ends, and how many times have we found sanctuary in this self-deception? The Bride would most jealously guard herself from defilement, entirely missing, or avoiding, the point. As Paul said, all our sanctification is found in Jesus the Bridegroom: a sanctification unimpaired when making contact, actually touching (1) leprosy (Matt. 8:1-3, etc.); (2) palsy (8:5-13); (3) fever (8:16-17); (4) the mentally sick (8:16-17); (5) a tax gatherer (9:9); (6) an unclean woman (9:20-24); (7) the Great Defiler himself, DEATH - Jairus' daughter (9:23-25); (8) the woman who was a sinner (Luke 7:37-50).

How much more evidence is necessary for us to understand that our sanctification alone is effectual in Jesus our Bridegroom? He was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners" (Heb. 6:26). Should not the Bride, then, have been obedient unto the heavenly visitant? She had no excuse, as we have none when in this moment of indecision. She admitted immediately that "It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh" (Song 5:2). Jesus strongly alludes to this moment in Rev. 3:26, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with Me". These words were addressed to the Laodicean ecclesia and how appropriate they are when comparing the dual contexts - (a) Song 5:2 "I sleep, but my heart waketh"

(b) Rev. 3:15 "I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot:

I would that thou wert cold or hot". Because of this condition they were in grave danger of the displeasure of the Lord: "I will spue thee out of My mouth" (verse 16). Such is the understanding of our context in Song 5:2-7. This is the Lord's opinion of her condition.

How can this condemnation come upon us? Rev. 3:17 - worldly wealth and increase of goods and consequently complacency, "having need of nothing". A decrease of reliance upon the providence of the Father and the love of the Son. These things induce sleep in regard to the Lord, but alternatively considerable insomnia from the angle of Ecclesiastes 5:12, "The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much, but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep, either from over-indulgence or, more direct, because he fears that someone will take it from him. Whilst sleep is not a natural companion of the writer, he has never suffered from "rich man's insomnia", for which we can thank God!

Song 5:3 The Bride complains that she has "put off her coat".

Rev. 3:17-18. Jesus is well aware of this, but not in the way that she would put it. Because of this sleepy condition she failed to realise that she was "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked". Notice one vivid omission: she is not deaf, as the Song implies she could hear the voice of Christ knocking. The word "knocketh" in Song 5:2 occurs only once again in the Hebrew and is the name of a station in Israel's Wilderness wanderings: Dophkah (Num. 33:12). The circumstances surrounding this place are very interesting and particularly so



in view of our dual contexts (see "What's in a Name? No. 1. Numbers 33", pages 7-9). The name Dophkah means Knocking as at a door.

Israel had just survived a tough section of their journeying through the terrible Desert of Sin (= Thorns) and came to the Wadi Magnana, a wide valley, most beautiful and picturesque, and the record in Numbers 33 seems to imply that there was some softening of the desert barrenness here: "they took their journey out of the Wilderness of Sin". For the last few days the way had been uphill. There would be considerable suffering from heat and lack of water. It was trying, but not impossible; for did not that Pillar of Cloud supply some cover from these awfully trying conditions? There were intense conditions indeed in Shur and Etham, etc., but they were almost intolerable in the lonely fastnesses of the Wilderness of Sin, yet God was with them, and at Dophkah an altogether unexpected mercy awaited them. It brought relief to their minds and was to give inspiration for the journey ahead.

History and inscriptions have combined to prove that in this part of the mountains were extensive mines of copper and turquoise. For centuries before their time these mines had been worked by the Egyptians, sending thither their political prisoners. It was a place of penal servitude. Slaves, innocent and guilty, men, women and children, were all driven to underground tasks by the civil engineers. 750 soldiers guarded the entrances to the mines to make sure that none escaped. Death was the only release. Among these slaves would be many relations and friends of the relieving Israelites of the Lord who came marching to Dophkah. It is thought that Joshua was one who gained freedom here, the rest of his family having perished in the awful incarceration, and that he became the servant of Moses first of all in gratitude. So we see the way Dophkah worked at this time - God knocking on the hearts of those who are cast down by the rigours of the way of the Wilderness, by helping to release those in more dire need than their own.

Is not this just the point in Song 5:2, where Jesus is "knocking" on the heart of His beloved. The dire need is shown in Himself being outside in the chill of the night, this night of affliction, His head being wet with the heavy dew of the night, the dew that is radiant with refraction in the glint of the sunshine in the morning that is without clouds, speaking of the joy of resurrection of eternal youth and unwearied service and fellowship in immortality. It is, however, the same dew that is formed in darkness in the chill and frost of affliction (this is the picture that we have here), the sudden drop of temperature, etc. - historically Gethsemane, as we have seen, but spiritually every time that Jesus knocked and was not invited to the light and warmth of the house of fellowship. The context proves that the knocking on the door is not imperious, but rather tender and full of pleading; Jesus Himself providing the answer in Matt. 7:7-8, "To him that knocketh it shall be opened" and in John 6:37, "I will in no wise cast out". Even the abject poor would be supplied by Him. The custom being a poor man asking for bread at a rich man's door - the bread is always given. One of the old Italian versions has it: "I will in no wise cast out of doors" - so the poor man had been already admitted. Christ as usual had already given the example (Song 5:2):

- (1) We find that Christ knocked, and broke into the beloved's reverie, and, in keeping with John 10:3-4 she heard His voice, proving that she belonged to Him. But would she come to Him as the sheep did when they heard the shepherd's voice? He found reluctance on her behalf.
- (2) She hesitated to yield to the call of her afflicted Lord.
- (3) He called to her, "Open to me, my love . . . for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night". Our Bride is not quick either to give the poor man entrance or to give him sustenance in his hour of need, which of course came about (the poor man status) because of His love for her — "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that through His poverty ye might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9).

Because she was temporarily hesitant to obey this call to her afflicted Lord, her unwillingness to deny herself for Christ reveals a readiness to make much of little trouble, however slight. Song 5:2 is an example of the way we are apt to excuse ourselves for not giving Christ immediate attention. It is recorded that Jesus said to one man, "Follow me!" and the answer was, "Lord, suffer me first to bury my father" - could be either months or years. Another also said, "Lord, I will follow thee, but let me first go and bid them farewell which are at home at my house" - possibly would take ten days or six months. Each was a polite "No, thank you, Jesus".

7-9). Luke 9:59-61, "I will come, but not immediately; in my own time". But these people have not yet experienced the magnetic power of the Christ; otherwise nothing would have stayed them. But the Bride had been drawn, attracted by that Name poured forth as ointment. She ought to have known different. As it happens at times in all our lives, the pull simply had gone. The current had been switched off, either through indifference, fear, etc. The conformity, or the need for a fuller conformity unto His death, has been somewhat mitigated, because her thoughts are at this time insular, as we noted a little earlier with the "my" sequence having crept in. She says, Song 5:3, "I have put off my coat"; conveying to our minds a vivid reminder of the action of Elisha, when he took off his own clothes and rent them, ere he took up the mantle of Elijah (2 Kings 2:12), typifying the rending of the garments of the flesh - the past life - so that the Spirit of the Lord might truly find a naked heart open to its workings and fully clothe the recipient with the clothes of the Spirit.

The betrothed one shrinks back from the call to conformity to the rejected Christ, and replies to her Lord that, (Song 5:3) she had already been to the Cross, put off her coat and laid aside the garments of the old life; because she well knows that the foundation of the new life is "I have been crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20). Even yet she is unable to understand that the Lord is not calling her now to "put off the old man with his doings" (Col. 3:9-10) but to enter into the fellowship of His sufferings and to be conformed to the image of the Lamb. In other words, at this time she has not learned the deeper measures to which her whole being must be subjected, that she may be found in practical conformity to this unique position afforded her in the purpose of God, that she has died in Christ, and that "always bearing about in the body the dying (of the putting to death - margin) of Jesus' is the condition of the life also of Jesus, manifested in (her) body (2 Cor. 4:10).

The Bride has "put off her coat" it is true, but how about the question that follows: "How shall I put it on?" This will be only too quickly answered if she fails to respond to the call of Christ at this time, for there is no point in the spiritual life where the believer may not drift back or build up that which has been overthrown (Gal. 2:18). Those who have reached maturity in the spiritual sphere will readily agree that however full and blessed the past experiences may be the power depends upon the fresh inflow of Divine life obtained from the Word of Life and the obedience of the heart to the very utmost. The lightest retreat admits the atmosphere of the old life; failure and sin automatically following. The fight of faith incumbent on all the constituents of this Beloved is that of having the capability and courage to stand fast and firm upon each successive step in the spiritual heavenlies. Each step will be fiercely contested by the spiritual hosts of wickedness. "Having overcome, stand!" (Eph. 6:13, A.V. marg.). Yet we dare not "stand" when God says "Forward!", for every call disobeyed means lack of faith and retrogression. The Adversary is ready with the old coat under a new name and will snare the unwary, particularly if we are only half awake when the call comes. How true it is that "it is only the unchangableness of the love of Christ that prevents his people from falling out of the slumber of the couch into the slumber of the grave"! We may well lay this lesson to heart.

The Lord has knocked and called without response. He now acts the nearest equivalent to entering the chamber.

Song 5:4 "My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door and my bowels were moved for Him" - putting His hand through the hole of the door on to the bolt of the lock. She observes the hand scarred with the mark of the nails; then she is overwhelmed with desire to go to Him.

Song 5:5-6 "I rose to open to my Beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn Himself and was gone. My soul failed me when He spoke."

In the East in those days, probably in our days too, the devout lover would sometimes visit in the night the home of his beloved with flowers, which he would strew upon the threshold, and with perfumes, with which he would anoint the door and its lock, that the loved one might know that he had been near her. We are informed by some authorities that if the lover for some reason or other were rejected, these proceedings

would be intensified and prolonged in the hope of softening the attitude of the person he loved. What lover was, or even today is, more devout than the Wellbeloved to His Shulamite? What pleading could be found in that knocking voice, as we have already observed!

He beholds His loved one shrinking from His call in fear! Fear of consequences, of losing the present blessing - could we put it, an undefinable fear of what it might mean in actual suffering? He knows, unlike her, who must trust Him that she "is in great fear where no fear is" (Psalm 53:5). She might remember all the way He had led her hitherto (we recall that we thought this experience came to her toward the end of her probation). She had been deliberately brought on to this day. She had found that His grace had always been sufficient to make each apparently impossible step quite easy. Paul himself has to learn this lesson, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:7-9). She might know that the fact of His call proved that He had prepared her for all that He was preparing for her. He had not bidden her to take a step beyond her measure.

As the eyes of His glory penetrated the depths of her soul, He understood far better than she that it was, as it were, but a surface shrinking, a natural aversion from affliction and dejection. No one in his right mind likes to afflict himself, and delight in rejection and dereliction; only one possessing a perverted viewpoint such as the Carmelite theory. If the action were deliberate rejection on the part of her will, then He could do no more until she yielded. So the Lord must try to help her ignore it, and act by her will alone; for He knew, as we know, that at the very centre of her will she is stedfastly purposed to follow Him at all or any cost (compare Thomas, John 11:15). He therefore puts forth His hand; and immediately the inertia is gone and her heart is touched. Penn Lewis will say, "He knows the character of each of His redeemed ones, and the spring that will respond to the touch of His pierced hand" - whereon hangs another thought: Was it by sight only of the pierced hand that the Bride was awakened and drawn to action?

One of the easiest of senses excited naturally is that of smell. Going back to Isaiah 11:1-5 and Jesus in the spiritual sense. We learned in our medical student days that a litre of air containing only .0000004% say of nitercarpan is distinctly perceptible by normal people. We believe that the spiritual perception of smell had returned to the Bride and that the bag of myrrh lying between her breasts had penetrated her reverie and awakened her with quickened perception (Song 1:13). Or had she removed it and forgotten to wear it? However it may be, she is now fully awake and eager to open to Him, her bowels or heart being moved for Him. Rainford well puts it that by the insertion of the hand in the door, Christ's unconquerable love and grace are what is intended here, and they are needed for restoration as well as conversion.

Christ has many ways of preparing an entry for Himself:

- (1) A look from Christ broke Peter's heart (Luke 22:61-62).
- (2) A word revealed Him to Mary (John 20:11-16). It was only "Mary" but it went right home to her heart, and so here by the entrance of
- (3) His pierced hand the door is opened.
- (4) Acts 16:14 records that the Lord opened the heart of Lydia that she attended to the things spoken by Paul.
- (5) Here the Lord puts His hand into the hole of the door of the heart of His Bride that she might attend to His cry (Song 5:4).

Penn Lewis remarks, "In some it is the shame of cowardice in leaving to Him alone the path of rejection, in others a high sense of loyalty to their Lord." What spring did He touch in Peter with that one look that broke his heart? This further and more direct action of His love has found the spring of her love. His voice and His knock were heard before He Himself, being hidden. But His hand put into the chamber was a partial and very powerful manifestation of Himself, and it made the spouse deeply conscious of the reality of His person and love; and it speaks, as it were, of the direct and personal action of the Lord, which is more effective in producing an impression than either voice or knock. How true this personal touch is in ordinary affairs with men, either in business or in the heart, and how much more so when it is the King's business and of His heart!

"My bowels were moved" or yearned "for Him", and an old poem penned it, "Yes! then 'twas my faith - Thy Word - but now THYSELF my soul drawest nigh".

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Now, really moved by this inward surge, she rises from her bed and goes to open the door, as she was asked by her Lord. Had His living reality and attractiveness melted away all selfish ease that no longer detains? There is a revival moment and a quickening of heart in relation to Him. But although this is a happy revival, it is not the time for the restoration of heart. She has not yet felt the condition into which she had fallen, in a way that at all corresponds with how He had felt. In a way, distance of heart had really come in on her side, and there would be no time for recovery of confiding affection without this being felt by her. Surely 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 deflection deeply. The Lord will not give Himself to a repentance which is light and superficial. The faithfulness of His love comes out as much in His withdrawing Himself in Song 5:6, as it does in His knock and voice, and in putting in His hand by the hole in the door. For true restoration He has to make her conscious of how deeply He had felt her former condition.

Perhaps we do well in our moment of retreat from this present evil world to sit back and try to realise how much sorrow we have given our Lord personally. It will be fully obvious to our Lord at this moment just what place He has had in our hearts; and if we have kept Him out in the cold, gathering the heavy dew upon His locks. He certainly feels it, and to keep the bond of fellowship intact He would that we must feel it too. So in order to grant her respite and the opportunity to do this, He has withdrawn Himself and Gone! gone! gone!, as the Hebrew idiom has it.

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Song 5:5-6. As she puts her hand to the handle or bolt of the door, she finds it sticky, and strikingly familiar in perfume, and, looking down, she finds her hands "dropping with myrrh" and, for double emphasis, "sweet-smelling myrrh", again of the freely running variety. Instantly the link is forged between the bundle of myrrh on her breast and this sticky substance on her hands, and her soul fails her; or, as the Hebrew may be rendered, she "calls His neglected words to remembrance", fitly expressing that deep poignant sorrow and anguish experienced until the cloud passes that hides the favour of God's countenance. Now she wants the presence of the Bridegroom and nothing else can satisfy her, and yet He has withdrawn as voluntarily as He had sought her out. "O that I were as in months past" is her language, "as in the days when God preserved me, when His candle shined upon me" (Job 29:2-3); "Hear me speedily, O Lord; my spirit faileth; hide not Thy face from me" (Psalm 142:7); "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord" (Psalm 27:13). These three quotations are well within the confines of her thoughts at this time. One usually never appreciates what one has until one thinks that it is gone or lost. It argues strong faith in the Bride that she should still be seeking Christ, though in such utter want of enjoyment, and He deals with her accordingly. "The strong He will greatly try". But and if the Bride can regain her spiritual equilibrium, there are strong signs that, though He has withdrawn, it is but for a season; she will never be entirely forsaken. --

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- (a) It is not the withdrawing of His love, "for I am persuaded that neither death nor life ... nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:35-39).
- (b) "I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness and in judgment and in loving kindness and in mercies" (Hosea 2:19).
- (c) "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee" (Hosea 2:19-23).
- (d) "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee" (Isaiah 54:7).

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The withdrawal of His presence for a season is essential, for in this way He corrects and rebukes our negligence, and enhances to us the enjoyment of the privileges of His fellowship, which is the reward of a faithful and humble walk with God. We list a sevenfold effect of the way of the Christ Man with the maid (Prov. 30:19), or on the lock of the heart that was closed against Him:

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- Song 5:4-6 (1) "My bowels yearned for Him". Her heart was stirred to its very depths when she thought of the way she had treated Him.
- (2) "I will rise up to open to my Beloved".
- (3) "My hands dropped with myrrh".
- (4) "I opened to my Beloved".

(5) "My soul failed when He spake".

(6) "I sought Him".

(7) "I called Him".

Such are the seven steps of the knocking by Jesus on her heart.

Song 5 : 6 "I sought Him, but I could not find Him ; I called Him, but He gave me no answer."

Here is described no infrequent experience of a back-slidden child of God. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth". "Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled". "I sought Him, I called Him, but He gave me no answer". Rainford says that sin is often chastened by a like correction, as Jacob's great sin in deceiving his father was in after years, when his sons brought Joseph's coat to him as if some evil beast had devoured Joseph. We may learn here that the prayer, even of a repentant soul, is not always answered immediately. The Lord does this in love. A withdrawn Christ is not always easily found, but it is better to follow Him with tears than to live in peace without Him.

It is true that prayer, if not immediately answered, is not of necessity rejected. The Bride's efforts are not immediately answered, but the promise in the will of God is both to effort and to prayer for perseverance. How often have we experienced that the most effective answer to our prayers the Lord can give us is a refusal, doing better for us than we can ask or think! One shudders to think what could have fallen out to us if some of the prayers we made to the Father had been answered as we had asked. We know not what to ask, or indeed think, and we thank our God for Jesus our Lord, Who presents the offering of our lips in an acceptable fashion to the Father, and, strictly correct, answers every prayer from our lips, but not usually in the way we would like. -

(1) Moses prayed, "Let me see that goodly mountain and Lebanon" and the Father said, "Speak no more to me on this matter" (Deut. 3 : 23-28, Luke 9 : 28-31). Nevertheless, we see him ages after on the Mount of Transfiguration.

(2) Elijah prayed, "Take away my life ; it were better for me to die than to live", but God was about to translate him that he should not see death (1 Kings 19 : 4, 14, 2 Kings 2 : 1).

(3) Paul also prayed thrice that the thorn in his flesh might depart from him, and the Lord answered that His grace was sufficient for him, and the astonishing result is that Paul will afterward glory in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him (2 Cor. 12 : 8-9. Note that the infirmities in these verses number five in all. Paul realised that it was indeed all in the grace of God. See the chapter on numerology in "The Significance of Blue in Scripture" by the present writer).

(4) Job lamented loudly, "O that I knew where I might find Him! Behold, I go forward, but He is not there ; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him" (compare Job 23 : 3-9 and 34 : 29). The true believer goes on seeking, though the heavens seem as brass, and though our cry may be with the ancients, "Thou coverest Thyself with a cloud that our prayer should not pass through" (Lam. 3 : 44, 8) : "I cry unto Thee and Thou dost not hear me" (Job 30 : 20).

(5) It was thus also with the Poor Woman of Canaan who came to Jesus earnestly entreating Him to heal her daughter, "but He answered her not a word" (Matt. 15 : 22-23). "I called Him, but He gave me no answer". And why did the Lord do this to His Bride (for we feel that the characteristics that she displayed are a sound indication of such a conclusion)? Undoubtedly for the trial of her faith! The Lord knows His own and their peculiar requirements. Therefore trials are Divinely adapted trials and there is given grace again, Divinely adapted, we believe, to their need in their trials, as in the case of our sister before us. It was the strong faith resident in the Bride and revealed in this woman that, as it were, justified this severe trial. She was able to bear it.

(6) Contrast the case of the poor woman bowed down with twelve years' severe haemorrhage, who came behind Jesus trembling. Her respite and healing were immediate (Luke 8 : 44-48). This woman's physical condition and open confession warranted immediate action from Jesus and it was given so very graciously. No doubt many other cases have this distinctive treatment by Jesus, and in the various ways of answered prayer are well known, and possibly found in our own experience.

The lesson we are trying to learn is to "trust Him where we cannot trace" at the moment.

It has been observed by an unknown but wise writer, that we should learn that, while there is forgiveness with the Lord, it should be esteemed by us as no light thing to be drawing on that forgiveness (a possible connection with Rom. 6:4); for, while it is true that He "forgives us our trespasses" and that this may be said by the children of God in spirit continually, knowing as they must in how many things they all offend, yet it is still a serious thing to be drawing on the pardoning grace of God. The Book of Judges illustrates this, showing a growing reserve on the part of God towards His people. As they repeat their demands on His grace, He holds Himself more and more distant from them. It would appear that the experience of the Bride is precisely similar. Compare Song 3:1-4, where the search was comparatively easy (as she was so much more ready to commence it), with Song 5:2-8, where her reluctance to rise and open to her Beloved caused so much delay in her finding Him - "I sought Him, but I could not find Him: I called Him, but He gave me no answer".

"So if at any time while thou art engaged in earnestly calling upon God, He answers thee not a word, mark what that delay says to thee: "Great is thy faith". Remember the experiences of Martha and Mary when Lazarus was sick unto death, and the prayer or request to Jesus was answered in not a word. The whole sequence was given to reveal the glory of the Father in resurrection power. Compare John 11. By this time the Bride has realised that "God worketh with good in all things to them that love Him, who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28), and that according to Rom. 8:17 it contains the elements of suffering, which she would formerly have liked to forget, as well as glory which she would haste unto - we have fellowship with the Lord as the Risen and Glorified One on the Resurrection side of the Cross. She now realised that to do such she will only know Him in proportion as she enters into fellowship with His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death! - counted worthy to suffer and to "fill up" that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ, for His body's sake, which is the church (Col. 1:24). Fausset comments, "It must not be supposed that the sufferings of Christians now atone for sin. No greater dishonour could be cast upon the work of Christ than that!" Nevertheless Scripture identifies the sufferings of Christians with those of Christ. He suffered while hanging on the cross for six hours. He has left one brief hour for the Bride to accomplish and fill up the number seven, the perfect number. He said to the chosen three in the Garden, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?",  $6 + 1 = 7$  (Matt. 26:40).

Another unknown, this time a poet, put it in these words:

"Many sit at Jesus' table,  
Few will fast with Him,  
When the sorrow-cup of anguish  
Trembles to the brim;  
Few watch with Him in the garden  
Who have sung the hymn.  
  
But the souls who love supremely -  
Let woe come or bliss -  
These will count their dearest heart's blood  
Not their own but His.  
Saviour, Thou Who thus hast loved me,  
Give me love like this."

To which we add, Yes, Lord, quickly!

Thus we have observed the "way of THE MAN with the MAID". He does not upbraid her, as He might, but He gently chides and disciplines her by a withdrawal. Thus the True Shepherd chides and teaches.

Song 5:7 gives us the result of this soul-searching exercise on the part of the Bride.

"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".

It is obvious that she went out to find her Beloved, to cause Him to return to her, and so came under the jurisdiction of the security guard of the city, who did their work roughly and thoroughly. As any young woman out after curfew dark could only be thought to be about one object, so they delivered immediate justice. They smote her,

they wounded her and took away her veil, branding her as a common woman. She never ought to have come under their notice at all, but having lost the company of her Beloved through indolence and apathy, she was restless and agitated now that she realised her loss. She had been treated roughly, unjustifiably, but her Lord permitted them to do so to deepen the exercise. Every blow must have brought home to her that if He had been at her side, or had she opened the door more quickly, they would never have touched her. And why was He not there? She had only herself to blame, and the humiliation of it all would only increase her desire to want Him more than ever. The watchmen were faithful to their trust, but in this case with mistaken severity, and they were unsympathetic with the hidden exercises of her heart. We cannot but think of Eli the high priest of Israel, a watchman in truth over Israel, and who as a high priest should have been "touched with" Hannah's feelings of "infirmity". How far his verdict was from the truth! 1 Sam. 1:1-17 covers the incident, the relevant portion for us commencing in verse 10. Hannah was in bitterness of soul and prayed unto the Lord and wept sore (verses 12 and 13). Note how Hannah prayed and spoke in her heart, but her voice was not heard. Eli had marked her mouth and concluded that she was drunken, saying to her, "How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee!" Eli was the high priest of Israel and he failed to understand. This can never be said of our High Priest (Lev. 2:15-18, 4:14-16, 5:7-9, etc.). How could we expect the security guard to understand her dilemma? The lesson, however, found here comes to us, that we too, like Jesus, have to learn how to combine faithfulness with sympathy. We have to be very careful not to wound those whom God has not wounded (Jer. 10:21, Ezek. 34:21-22). How deep and dark was her distress!

Those three days to the apostle Paul after he had been blinded by the vision of the glorified Lord on the road to Damascus must have felt like a lifetime, as in the quietness and darkness of the room he would think back over the way in which he had kicked against the pricks of the Christ-goad (Acts 9:1 and 19:9 in particular). The sympathetic sequence of the Lord Paul fully knew; he had experienced it himself, hence the full exposition in Hebrews just quoted. The Lord knew that after this rough treatment sympathy would do wonderful things for this dejected one. We notice that on this occasion the Bride did not attempt to explain to the watchmen who it was she was seeking, because it would have fallen on stony ground. They could not understand.

Tom would think that these watchmen represent natural Israel, who persecuted the saints and put them to shame and to death. Isaiah said that the Jews had become watchmen. They were blind and ignorant and they could not see that the Bride was loving and seeking their Messiah, whom they had rejected. This has been the history of the sister and spouse of Jesus: tears, sorrows, trials, tortures and imprisonments. But persecutions have only made her stronger in perfecting her love for Jesus. No wonder Paul felt this position very keenly after his conversion to Christianity. He felt that he was the least of all the apostles because he had persecuted the church of God or the Bride of Christ (1 Tim. 2:12-15, 1 Cor. 15:9). These comments of Tom ring true of that day and age in the first century, but have no practical bearing concerning the Bride in our day and age, who is not in particular under this form of affliction. Discipline does come in many ways in all ways of life, and many is the time that we are wounded and bruised by contact with these elements, which would have no jurisdiction over us were we to be quick and ready to open the door at the knock of the Lord. It is all part of the chastening of the Lord and if we are wise we shall perceive the end in view.

There is one very noticeable contrast or a series of contrasts between the opening verses of this chapter. Very remarkable, indeed! Stuart comments: "There is nothing that is so useless, uncongenial and contrary to a troubled conscience as a ministry either unconverted or at ease in Zion, and there is nothing that so disconcerts and torments such a ministry as a conscience which nothing will pacify but Jesus found and possessed. Ministers without grace, or without grace in exercise, have no sympathy for the wounded soul, for in condemning itself it doubly condemns them. Finding their dealing ineffectual to suppress conviction, they begin to smite with the rod of the mouth. When the smitten soul still seeks, they smite so as to pierce and wound, and when the wounded one perseveres, they tear away the veil, and expose her to shame and reproach as if the mourner only feigned to be

Christ's chaste spouse'. (Ministers and ministry to be seen from the angle of the Truth of God, and not in general terms as understood in parsonocracy).

Perhaps we have a thought for the watchmen of the ecclesias here, and a word of warning and wisdom as to their conduct in such cases as would appear to be 'water-tight', proving on the surface a departure from Christ. Remember Eli and Hannah; also Paul's advice to the Thessalonians, when it would appear that necessary discipline should be applied to an ecclesial offender (2 Thess. 3:14 - see Hall on "Note that man"): carefully scrutinise continually and make no hasty decision, was his advice.

Returning to Stuart, he continues, "And this follower of the Lamb, smitten, wounded, stripped, seeks as she never sought before, admits as she never admitted before, and loves as she never loved till now". She has no care now as to how she will put on her beautiful coat, as she runs in rags through Jerusalem. She has no thought about defiling her delicate feet when she wades through the miry lanes. She has no complacency in her fingers dropping myrrh when, with hands bleeding from the watchmen's blows, she knocks wherever her Lord may haply be found. She is in right earnest now, self and ease forgotten, self and comeliness forgotten - Christ, Christ, none but Christ is all her desire and all her pursuit. "If ye seek Me with all your hearts, ye shall ever truly find Me", God said to Israel; and the same conditions apply between Christ and His beloved.

Song 5:8 Jerusalem's watchmen will never understand her plight, so she turns to Jerusalem's daughters and confides her love and plight to them. We have already commented upon their identity in an earlier chapter, and offered the comment that, whoever they may be, they are not against either the Bride or the Bridegroom or at enmity with the covenanted marriage. We saw how Jesus identified them quite clearly in His day when they wept at His crucifixion: "Weep for yourselves, ye daughters of Jerusalem", etc. Throughout the Song they are interested spectators or witnesses, and in this verse we commence the prelude to the climax regarding their presence and the reason why they are included within the Song.

Song 5:8 "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell Him that I am sick of love" ("wounded of love", Grk.).

Tom would see in this assembly the multitudinous Bride herself, and this is the precise point we would wish to make, qualified by the dispensational viewpoint in matter of time. He says that this outpouring of the heart could only be expressed by and to those who would constitute the multitudinous Bride within the defined circle of love. It is not in harmony to use such an expression of deep love to strangers who know not the Beloved, and he brings a lovely comparison between Song 5:8 and Romans 8:19, where it speaks of the creature whose earnest expectation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. The creature, he thinks, is not apart from the sons of God. These sons of God in the mortal state are longing for their own manifestation in immortality. So may we have the love pangs of the Bride, that love which in its longing causes such "hiraeth" in the heart, etc., inexpressible emotions manifesting our profound love for our Lord and Master. In the language of the Psalmist, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord" (Psalm 84:2). This is the sickness of love that eats up the heart of the loving Bride in her longing for her Beloved.

As we meet the various occurrences of these Daughters of Jerusalem, we find that, in a dispensational aspect, they are future elements of the Bride in respect of their lively interest and voluntary request to follow Christ (Song 5:9, 6:1).

In due deference to this sickness of love, could we just note that the sickness now and the sickness at the close of the first Idyll or Song, though expressed by the same words and resulting in similar effects, are produced by opposite causes? (Song 2:6-7 and 5:8):

- (1) Then it was fainting under joy; now it is fainting under grief.
- (2) Then it was swooning away through a glorious presence more than heart or frame can endure; now it is sinking and swooning through a lamented absence more than mind or body can sustain;
- (3) Then the soul was sick of love, loving much and obtaining a greater return of



love than it could receive; now the soul is sick of love, loving much, but void and fainting for want of any response.

(4) In both cases it is the loveliness of the Wellbeloved, with her love to Him, that causes the sickness, but in one it is sickness through excess delight, in the other it is sickness through excess of pain.

We do know that all this love agitation and emotion had a powerful effect upon the Daughters of Jerusalem.

Song 5:9 "What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved that thou dost charge us so?"

(a) First of all, this rejoinder by the Daughters proves that as yet they do not know the Lord truly. They saw no beauty that they should desire Him, but they were very interested, using the word "beloved" four times in this small verse. They were anxious and, no doubt, very curious as to how any beloved should cause such emotional upset in this beautiful person. Her renown had gone forth for her beauty, as Israel when blessed by God (Ezek. 16:14). The holiness which is stamped upon every member of the church of Christ was visible in her, for they called her the "fairest among women". How strange that they should so clearly discover the beauty of Jesus in her and yet not know Him (from Whom all beauty comes) as "fairer than the children of men"! (Psalm 45:2).

(b) It is to be noticed also that they echo the phrase used by Christ of the Shulamite in Song 1:8, "fairest among women". No doubt they had been present in Song 3:11 and attended the espousals and the day of gladness and heard the reason why she received such an honoured description from none other than Christ Himself. Now they wanted to know why she thought her beloved should be above others, anticipating a few words in Song 5:10, "the chiefest among ten thousand", or 5:16, "the altogether lovely" - the wonderful result of this most beautiful of eulogies. Song 6:1 - again a repetition of the phrase, "Whither is thy beloved again, O thou fairest among women? Whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee?". Could this be said of our preaching today, when apparently the old-fashioned lecturers, based entirely on the Word and lasting 40 minutes, are getting too tedious; and if one should exceed 25 minutes it is a certain sign that he will not be asked to that ecclesia again; when the constant remark is, "Will the young ones like it?"; and a good old-fashioned lecture based on the prevailing trend of the harlot daughters going back to their mother church, Rome, has the overriding consideration, "Will the Catholics like it?" Of course they will not like it! It is not intended that they should! The idea should be to make them think, "Is their religion right? and if not, what are they going to do about it?" If they go on a long journey afterwards and do not return to the lectures, then we have made our point. Let it be said that when the present writer first heard of the Truth, it did not exactly please him, but the arguments from plain wholesome Scripture soon convinced him that the Truth was right and that he was wrong, and through the mercy of God he was able to do something about it.

Other points emerge from this consideration and should give a clear searching guide for future lecture detail:

(a) It was the beloved's claims over Christ that made the interest and impression upon these friendly witnesses, the Daughters of Jerusalem.

(b) The Bride as seen in Joshua, Caleb, Eliezer, in their days and during their wilderness journeys and particularly in the taking of Jericho (the pleasure city), typically the world wherein we dwell, conquered by taking the Ark of the Covenant, with the outer covering of blue, round the city, when the people shouted and the walls of the city fell flat (Joshua 6:1-21); the Ark representing Christ as the true depository of God's glory and purpose - Christ in this aspect should be the burden of our lectures, and if Christ and the Word (all stemming from the Father) are unable to convert the part of the world in which we serve, then lecture titles of fanciful flight are of little use. It was "the way of the Man Christ Jesus with His maid", the beloved, that attracted these Daughters of Jerusalem and furthered their interest in these mysterious ways of God with His creatures. May we take the hint!

(c) It was a book written entirely about the Scripture that first attracted the writer - "Jesus Christ and Him Crucified", or "The Real Christ", as Prophet, Priest and King, by J. J. Andrews. After comparing the thoughts with Scripture he was mightily convinced (if we may be permitted a personal testimony).

(d) These Daughters were very impressed by the force and earnestness of the words that the Bride employed, as portrayed in the words "I charge you". The original implies the Bride's intense concern. It is no light surface work: "I charge you" - intense earnestness, vehement, solemn, serious. It has been said there is no message we can send to Christ so likely to win back His presence as this, "I am sick (or wounded) of love".

This is not, and never can be, a sickness unto death. None shall ever die of love to Christ, for our love to Christ is but a spark out of the great furnace of God's eternal love to us.

"Take this love to Him if you find my Beloved", the distraught Bride urges upon the Daughters of Jerusalem, who have within the meaning of their name, "the inheritance of the possession of peace". Peace she had none, but a burning desire to find her loved one, her lost one. No human medicine, however, advanced in therapy, could cure her love sickness - nothing but the presence of her Wellbeloved Himself. A very faint and feeble comparison is to be observed in the intense desire of the terminally sick to see some loved one. Here we find hope deferred that maketh the heart sick, and this maelstrom of love and emotion leads to this all-embracing eulogy.

We now turn our thoughts to "What is thy beloved more than another beloved? O thou fairest among women. What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost charge us so?" (Song 5:9). What indeed? - In everything! Discern and marvel at the portrait of her Beloved as it was written on the heart of His repentant and sorrowing Bride! --

#### FEATURE No. 1

Song 5:10 "My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand".

Rainford comments, "The description is one of enwrapped admiration and affection. It is superlatively glorious and uttered in brief and comprehensive language, highly figurative, no doubt, but wholly spiritual." There is nothing casual in the Bride's description of her Beloved. No man ever appeared on earth corresponding in the least degree to the picture here presented for our admiration. The inspired author of this Book is speaking from the standpoint of prophecy and of the types and shadows of the Old Testament. It is a combination of all the references in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms that were written of Him and the would-be components of this Beloved who is making her confession in those early days. Those holy men and women of old, inspired, studied their own writings in reference to this Coming One, their Lord, "enquiring and searching diligently" as we are endeavouring to do now on the other side of the Cross. We can imagine with what amazed delight and adoring anticipation they were wont to meditate on the Person's beauty, fulness and glory, of God's love-gift to the sons of men. Even the angels desired to look into these things (1 Pet. 1:1-12). They are all found within these following lines in cameo sequence. Here we have portrayed the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person (Heb. 1:1-3), the Lord Christ, in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9). Thus our Bride endeavours to give the Daughters of Jerusalem a true, if not a full, description of Him Who she is seeking, and of her joy in doing so. We note it is all about Himself and not about His gifts - as it has been described, "downright personal love to Himself". Would to God we had more of it! Himself, not His offices, attributes, words, works, promises of gifts, but His Own Self - not a picture, but a person. My Beloved, uniting in Himself all that is worthy, lovely, attractive, like the sacred perfume made up of divers fragrances and that "Name poured forth"; so was her Beloved an unalloyed congerie of excellency and delight exceeding all description. Superlatives fail us when we think of the prospect of our Lord as described in this chapter. "He is the altogether lovely". Whenever we muse on these typical pictures of our Lord (which is often), the words of John Bunyan, the tinker of Bedford, come to mind: "Yea, they did gather that the things themselves were a kind of portraiture

and that of Emmanuel Himself, for when they read in the scheme where the riddles were writ and looked in the Face of the Prince, things looked so like the one to the other that could not forbear but say - This is The Lamb! - This is the Sacrifice! - This is the Rock! - and This is the Way! with a great many other things more culled from the Holy War." etc.

Oh that this were the fashion today: a great many things written, and things said, would never have plagued us, and wasted valuable study time,

Let us return to this veritable treasure house of types - Song 5:9-16.

Song 5:10 "My beloved is white and ruddy". There is beauty in Him, such as can be found in none besides. He is 'white and ruddy', or as Fry renders it, 'faur and blooming'. The picture we have in general in these verses is one of the blooming of eternal youth or the immortality of an eternal spring in Jesus, "The same yesterday, today and tomorrow." (Heb.13:8).

David, we remember, whose name means 'beloved', as a youth was 'ruddy and of a fair countenance'. (1 Sam.17.42). White = pure, holy, separated from sinners and undefiled (1 Pet.1.18-19, Ex.12.5, Heb.7.26 etc.) In Him, Jesus, is no darkness at all. As the Ancient of Days in Dan.7.9, "whose garment was WHITE AS SNOW and the hair of His HEAD like the PURE WOOL" and anyone who has worked in the processing of pure Marina wool can testify to the amazing whiteness - indeed 'as white as snow' (Rev.1.14). The three saw this dazzling array of whiteness in Hermon, the Mount of Transfiguration. "His face did shine as the sun and His raiment was white as light" (Matt.17.12). Wonderful correlation with the Hebrew here. The Hebrew for white is properly 'illuminated by the sun' (Fausset), bringing into focus Song 6.10 - "Fair as the moon", "pure as the sun", speaking of the Bride herself for obvious reasons - later!

We combine again with Tom. Truly this is a righteous man made righteousness unto His spouse. The High Priest in the linen garment of atonement (Matt.17.12, Lev.16.4, Luke 23.47). He is ruddy who was crowned with a crown of thorns (see in Song 3.11), the blood streamed from the brow to the cheeks and through the blood of the covenant He was ruddy and goodly to look upon. The cheek that was smitten with the rod (Micah 5.1) now glows with the freshness of a royal ruddy David. "My beloved is God's firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (Psa.89.27, see whole Psalm).

Undoubtedly He is red in His blood dyed garment as slain (Matt.17.2, Isa.63.1-2).

(1) Our brother John Zebedee knew the Lord as the crucified and risen one (a true description also of white and ruddy) many years before he beheld Him in His glory as the sun that shineth in his strength (Rev.1.16) followed on by a still fuller revelation of Him through the door opened in heaven as the Lamb in the midst of the throne. Is this a fresh vision of the Lord that has come to the hidden one because she has now followed on to know Him and to be made conformable to His death?

(2) It may be so, for she describes Him for the first time in the glory of the white light that Ezekiel calls the 'terrible crystal' which surrounded the throne of the Kingdom (Ez.1.21-27 etc.) yet in the light of Revelation He is ruddy with the marks of His passion. May we not connect the thought expressed by the Bride in her words 'white and ruddy' and see Him here illuminated to the 'eyes of her heart' as the Lamb slain, a standard bearer for all who will follow the Lamb and be conformed to His likeness, the chief among ten thousand, the firstborn of many brethren. Chief indeed among many brethren (incidentally the Bride is also determined as white and ruddy or red. Cp the section on the pomegranate cut open, multitudinous seed, white and red, 4.3, 5.7). John further describes the ruddy aspect of Jesus as 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world' - the true paschal lamb whose blood - the blood of the everlasting covenant - saved Himself from death (Heb.13.20) and is sprinkled on the door posts of every believer's heart. Shortly He shall appear 'clothed with a vesture dipped in blood' (Rev.19.13) - "red in thine apparel and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat" (Isa.63.1-3). None was ever clad in a blood dyed garment like Jesus! The day of vengeance is in His heart and the year of His redeemed will have come! May the Lord keep us against that day!

- (1) This personal purity and devotion of Christ as defined in 'white and ruddy' is the foundational feature of His excellence. Cp the white foundation garment of the High Priest upon which the robe of the ephod (devotion etc. and obedience to the word of God etc. could be based; see "Blue in Scripture" - High Priest, Hall) and it is the mark of God's delight in Him and our supreme confidence too.
- (2) Admit even the possibility of one sin or stain and all is gone! He is not the Christ of God and we have no Saviour.
- (3) The essential basis is the spotless perfection of His manhood, not only to the direction of His origin and the value of sacrifice, but to the place which He holds in the affections of His spouse. What confidence we have in Him! The most minute scrutiny will never find a single flaw or spot. Moses, Paul, John and all the worthies have spots - there is only one who is white. He is not only white, but ruddy. Speaking further of a life of intense vigour, John clearly brought this out in John 21.25 "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." Amen.

The word 'ruddy' is practically the same word as is used in speaking of the rams' skins dyed red in the tabernacle, conveying the thought of intense consecration to God - the renewed heart and mind craves for this. It is due to the Father that He should be served in loving consecration, not coldly or formally, but with intense devotion. It is with great satisfaction and delight that we muse upon this aspect of our Well Beloved. We have in another place traced this devotion of the Son to the Father ("Blue in Scripture" - the wilderness aspect). Briefly, "He was about His Father's business" at the age of twelve (Luke 2) and when He purified the temple His disciples (the bride) remembered that it is written 'the zeal of Thine house devours me or hath eaten me up' (John 2). They remembered how ruddy He was to His Father's house and the working thereof. It was so all through. He went to the Garden and the Cross that the world might know that He loved the Father and that as the Father had commanded, so He did (John 14.3).

Finally under this heading we have the thought expressed by Stuart that "it is possible that Solomon meant to express no more by the words than the perfect beauty of the Messiah; yet when the prophets testified of Jesus it is expressly written that they spake beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and of the glory that should follow, as if those sufferings entered largely into their descriptions. Who can tell what thought may have occurred to a mind so deeply reflective as Solomon's while he looked on the red blood streaming on Yahweh's altar and when he pondered the uplifting of Abraham's knife against his own son. How nearly he may have prophesied of Him who was to be led as a lamb to the slaughter; or what his interpretation might be of his own description of the beasts which Wisdom killed when she furnished her table."

The white and the red are given as the two combined yet contrasting elements by which the Bridegroom of the Church may be recognised and distinguished from every other beloved, from all other objects of affection and regard among the sons of men.

- A. The bride is the Lamb's wife.
- B. The espousal is the marriage of the Lamb.
- C. The wedding feast - the marriage supper of the Lamb.
- D. The Lamb is specially the Bridegroom's name and no other name is so intimately associated with His marriage and His Bride.
- E. The Lamb in a word is the bridal name of Jesus, but it is also His sacrificial name and always associated with His death.
- F. His name of marriage (Rev. 19.7-9 etc.) and
- G. His name of sacrifice is one! (John 1.29 etc.)
- H. And that name is The Lamb.
- I. The writings of John Zebedee show quite conclusively that THE LAMB is the Father's personal name for the Son (commence at John 1.29 and trace through the various contexts where the phrase is found. We think that you may arrive at our conclusion on the point). It is all THE LAMB OF GOD!
- J. What are the characteristics of the Lamb?

Meekness, silence, harmlessness and other features pertain to the emblem taken in its fulness, but as regards appearance under review at the present, the features are two and only two - white and red are the uniform and unvarying token by which He is to be recognised - "the blood of Christ as of a Lamb without spot and blemish" - "In the midst of the throne a Lamb as it had been slain". Two separate dispensational aspects - (1) today, the Lamb without spot and (2) tomorrow in the Kingdom age "in the midst of the throne". Backward aspect in those days causing to remember His passion and death - a Lamb as it had been slain. These aspects all relative to the bride, of course, and in both ages the cry in unity - "My beloved is white and ruddy."

Our beloved white in the days of His flesh, in the sense of being holy, harmless and undefiled in the midst of sinners, yet separate from sinners, although similar in nature to sinners. He came as the Seed of Abraham (of which we have the honour to belong by adoption) circumcised the eighth day under the Law (Mary having to offer two young pigeons for her cleansing). He was conceived of the Holy Spirit by the Power of God in Mary, a Jewish woman of royal lineage. He was born, advanced in knowledge and wisdom, with experience. He was happy, depressed. He could weep, He became tired and hungry, exhausted under third degree trial and brutal treatment, and He died. His blood was shed and yet throughout His life He was 'white' seen amongst the dark Ethiopian skins of sinners, He was a Nazarite 'whiter than snow' moving among the mire of sin which was all about Him. He was 'without spot or blemish'. Now He is white with the infinite purity of the Divine nature, and could we not say, compared with His brightness, the heavens are not clean? "The Lamb without spot". We have already advanced thoughts comparing ruddy to Jesus being red with His own blood.

(1) Stuart remarks very much to the point - "Every other member of the human family is red with the blood of others, or his brothers, whom he has hated and his sin therefore is as 'red as crimson'".

(2) But Jesus, free from the blood of all, is red with His own blood shed for many. The spotless whiteness makes the blood precious and the red in Him is as pure as white, and makes the whiteness ours, for He could never be our Beloved, except He were both white and ruddy.

(3) The dying malefactor redeemed by the Lamb to be His Bride recognised or knew the beloved by these two tokens - when the red blood streamed before him consecrating the great High Priest on His head, His hands, His feet and His side.

(4) The penitent recognised the whiteness of the Lamb in His spotless manhood. "He hath done nothing amiss" (Luke 23.33-43). In His glorious kingship "Lord remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom", but it was the flowing blood that emboldened him to look on the Holy One as His Beloved.

(5) "Doubting"? Thomas would not own his beloved except he saw Him both 'white and ruddy'. The other disciples testified that they had seen the Lord, a glorious one shining in brightness, whom they first took to be a spirit. Didymus doubted not that they had beheld some glorious being 'white', but "my beloved", he said, "is white and red and none other can I own for mine except I see in His hands the print of the nails and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe". The Beloved answered, "Thomas, reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side," and he instantly exclaimed, "My Lord and my God". This is my Beloved, for He is 'white and ruddy'. This is my Beloved!

Song 5:10 "The chiefest among ten thousand". This phrase is of tremendous importance and vast scope. We can but briefly point out the various aspects of significance contained within the influence of this sphere:

The numerology behind it underlines these thoughts - 10,000 equals 10 taken to its third power, therefore having aspects contained in it symbolising Spiritual Perfection No. 3. Compare (1) three aspects of the Yahweh Name, It "was and is and is to come" (2) Christ raised the third day (Matt. 16:21, Luke 13:31-32). (Rev. 1:4).

No. 10 is the number of Ordinal Perfection, as No. 11 commences another sequence. We think of the Ten Commandments, the Ten Plagues in Egypt, etc. 10,000 equals  $10 \times 10 = 100$   $10 \times 100 = 1,000$   $10 \times 1,000 = 10,000$ . So we arrive at this conclusion: we shall find 10 of ordinal perfection intensified in the 2 of spiritual perfection.

Enoch, one of the worthies of old who will grace the Bride in this wedding day of espousals and gladness, opens the testimony for those who have looked into the prophecies given to them of this glorious Bridegroom. Jude 14 - "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints". Note the dispensational and time period - 7th from Adam (see Gen.5 and Luke's genealogy of Jesus, Luke 3). Seventh from Adam in an ordained genealogy (not cardinal when all stages in the genealogy are included), so derived by God to manifest openly His plan of salvation developing in the progeny of Seth, the line of the seed of promise.

This number of 10,000 is given to imply the completion of this purpose, 10 being the cubic root of this number - cubic perfection and the dominant third power of spiritual perfection.

Again we have the confutation of those who say that the Song, as a prophecy of Jesus and the Bride, contains no message for those living in Solomon's time. Our point is, and demonstrated very vigorously by Enoch (the seventh from Adam), that all dispensations from Adam downwards have had a very definite and stirring message. All are included, none is left out, as we have advanced from the various characters of the Bride drawn out by the Spirit's call from every dispensation, i.e.

1. Abraham saw MY DAY - that is, this day of triumph after sacrifice.
2. Enoch saw Him as the chiefest among ten thousand or standard bearer.
3. David saw Him as the King in Psa.45, complementary to the Song, as we suggested in the Introduction.
4. Solomon revealed Him in the character of the "Beloved" (the greater "David", that is), but not in the turbulence of war and shedding of blood (with the exception of his own, which brought peace ("Solomon") as a reality and a certainty of the anti-typical fulfilment).
5. Solomon further revealed to his day in the person of this Shulamite (feminine of "Solomon" meaning "peaceable"), and again in Jerusalem ("the inheritance of the possessions of peace"), the place of the future Millennial throne. He demonstrated a threefold application of the Bridegroom of King consort - the future throne, within the basic consideration of the Heb. "Shalom" = peace, obtainable only through the "Shalem" = sacrifice of peace offerings. The peace offering is always in the plural application. Peace acting as a guard from every direction, while nothing adverse can gain entrance - Eph.2.11-22, wherein Paul groups all together, the Lord or King, Shepherd and so forth, the Bride reconciled through His blood in peace, and the ultimate building into the living temple of God - the greater Solomon's, also known as the New Jerusalem or the Zion of God. It is all here in cameo.

There were lessons in Solomon's days from this point of view, similar to those given to all ages either by prophecy - Abraham, Enoch, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and so on - or by the exposition of this Song in the days that followed. Each age fits into the basic teaching, the message for us being that we apply diligent thought to find our particular place within the scheme and give it our devout attention! We have seen that Ezra and Nehemiah found their place, even helping to build walls that have fallen down. Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, Thomas, Joseph, Nicodemus, the wise men, Daniel and a host of others, each in their day and generation found their own particular niche within the glorious orbit of this spouse of the Lamb. It is Paul who once again rounds off the sequence in Eph.2.21-22 - "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into a Holy Temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit", or in other words, 1.18 "The glory of His inheritance in the saints" - a double type combining Jerusalem, "the inheritance of the possession of peace", and the temple of Solomon on Mount Zion.

There are lessons enough for us if, with the necessary humility of mind and devout searching, we look into these things, as did the prophets of old who have gone before us, enquiring diligently into their writings for the suffering and the glory of Christ (1 Pet.1.10-13), for the burden of The Song is just this.

We have, then, our brother Enoch in unison with The Song - the chiefest among ten thousand when He cometh with ten thousand saints. What do we make of this phrase? May we outline in very brief detail a few of the thoughts that it presents to us, as we, within the eyes and character of the Beloved, behold and meditate upon Him?

1. The chiefest among ten thousand  
We could assess Him on the spiritual computer of superlatives, excelling all others, "fairer than the children of men" (Psa.45.2), even Messiah, therefore Son of God, consequently brighter than the stars that celebrated His birth.
2. The first and the last  
The first and none before Him (John 1.15, 18 etc.). The last and none after Him, none like, none second, none next, none other in this life, but the promise is that "when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3.2), when this Song is truly sung - THE NEW SONG could this be? We think so. Compare at your leisure the sentiments of the "new song" in Rev.5.1-13. It is but the same version of what our Song has taught us in detail, and note the numerology here - "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands", without number as the sand upon the sea shore and the stars of heaven for multitude (Gen. 22.17 etc.) What a multitude will be contained with the Bride because of the redeeming work of the Bridegroom, all in the love and purpose of the Father.
3. Among ten thousand kings He is the ONE Anointed King, the King of Kings among ten thousand Lords. The One Lord over all, the Lord of Lords (Rev.17.14).
4. He is the One Leader and Commander among ten thousand leaders.
5. Ten thousand captains there may be in the Lord's host, but He is the ONE Captain of Salvation (Heb.2.10).
6. Ten thousand conquerors with palms in their hands, but He is the ONE CONQUEROR over sin, death and hell, Who proclaims - "I have overcome" (Rev. 1.18). This list of superlatives concerning the Chiefest among ten thousand is virtually endless.
7. There are ten thousand Holy Ones, but He is the Holy One of God.
8. Ten thousand shepherds are insufficient to replace Him for He is the Good Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd and the Great Shepherd of the sheep (John 10.11, Psa.23, Heb.13.20, 1 Pet.4.4).
9. Out of ten thousand priests sanctified unto God He is the ONE High Priest consecrated for evermore (Heb.7.24-28).
10. Out of ten thousand prophets He is the ONE prophet, that prophet of whom Moses spake.
11. There are gathered in the general assembly of the church ten thousand firstborn, yet He is the Firstborn of the Father! (Heb.12.22-23).
12. There are ten thousand born out of death, but only because He is - the first begotten from the dead. So we could carry on in praise to our Lord and Master.
13. Ten thousand first fruits unto God, but He is the first fruits of every creature (1 Cor.15.20-28).
14. Of ten thousand risen ones He is the resurrection.
15. Ten thousand names in heaven or in earth, but He is the ONE Name by which men must be saved (Acts 3.16, 4.12).
16. We may have ten thousand brothers, but He is the brother born for adversity.
17. Ten thousand friends, but He is the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.
18. Ten thousand kinsmen, but He is the kinsman - redeemer, the next of kin.
19. Ten thousand advocates may plead, but He is the ONE advocate with the Father.
20. Ten thousand judges may pass sentence, but He is the Judge of the world in righteousness (Psa.72 etc.)
21. Ten thousand are the physicians of this life, but He is the physician of the sick for whom there is no healer - Yahweh Ropheka (Luke 8.43-48).
22. In ten thousand counsellors, He is the "Wonderful, the Counsellor (Isa.9.6).
23. Ten thousand eloquent orators there be: it is "He that spake as never man spake".
24. Ten thousand truthful witnesses have testified, but He is the true and faithful witness (Rev.1.5).

25. Ten thousand meek and lowly have bowed before the Father, but He is the meek and lowly ONE (Matt. 11.28-30).

26. Ten thousand valiant ones have fought the good fight, but He is the ONE who stood alone in the breach in the day of battle.

27. Among ten thousand wise, He is the Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1.30).

28. Among ten thousand mourners - the Man of Sorrows (Isa. 53).

29. Among ten thousand thanksgivings, anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows (Psa. 45).

30. In ten thousand stars, the sun shining in strength (Mal. 4.2).

31. In ten thousand trees of righteousness - the ONE true vine (John 15).

32. In ten thousand branches - the Branch of the Lord (Isa. 11.1-5).

33. In ten thousand sheep in the midst of wolves, He is the Lamb of God (John 1.29-36).

34. Among ten thousand faithful subjects, He is the servant of the Father.

35. Among ten thousand children heirs, the Father's only begotten and well beloved Son (Matt. 3.13-17).

"This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem" ! It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell and that in all things He should have the pre-eminence. He is the Chiefest among ten thousand. This too is my beloved. Is He yours?!

He is the Chief among ten thousand, the Bride declares, but she speaks also of another chief of a different character :

A. Through the mouth of one of the most prominent bridal virgins found within her folds, she announces, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief". How sad the pre-eminence in guilt and how shameful !

B. Yet the Chief among ten thousand holy ones comes to save the chief among ten thousand sinners. Each of those today who find their place within the bridal orbit will take this statement unto himself or herself, as Stuart says,

C. The greatness of salvation and the greatness of transgression suit each other by their very contrast ! The chief of sinners needing the Chief of Saviours - the Chief of Saviours sufficient for the chief of sinners ! " Possibly with Paul we may apply this to ourselves. Are we chief of sinners? If so, then in this sense -

D. The Father sends the Son and the Son presents Himself as the chiefest among ten thousand if we will receive Him ! He has come into the world to save sinners, of whom we are chief !

E. So too is He the Standard Bearer (A.V. marg.) among ten thousand. The pioneer. The One who has gone before. The Captain of our salvation (Heb. 2.10). The rallying point of the people. God has given Him as a leader and commander to the people (Isa. 55.4), their ensign and forerunner (Isa. 11.10, Heb. 6.20).

Compare what the mighties of old said to David - "Thou art worth more than ten thousand of us" (2 Sam. 18.3). The chiefest among ten thousand. The first and the last. The great High Priest (Heb. 4.14). So we must conclude this eulogy of superlatives; one of the most pleasant tasks found in this exposition of the Song. He is beyond compare; and our Bride will now demonstrate in ten particulars why she had made this stupendous statement concerning her Lord; this number 10 being the basis of all the splendour of excellence she has just claimed for her Lord.

in. Song 5:11 "His head is as the most fine gold"

1 It was once said many centuries ago, "Thou art this head of gold" (Dan. 2.38), spoken to Nebuchadnezzar, and of the excellency of the Babylonian kingdom. What a far cry to this Divine excellency of wisdom and power now resident in the Bridegroom Jesus as the Lord, the Spirit. Again we detect a correspondence and union with the chiefest among ten thousand - head of most fine gold.

.6). (a) Very obviously it would appear to teach the immortality of His nature. The Hebrew has it 'the most fine gold, or gold of gold, the finest quality of this most precious metal'.

(b) Pure gold as well as precious. The most fine gold without the least mixture or alloy of any kind or any other metal. Light and no darkness at all. Love and no malice at all. Truth and no shadow cast by turning.



(c) It is vast also in its pure preciousness. Not a single grain, BUT a pure globe of gold. The head one mass of finest gold. The infinite greatness of Deity, pure gold throughout. Golden - power, wisdom, truth, righteousness, holiness, love - such is Christ's head and such is He to us - of the Father (1 Cor.1.17-25) because, of Himself, the Son said, "I can do nothing" (John 5.30-36). Such is Christ's head to the beloved! Why?

The bruised heel of His triumph and her salvation had reference to this golden head. It was the heel of this head - the golden head pertaining to the promised heel - it was the head of that heel. The head was bruised in the heel and the heel exalted in the head. When we as sinners truly accept Jesus, we become most intimately related to this head.

(d) We have not to be discouraged by the disparagement of Christ by His contemporaries when they valued His head at a mere slave's price - "thirty pieces of silver" (Matt.26.14-16 and result Matt.27.3-10). Most fine gold is the estimation of His friends. "To you that believe He is precious", said Peter (1 Pet.2.7), or literally He is the price or preciousness itself. In believing, this preciousness 'rubs off' on to the estimators. "Buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich" (Rev.3.18), and being in truth a member inseparably united to this golden head, surely as He claimed for us in the days of His flesh, we should be above all want, above all poverty and above all fear for ever. (2 Cor.8.9, 1 John 4.15-18).

(e) This ingot of finest gold also teaches that Christ has full intelligence of all that is in the mind and purpose of God (cp Rev.1.14) - the Divine flame thrower penetrating every nook and cranny of our minds and actions.

(f) The fruition of the Father's blessing manwards, all brought to light through and in Christ. The outcome is to be viewed in that complement of the Bride in glory, The heavenly Jerusalem (Rev.21.18) is pure gold because it derives from Christ, and nothing is really of God in the ecclesias today, save what is derived from Him. His thoughts are the true measure of everything and we can thank God that likened unto this fine gold they will never know diminution or decay.

(g) And yet when compared to the living reality of the process of redemption in Christ this gold and silver is compared as corruptible (1 Pet.1.18-19) "Unto us therefore that believe He is precious and that beyond compare".

(h) Yet in the days of His flesh "the Son of man had nowhere to lay His head". What an enormity in contrast between the Judas value - 30 pieces of silver - and this head of finest gold as valued by the true Bride of Christ! How would we compute it? He is the head of the body, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence (Eph. 1.22, Col.1.18, Psa.110.7).

(i) But we have another consideration as we muse over this magnificent head of gold - It was the Father that put "all things under His feet" (1 Cor.15.27-28) "but when He saith all things under Him it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." So we are reminded of the Godhead of Christ - "The head of Christ is God" (1 Cor.11.3).

Isaac Watts once put it as follows :

"His head the finest gold excels,  
There wisdom in perfection dwells;  
And glory like a crown adorns  
Those temples once beset with thorns".

With Tom we are reminded that here we have the

- (1) Gold of immortality (Psa.21.3-4)
- (2) Crown of life (James 1.12)
- (3) With the engraving of a signet, "Holiness to the Lord" (Ex.39.30).

#### FEATURE No. 2

Song 5.11     "His locks are bushy and black as a raven"

We are informed that the word 'black' is elsewhere translated 'youth' (see Eccl.11.10) so that the idea chiefly suggested is that of the vigour of youth. "His locks are bushy and black as a raven". There are no grey hairs to be found upon our Lord Jesus. Compare Hosea 7.9, where the backsliding of Ephraim is

compared to a cake devoured whilst as yet it was not fully baked. Premature old age through being given over to strange gods and apostasy. "Strangers have devoured his strength and he knoweth it not; yea, grey hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not". Such a condition of declension is not found in our Lord. Not only do we as the Bride project Him on the screen of Bible Truth as in (1) in the day of His eternal youth (Psa.110.3), but also, as this Psalm delightfully portrays (also in verse 3) (2) it is "the day of Thy power in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning". Here we find the Bride rightly interpreting the result of the dew of the night of Song 5.2 in the victory of the morrow without clouds. (3) And we take particular notice of Psa.110.3 "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power", unlike herself just previously, whose reflexes were not immediately responsive to the call to fellowship, the dew of these locks during affliction's night. In that future day of eternal youth her hair too would be 'black' (Song 4.1) "the black goats on Gilead", the unshorn locks of true and perfect Nazaritehood, then eternally devoted to Yahweh her God. This Gilead is her place of witness !

She has caught on at last and sees in Him the fulfilment of the long view of faith regarding the locks and the dew in the night. She will be truly willing in that day. Who would not? This splendid One, although taken away in the full vigour of youthful manhood ("black hair and bushy locks") - cp green ears of corn (Lev. 2.12-16 etc.) and the meal offering of first fruits - would return to her and claim her in the eternal vitality of Spirit nature. How precious and comforting these words are to her in all ages during her preparation, when one is faced with the spectre of declining strength and failing powers of old age, of which Ecclesiastes 12 is a masterpiece of TRUTH! While she, along with the earthly 'heaven', is waxing old like a garment, He is ever the same - yesterday, today and tomorrow. He is ever the same and His years to all generations (Psa.102.27 etc.) This is her hope, to have the untiring strength of the spirit, this garment of praise and joy for her adorning.

She will be truly willing and be a willing chariot to convey these wonderful truths in that glad day, for she will be "chariots of the willing or princely people" - Amminadab. (Song 6.12). To convey this witness to the black locks of dew in the radiant atmosphere of redeemed Zion, we see a little later on that this attitude and correct spiritual diagnosis affect the 'daughters of Jerusalem' not a little. And in bridal fashion let us heed the instruction of Psa.110.7 "He will drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall He lift up the head" - the head which is under contemplation. If we drink regularly and deeply of this brook or stream of divine truth (and in particular Song 5 when we are cast down and our locks are full of the dew of affliction in this day of weakness and uncertainty), then we may with the Lord our husband lift up the head in the day of triumph and rejoice in the dew of youth.

Again her raven-like description of the well beloved's hair exercises her thoughts in the direction of

- A. The perfect maturing of wisdom and grace resident in her Lord.
- B. Not the maturity of age, it has been suggested, "for that He had no need".
- C. In Him every grace is fully ripened in the fulness and perfection of spiritual manhood.
- D. The locks are bushy. Not one hair has fallen from His brow.
- E. We have already advanced the thought "they are black as the raven", not one has changed or begun to change its hue.
- F. Jesus saw no corruption. No corruption of death. No corruption of sickness. No corruption of age.
- G. No corruption of one single hair turned His head into the whiteness of years.
- H. No corruption of character.

No corruption was allowed to stand before Him. Three times Jesus met death and it was forthwith removed by Him. (1) Jairus' daughter (Lk.8.41-42 and 49-56) (2) Widow of Nain's son (Lk.7.12-17) (3) Lazarus (Jno.11.34-45).

In the complementary description in Revelation we are told "His head and His hairs are white like wool, as white as snow" (Rev. 1:14). There is no disagree-

ment between them. Black, as we have seen, in one aspect refers to His eternal youth; white to the essential eternity of holiness resident in Him. They will rest side by side with Him until time is no more in the everlasting unity of spirit life with the Father.

Jesus alone of all the sons of men retains the freshness of youth to the end, and, as Stuart delightfully puts it, "In every other beloved there have been grey hairs here and there; in every other some token of the almond tree flourishing, some failure, some decay, some cooling of love to God or to men". The Bride herself has only just suffered the pangs of remorse associated with this position when seeking reconciliation. There was no waxing old, no waning, in Jesus. Nothing in Him was allowed to grow old or decay. We remember that Jesus used Psalm 22 on the cross, and addressing the Father said, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" and added "Thou art He that took me out of the womb, Thou art my God from my mother's belly". It is noticeable that with the same freshness with which He hoped in God when He hung on His mother's breasts, does He hope when He hangs upon the cross. "My God" in both, the raven locks of youth unchanged (Psalm 22 : 1, 9-10 , Matt. 27 : 46).

Jesus loved Martha, her sister and Lazarus, and He loved them to the end. The same yesterday and today. He still has the dew of youth resting upon His raven locks. We have hinted that Jesus has not only the dew of youth for Himself, but confers it on His followers or Bride, "who are all like the dew-drops from the womb of the morning". They will be new born, gloriously new, everlasting new, forever young, rising from the night and chill of death with the new fresh sparkling dew of resurrection morn; the Judgment being past, everyone accepted will bear the image of the First-born Brother -- everyone with the raven locks of everlasting youth.

Perhaps these words may also contain an implied answer to the reproaches of the enemy. Jesus, covered with our imputed transgressions laid upon Him, and as such made His own, is "ashamed to look up" and confess that the evils are more than the hairs of His head. To the enemy He looked dark and defiled in that hour (yet it was the hour in which He glorified the Father and redeemed His Bride - John 12 : 23-33). But He is never more lovely in the eyes of the Bride, never more beautiful and attractive. These sins are none of His own. His own hairs are as white as wool, whiter than snow, and the blackness of our transgressions that covered His head deformed Him not in her eyes. If His locks are counted black by His murderers, as if defiled by the soot of Egypt, they shine to His friends with unsullied lustre, "black as the raven's wing".

One further thought we must mention on this second detail of the glorified Christ and then pass on. It is with regard to the opposite attributes (such wonders to our finite understandings!) that are found within our Lord. We have just discussed one such - black and white hair. We perceive another in the "simplicity of the dove" as it is found in Him (Song 5 : 12), and the "impenetrable darkness" of the raven. "Black as a raven". His judgments are very deep, clouds and darkness are round about Him. His path is in the sea and His footsteps are not known. He is past finding out. He will render judgment to His enemies, for "He is strong in power". Wisdom and might are His (Rom. 11 : 33, Psalm 117 : 2, Isaiah 40 : 26, Dan. 2 : 20). Although applied in a primary sense to the Father, they are now resident in Jesus, to Whom the Father has given "all power in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28 : 18).

We have not to do with things that grow "old and aged" (Heb. 8 : 13) like the first covenant, but with One of whom it is said, "Thou art the same and thy years shall not fail". On the side of man's responsibility, everything has tended to decay (there is evidence that it will be so even in the Millennial age. Rev. 20). Perpetuity and immortality of perfection are in Christ alone. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End (Rev. 22 : 13). The glory of God and the blessing of every family of the redeemed is secured unchangeable in Christ as the Head, Who is the same yesterday, and today, and to the ages to come. There is no change, nor ever will be, in Christ the Head, by the mercy of the Father. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords too (Rev. 17). This raven-like aspect will be terrible to those who know Him not (little though they may realise it today), but to us who believe and are in the Beloved, as the Bride apparent, we hope, His locks, "black as raven's wings" are indeed precious.

Song 5 : 12 "His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the river of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set".

It is true, as we observed in Song 4 : 1, with regard to Christ's description of His beloved, that the eyes are the mirror of the soul, and wondrously we see what was mirrored there - the image of the Bridegroom Himself. She had doves' eyes because she had learned of Him to walk in lowliness, to mourn for Zion, to reflect the character of the Spirit as she had detected within His "black locks". We have seen the "goats on Gilead" being a faint glimmering of these truths before us at the moment, as seen in herself. Here, then, is what she saw and the substance of her own doves' eyes.

(a) My A.V. margin gives eyes "sitting in fulness". "The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good" (Prov. 15 : 3). "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4 : 13), even the eyes of His glory and might, like Boaz of old speaking of Ruth, "it hath been fully showed unto me all that thou hast done" (Ruth 2 : 11). Those eyes have followed us, searched us through (Psalm 139) all our days.

(b) In fact, the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, in that He may show Himself strong on behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards Him (2 Chron. 16 : 9).

(c) Is it not an unspeakable comfort to know that "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous" (or His Bride) and that He always sits by, like the refiner, to watch the gold in the furnace.

1. We have commented upon that look of unutterable grief and of inimitable tenderness which broke the heart of Peter (Luke 22 : 61-62);
2. The eyes that wept tears of grief over Jerusalem (Matt. 23 : 37-39);
3. The eyes that were "lifted up" in supplication to meet the downcast glance of the Father's eye, in prayer for His Bride or people;
4. The look of salvation to Zacchaeus, the outcast and quisling at Jericho (Luke 19:5);
5. The eyes that wept over a loved one whom death had claimed - Lazarus (John 11 : 35), as mentioned already;
6. The eyes that sought out the erstwhile blind one cast out of the Temple because of faithful witness to his benefactor (John 9 : 34-35) - but read the whole chapter to get the force of the argument;
7. The eyes of perception that withstood the devil or the workings of sin (John 5 : 15, Matt. 4 : 1-11).
8. The eyes of pity and mercy that perceived the plight of the widow of Nain and restored to her her dead son (already commented on);
9. The eyes of true separation and family likeness in Mark 3 : 31-35, and of certain identification within our Bride : "the same is My sister", etc.;
10. The eyes of guidance and instruction in the way of truth (Psalm 32 : 8), "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go".

All these aspects of the mirror of the soul are to be found in the doves' eyes of the Lord. In fact they are all contained and found within the limits of Rev. 5 : 6, where their being "set forth in fulness" is strikingly set forth in a Lamb, or the Lamb, having seven horns and seven eyes, seven denoting fulness, completeness and perfection. See also Zech. 3 : 9, 4 : 10, assuring us of the omniscience of the Lord. We can never escape His penetrating gaze. "Whither shall I flee from Thy spirit?", etc. (the whole of Psalm 139). There is none so omniscient as Jesus. How different this aspect of the dovelike character of the Bridegroom's eyes from the eyes as a flame of fire (Rev. 1 : 14) which mark Him as judging in the midst of the ecclesias!

There it is! Divine purity acting in a judicial way to search out, and detect, all that is unholy and untrue, and to bring it under judgment. Such an aspect of Christ's eyes only comes in on account of persistent disregard of His eyes as doves' and the refusal of His purifying service of love. When His headship is no longer recognised and the ecclesias are no longer in affectionate subjection to Him, Jesus can no longer regard them as having the features of His Spouse. Evils were there which called for rebuke, and which, if unrepented of, would inevitably come under judgment, but the eyes of the Wellbeloved as resting upon His Spouse would have no such aspect as this. They beam upon her with gentle and complacent affection, for she recognises Him as her Head.

Again we must emphasise that no other third person is found in this Song. The only comparison she makes is not towards one other lover, but against all other lovers. Her Beloved is beyond contrasting with lovers, devout or otherwise. To single out any one person is unthinkable in any circumstances whatever.

However she may have failed, she has now returned to loyal affections. Her desire is towards Him in the subjection of love, as in hearty appreciation of His beauty, and she is telling what He is in her eyes. She knows herself to be the object of His love, and in the consciousness of this she is free from self-consideration. How blessed to find such a state of heart! Those eyes only convey to her thoughts covering the previous process of purifying.

The multitudinous components of this Bride will recall to mind the various channels through which their particular cleansing came. Paul in Ephesians 5 gives the lead, saying, "He loved the church and has delivered Himself up for it in order that He might sanctify it, purifying it by the washing of water, by the Word, that He might present the church to Himself, glorious, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing".

The word of God's grace has been the agent of cleansing all her days down the various dispensations of time. John 13:1-17 revealed the way such knowledge should be practised and, as she surveys these eyes that have known "all things", even in prospect by the spirit of prophecy in olden times before He was manifested (1 Pet. 1:7-13, etc.), she remembers the all consummate desire they attracted in her and the "witchery" which compelled a following of and subjection to this beautiful Lord. They and the children of men! The happy conclusion of such a course now gripped her in the joy of spirit life at the marriage of the Lamb and herself. Matt. 3:13-17 will be vividly recalled by her during this narration of eulogistic superlatives. The dove's descent (the Holy Spirit of the Father), the dove's eyes full of the Holy Spirit without measure, as full as the quiet running brook to which she had compared them - eyes of doves by rivers of waters. Jordan = The Plunger, the river of death, and when this marriage is actually consummated, the river of death for the Bride will have been healed (see Song 1:14 and comments there).

Great will be her rejoicing as she outlines these features of her Beloved. Sorrow and death now well and truly behind her! Separation gone! All that is left is the eternal unity without any trace of reproach in those wonderful eyes that never leave her. Could she ask for more? The tranquility of the Eternal Spirit will pervade her as she looks with the wonder of spirit knowledge into those eyes so "fitly set", as were indeed the stones of the High Priestly breastplate (Ex. 28:17) in the ouches of pure gold, the secure fastening of spirit nature. The eyes of a man or woman who faithfully love their respective partners are indeed a wonder and thing of beauty, but the eyes of Him who loved us to the uttermost are beyond price and comparison.

What, during the various ages of her conception and assembly, has she most readily experienced personally? Now it would seem in this eulogy we have the pent up emotions of her combined unity uttering forth her appreciation down the ages, that these wonderful eyes have searched her thoughts and guided her to Him throughout the long watches of the Gentile night. Words have often failed us to express our personal love and gratitude towards our Lord. They appear completely inadequate. ---

- (1) Shyness perhaps has stunted our expressions.
- (2) Inability probably has been a major cause of its omission.
- (3) Unworthiness has no doubt heightened our appreciation, and at the same time retarded confession and expression of these attributes of spiritual beauty.
- (4) However, when this eulogy is expressed, all these disadvantages of the flesh will have been resolved and consumed in spirit nature. Haste the Day, we pray, and may the Father grant that our confessions may find inclusion within these verses now before us.

If we have been faithful to our trust then, as Jesus, our eyes will have been washed with milk during times of loneliness. When the sheep were in the pastures on the hill sides, the eyes of the shepherd would be washed in milk to remove the grit and inflammation caused by the hot Syrian sun and irritation through exposure to it. In a similar sense, daily washing in the milk of the Word will help a great deal to remove the irritations of our pasturate, keeping our eyes alert and quick in His service.

Song 5 : 13 "His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers" - the A.V. margin gives "towers of perfumes" or another "banks of balsam", literally, of course, His face or countenance.

The Bride would combine all fragrance, sweetness and beauty at once "in the face of Jesus Christ". We have written in another place of the wonders of grace seen in a portrayal of the different aspects of the face of Jesus in Scripture (see "What's in a Name? No. 1, Numbers 33" under Punon station). Burnt within her memory was the thought that this face for her sake was once shamefully entreated and spitted upon, as it is written, "I hid not my face from shame and spitting; I gave my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair" (Isaiah 50 : 6). It is when we realise that in Hebrew eyes the cheeks are reckoned as the most beautiful feature of the face, that we understand the terrible things they did to Jesus in "His beauty beyond the children of men". In these cheeks of balsam flowers Jesus had presented the character of the Father to His contemporaries, and they spat upon Him, and so greatly abhorred even the Father Himself. Can we wonder why Jerusalem was destroyed and Jewry scattered?

We have presented the idea in our opening chapter that the Vulgate puts forth Nazareth as the 'flower town' and we see the reason why, because Jesus, the Flower of Yah, would dwell there and grace it by His presence. In Isaiah 11 : 1-5 we are introduced to the discernment by Jesus of the Divine fragrance of character that He bore and His swift reaction to it. So we find its sweet fragrance wafting continually around us as we delight to do His will, as Jesus did His Father's will, or, in the language of Psalm 89 : 15, we find it our highest delight to walk in the light of that countenance. It can be compared to a garden full of pillars of bushy balsam banks, not single flowers but whole banks of fragrant balsam, a bed of spices or a mass of sweet flowers filling the air with heavy fragrant perfume. The Father gave not the Holy Spirit to Him in measure but, as John again witnesses, "without measure" (John 1 : 14-16) - not the evidence of a single flower, delicate and beautiful though it may be, but whose sphere of influence is soon lost because of its single perfume; but rather the massive evidence of whole banks of such flowers, where the very atmosphere is permeated by them.

This is the Divine testimony and the Bride's acknowledgment of the Father's moral beauty as detected within the Son, her Lord. Once we have found our way into this Garden, this influence of the Flower of the Lord, we are most surely held for ever in its unforgettable perfume, as of "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1 : 14). "No man cometh unto Me except the Father draw him" first (John 6 : 44). The compelling scent of these flowers is also found in "the ointment" and the perfume of the Name, drawing us, or which has drawn us, to Him. As our Bride lovingly draws attention to these features of rare beauty, she is also cognisant of the ascending nature of this perfume, reminding her once again of His merits alone, through Whom her prayers had ascended to the throne on high and had found acceptance before the Father.

We have hinted at the Hebrew conception that the cheeks were the seat of beauty, and we are given to understand that the Hebrew word signifies this. The face as well as the head was anointed with fragrant oil, making the face shine, and the ointment flowing down the beard rendered it fragrant, like a bed of aromatic plants. We have just briefly mentioned Jesus with respect to these things - the head of Jesus anointed and His cheeks as a bed of spices. "Cheeks of spices", even the principal ones (see Ex. 30 : 23, again already expounded), myrrh, sweet cinnamon, sweet calamus and cassia - in reference, with Tom, to the future Melchizedekian priesthood, for she, too, the Bride, must be anointed with spices from the cheek bed to be priest with the Beloved. We have indeed youthful Spring, which blooms with the blush of youth from the womb of the morning - seen in the cheeks as "sweet flowers". Truly "the Winter is past and the flowers appear on the earth" (Song 2 : 12). There they are upon the cheeks of the Beloved, with fragrant spices, held, to our intense delight, in eternal bloom and fragrance.

Darby translates, "His cheeks are as a bed of spices, raised beds of sweet plants", and Coates speaks of the "lowly grace of our Lord", seen to his mind as he recalls the number of Scriptures which speak of smiting on the cheek. Well might the Bride in these turbulent days have to expose herself to man's violence in true

testimony to that bond of affliction never so far away from any one of us. He was exposed to insult and hatred, speaking of how near He came to men and in how lowly a guise.

"They shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek" (Micah 5:1). Contrast in this sequence the majesty of our Lord (verse 2), a ruler in Israel whose going forth was of old, from the days of eternity (compare Luke 3, the genealogy of Christ). In the future "He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of Yahweh, in the majesty of the Name of Yahweh, His God" (verses 4 and 5), linking up with the theme of our Song - "And this, or this Man, shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land".

He is indeed our peace, the Prince of Peace, Who will reign in a Possession of Peace, Whose name is Peace (Solomon), with a Bride of like description - Peaceable (Shulamite). Yet He Who is our peace was smitten, bruised and afflicted: "They smote the Judge of Israel upon the cheek". The greatest smiting undoubtedly took place when Judas kissed Him on the face with the kiss of betrayal. They smote Him on the face with the palms of their hands, in fulfilment of Micah 5:1. These smitten cheeks are to us the fragrant beds of spices. These smitten cheeks are to us the sweetest of flowers. They were lovely and fragrant in themselves, but Israel saw no beauty in them, and inhaled from them no perfume of the Spirit. Some beauty, some comeliness, some desirability they saw in Barabbas. They desired the murderer and petitioned, "Give us Barabbas!"

They loved their peace not! They could neither accept nor tolerate the Holy One of God, and though we, the Bride, must take our responsibilities as sinners in this action, for once we were sinners of the Gentiles without hope and without God in the world. By God's grace we are now found in Him; we pray in and at peace (Ephes. 2:11-22) and look on Him Whom we have pierced, and Whom all have pierced. Our insults have enhanced His beauty. Our smiting has drawn forth His fragrance, and His cheeks are now like aromatic plants and fairest flowers - "sweet flowers and beds of spices".

Israel of old had nationally esteemed Him "stricken of God and afflicted", but to us who believe He is the "preciousness" (1 Pet. 2:7). This twofold approach to Christ still exists, for whilst He is highly exalted in heaven in glory and nature, it is still in some ways the day of His humiliation in this world. Men are as ready to smite Him on the cheek as ever, and this not least amongst those who make profession of His name. He is still wounded in the house of His friends. If we, in our lectures, query the inspiration of the Scriptures upon which He has put His seal, what is this but a public smiting of Him upon the cheek? But what a privilege it is, as seeing His incomparable worth and glory, to be in any small way identified with His dishonour and reproach!

Finally, with Tom we note, in keeping with the raven-like hair, we have the youthful bloom of Spring, with the blush of youth from the womb of the morning, seen in the cheeks as "sweet flowers". Truly the time is when the Winter is past and the flowers appear on the earth. O breathe, my Sister, my Love, and live in the spirit air of the Spring of Life!

#### FEATURE No. 5

Song 5:13 "His lips are like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh".

(1) Here we find another side to His humiliation, if it has brought out what men have thought of Him.

(2) It has also brought out all the grace that was in the heart of God manward. The Bride has just described it for us in this verse. His lips - lilies dropping myrrh. Allowing for poetic licence, how can lilies drop myrrh? Myrrh, as we have already advanced, is an aromatic gum that exudes, artificially or otherwise, out of a tree. It can be assumed that the myrrh had first of all exuded from the bark of the tree, and then dropped down upon the lilies, mingling with their own scent its own unmistakable fragrance. No doubt a clue as to the interpretation can be found in an earlier verse, Song 5:5, where the Bride's hands were smeared with "sweet smelling myrrh" from the handle of the door, a token of the visit of her Lord and of His sacrifice on her behalf. We detect most readily that the lilies speak of the attractiveness of grace as set forth in Jesus. He Himself told us that there is something in the lilies which surpasses all the glory of Solomon (Matt. 6:28-29). The title of Psalm 45 (the psalm most intimately connected with the Song) tells us that it is "upon Shoshannim", meaning The Lilies (Passover Lilies), and this brings to mind a very important point which should have been included in the Introduction - that it is important to note that this Song was sung annually in Israel in the eighth day of the Passover Feast; therefore, only those who know Christ as their Passover Lamb can possibly understand it (see Notes on Song, Outlined Bible (Tree))

We note, then, that the lilies, apart from the other considerations in Song 2 : 1-2 (see there), have to do with Passover and glory (Matt. 6 : 28-29), the myrrh speaking (free flowing and sweet smelling) of the willing sacrifice of the Lord and that as an ascending offering, well pleasing to the Father.

- (1) We understand, then, the principle of sacrifice once again permeating this teaching.
- (2) The glory of obedience being a principal part - compare the tension of John 12 : 23, the point of glory.
- (3) Obviously stressed in this glorious obedience to the Father's will (John 12 : 23). Jesus, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified" (verses 24 - 25) - principle outlined: death on the cross necessary to bring forth much fruit (actually the Bride herself).
- (4) Shrinking of the flesh from such humiliation, affliction and degradation.
- (5) Strong conviction in faith - "For this cause came I unto this hour".
- (6) "Father, glorify Thy Name", meaning a set determination on His part to fulfil the cause.
- (7) The Father's confidence in the Son - "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again".
- (8) John 13 : 31-32, the certainty of the involvement - the die is cast! "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him". How tragic it all is, the die being cast by one of His own friends - Judas!

So the myrrh is dropped from the lily, or upon the lily. In it we see the glory of obedient sacrifice in the Christ or Passover (1 Cor. 5 : 7-8), but this is not the end of the matter, nor the end of the Lord.

1 Kings 7 : 15-16 - The pillars, Jachin and Boaz, of Solomon's Temple were of lily work on the top, and so also was the molten sea (verse 26), the brim thereof being wrought like the brim of a cup with flowers of lilies.

This Temple is the one that "Peace" (= Solomon) built for the habitation of the Father, the most costly edifice this world has ever seen (see "Essays, 1967" - Solomon's Temple), pointing forward to the time when God will "be all in all", and the way of redemption that has led to it.

The pillars, Jachin and Boaz, the ornamental pillars at the entrance to the porch, present us with the facts that God will strengthen (Boaz) and that it would be brought about by redemption (Ruth chapters 2 and 3) and that the Highest Himself would establish it (Jachin) as Zion itself (Psalm 87, Hebrews 12 : 22-29). Incidentally, "establish" is one of the meanings of "Zion". Although we undoubtedly have reference in these pillars of the House of God to such worthies in prospect as Peter and John (Gal. 2 : 9), the Spirit would have discern the grace of the Father revealed in the One Pillar of Truth that never faltered or collapsed under pressure, the One Whom God established and strengthened, even the Bridegroom Himself, through whose instrumentality this glorious edifice after the Spirit would be erected for a sure and eternal dwelling-place of Deity (Ephes. 2 : 14-22, 1 Pet. 2 : 1-10). The lily work of ornamentation around the top of Jachin and Boaz reveal the way by which it became possible. Shoshannim = Passover = Sacrifice, and the progress wonderfully revealed "from glory" (of sacrifice, as we have seen, of obedience in sin's flesh) "to glory" of stability and establishment in the living temple of Deity now resplendent in spiritual nature. Of such is the implication that the crowning glory of these pillars is the lily work that caused them to be erected and established. "The lily droppings of myrrh", indeed.

1 Kings 7 : 23 - The molten sea likewise had this decoration of lily work of huge proportions set upon the backs of twelve oxen facing outwards to all points of the compass, speaking of the water of cleansing for spiritual duty in the Temple of the Living God, going out to all the world through the lily-work emblem around the brim, again born of the love and sacrifice of the Father and Son. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (i.e. all creation). "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16 : 16). Verse 29 speaks of oxen, lions and cherubim also being part of the ornamentation of the bases, showing that this activity is all in the redemptive purpose of God. So we have outlined the glory of suffering and of service and the final consummation of glory of Divine nature, spoken of by Peter (2 Pet. 1 : 1-10), revealing in this connection, the lily dropping myrrh, the droppings pointing to the particular variety of myrrh = the sweet smelling self-exuding myrrh, speaking of the voluntary nature of His sacrifice.



As we are part of the symbology, likewise our part, once called to Levitical service in Christ, is voluntary, and our reasonable service and happy privilege (Rom. 12:1-2).

The lily, this lowly scarlet flower of the field or Sharon, born out of humility, has in it the surpassing glory of the character of God as manifested in Jesus our Lord and Bridegroom, and, as Song 2:1 puts it, must be found in us growing amidst afflictions, the thorns of this world, yet we know full well that the Lord will seek out, for on such He loves to feed (Song 6:2-3).

Returning to our verse, Song 5:13, we see quite plainly that this likeness we have been investigating is comparable to "His lips that are like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh". Again we go to Psalm 45 and Solomon's Temple to find our connection. Psalm 45:2, "Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into Thy lips: therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever".

First of all, with Tom we see that these lips are sweeter than those of Solomon in all his glory, for "grace is poured into Thy lips" - lips opened for the mouth to praise God. Formed are the lips to sustain with words him that is weary: "He opened His mouth" (Matt. 5:2). How like sweet myrrh the words of grace must have dropped upon the ears of the woman who loved much (Luke 7:47). Now in the Song is realised to the full the quickening spirit lips. He asks, "Could such lips with the voice of salvation be expressed better than in such words as "lilies dropping with sweet smelling myrrh"?, for He said, "My words are spirit and they are life". We know His enemies had to admit that "no man spake as this man". Consider, too, Luke 4:16-24, where Jesus reads out of Isaiah 61:1, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath appointed me to preach the gospel to the poor", etc., "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord", and He began to say unto them, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears", and they all bare Him witness and wondered at the words of grace (R.V.) which proceeded out of His mouth. Yet they were blind to the fact that Jesus proceeded and came forth from the Father, that He was the Word made flesh dwelling among them in the glory of the Father, the only begotten, full of grace and truth (John 1:14. Compare also verses 16 and 17).

But where can our lead be found in the Temple of Solomon (1 Kings 7:16), where the word for "molten" in Hebrew is "yatsag" and is the same word as for "poured" in Psalm 45:2, "grace is poured into Thy lips" (see also 1 Kings 7:23-30, 33; 2 Chron. 4:2; Gen. 28:18; Ex. 39:17)? This molten brass was used for the pillars and the brazen sea, so the words of grace as purified brass were poured into the lips of Christ, and, as the natural metal solidified into an "established" or "stable" state, in such a way did the words of grace, "dropping from His lips", lead to the erection of the living pillars: and, as the water from the brazen sea, issuing from taps in the mouths of the oxen, cleansed the priests and the Levites for priestly service, so the Water of Life sent by Christ through His servants the apostles does. By God's grace we, who have followed after, have had the means of cleansing. "Whosoever will" - those who have sought the Lord in truth are spiritual priests and Levites at the moment and help the Bridegroom in presenting to Himself His Bride without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Ephes. 5). Through the droppings of His lips and by His grace the Word once flesh becomes eternally fixed in the solid state of the Spirit and immortality.

Compare also the word "made" or "framed" (Kay) in Psalm 45:1. It is used of the fine art work of the Tabernacle (Ex. 26:1, Ex. 31:36, Ex. 27:16, Ex. 28:32) and, bringing the verse into sharper focus, in 1 Kings 7:17-19, where we find "lily work". H. MacMillan once said in reference to the lily work, "those floral high priests that daily send up their fragrance to heaven". Grant that we may be found in Christ after the order of Melchizedek! This theme is far from being exhausted and a careful and prayerful approach will supply great wealth to the seeker, particularly if we seek as for hidden treasure.

Finally, under this heading could we advance a few thoughts in the personal aspect of our Lord to these lovely lips envisaged by the Bride at this time of the marriage celebrations? -

"His lips like lilies"

(1) The lips of Jesus were pure. There was no guile in His mouth, no deceit in His tongue (Isaiah 53).

- (2) The lip of Truth was His. His the only human lip that knew no guile. Adam's lip was pure as it came from his Creator's hand, but when it touched the forbidden fruit it was filled with guile and bitterness - "The woman Thou gavest me, she gave me of the tree". Our lips have inherited the leprosy and are impure and untrue, but the lips of Jesus were pure as scarlet lilies.
- (3) The lips of Jesus were gentle. The soft tongue that breaketh the bone was His. Unlike us when He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered He threatened not (1 Pet.2.21-24).
- (4) From His birth to His grave the softness of the lily marked His lips and distinguished Him from all the human family.
- (5) Burning lips were in His disciples - "Shall we call down fire from heaven?" "Ye know not what spirit ye are of, the Son of Man came not to destroy but to save". His lips like lilies!
- (6) Burning lips were in His foes - set on fire of hell. "All they that see me laugh me to scorn, they shoot out the lip, they shake the head" - but His lips were still like lilies - "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do".
- (7) His lips were like lilies in His speech; His lips were also like lilies in His silence. His were soft words and His was gentlest, holiest silence.

"Dropping sweet smelling myrrh"

- (A) The lips of Jesus were full of wisdom, 'dropping sweet smelling myrrh'. In their own free opening they overflowed with the most odorous myrrh. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4.16-23).
- (B) The officers sent to take Him, returned without Him, and their apology was "never man spake like this man", because His lips dropped myrrh around Him; they came within its fragrance and could not touch the man to whom those Lips pertained!
- (C) His enemies would force His lips open. He could speak well and wisely of His own free choice, selecting what to utter, but there is gall of asps under every man's tongue, and though we see it not, it must be lurking beneath. And they urged Him to speak of many things, but the well spring of wisdom from His mouth, was a flowing brook and His lips pouring forth rapid and continuous replies to their urgent and incessant demands, dropped only sweetest myrrh.
- (D) His keenest enemies found nothing whereof to accuse Him. The fountain that was beneath the tongue they resolved to test, and they tested it to the utmost, but every drop that passed His lips was purest myrrh and so was every drop in the hidden source within.
- (E) His lips are like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh. The same now, the same gentle lips in heaven, as on earth, and exquisitely fragrant are the drops of myrrh that fall to the earth, and for the children of earth, from the lips of Jesus! Jesus at the right hand of God, speaking ever for us there - speaking ever to us thence. (Stuart).

In eulogising these most precious lips of her Lord, the Bride is but drawing upon her personal experience (in a multitudinous sense, of course) of what they have said to her and spoken for her and shown her in example, fully bridled lips at all times, sin never being found at the door of His mouth. Lips that have encouraged and sternly warned and furthermore, in our own day, lips that are waiting to kiss us with the kisses of His mouth according to our own particular request. "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth"! to which we say Amen, Yea, verily!

FEATURE NO.6

Song 5 : 14 "His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl"

Again we notice the dominance of gold in its reference to Christ :

- (1) His head as the most fine gold (Song 5.11)  
 (2) His hands as gold rings set with the beryl (5.14)  
 (3) His legs as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold (5.15).
- These three features alone demonstrate to us the perfection of spiritual completion.

- (a) Head direction and domination over the rest of the body.
- (b) The hand symbolic of power in action. "The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly", wholly divine (now type swallowed up by substance) in their skilful working.
- (c) The legs symbolic of endurance and support through movement have their sockets of gold, by which articulation and balance depend, and are of the non-decaying variety. No arthritic condition can be observed here. No change within the joint capsule - the sockets which maintain stability and mobility are of fine gold. The picture thus presented is of divine stability and perfection.

A. The rings or (R.V.) cylinders of gold first of all call to mind the eternity of the wearer, for it would appear to indicate that the rings are not fully an image of the hands themselves, but an ornament with which they are invested and by which they are distinguished from the hands of the others. "His hands, gold rings set with beryl". These rings characterise them, or with Stuart, if we may use an expression, His hands have gold rings set with beryl. One of the older Bibles renders it "His hands are full of gold rings and precious stones". The ring was worn either on the finger or on the wrist, but the Scriptures without reference to this distinction speak uniformly of "a ring on the hand". We think first of all of the eternity of the one who wears or grasps such a ring. Gold represents perfection and glory as outlined in Solomon's glorious temple (1 Kings 7 etc.)

B. A ring is the only way we can describe eternity in symbol fully. A continuous circle, but we must of necessity begin and complete that circle. So largely we are baffled and come to the conclusion that our efforts are only a 'poor best'. It is a link by which our finite thoughts may be turned towards such a glorious condition, but in reality it is far beyond our thought and comprehension and a participation in, can only bring true satisfaction (1 John 3.2).

C. The ring and the elements contained, point to the perfection of the hands of Christ on power and love (John 10.28-29). "I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand"; the secret of it all being, "My Father which gave them me is greater than all and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand". 1 Pet.3.22 - Angels and authorities and powers have been made in subjection to Him. All power in heaven and earth has been delegated to Him-by the Father, with, of course, the exception of Himself. (Matt.28.18, 1 Cor.15.26-28).

Our safety or city of refuge in Him is certain, should we so be inclined in these days of independence in thought, action and morals. As the doors of these ancient cities were closed neither night nor day, and the shelterer might leave at his dictates, yet by the time this eulogy is presented, the safety of each individual element of the Bride will have been accomplished in immortality. We shall have experienced the full proof of the name Imanuel - God will be a Saviour. Jesus = God with us. It is said of the Father Himself, "Thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good". These hands manifested forth in the Son have dropped "handfuls of purpose" for us whereof we are glad!

D. The hands are the instruments and agents in action as the lips are in expression.

1. In this application our thoughts turn to those 'dreadful rings of the cherubim of Ez.1 and 10.

2. Ez.1.18 reads, "As for their rings they are so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four".

3. We notice that their colour "was like unto the colour of a beryl" etc.

4. The immense power of the rings or wheels or cylinders is revealed by the fact that they were enclosed as a wheel within a wheel (1.16), presenting the section of a wheel towards each head of the cherubim which were four here (1.10).

5. A man, a lion, an ox and an eagle.

6. Their speed was as the appearance of a flash of lightning (1.13).

7. Their progress was straight forward; at the dictation of the Spirit they went and turned not (aside) as they went (1.12).

8. That is, whichever aspect of the four heads God wished to use, the cherubim went, all four in agreement, following the commands.

9. Their understanding and intelligence in obeying that can make them to be as lightning in movement is outlined in 1.18. They were full of eyes!

10. The height and dreadful appearance has reference to the massive concentration of power resident in them to wipe out any interference or obstacle in their path.

In these ten brief particulars we are introduced to the aspect of the hands of the Well Beloved as agents in direction, resistless in power and might, intelligent in use and expression, and again linking up with the Song 5.14 - as the beryl.

"The work of His hands are verity and judgment", we read of the Father (Psa.111.7-8, Deut.32.4), and to the Son of Man hath He committed all judgment (John 5.22), righteous judgment.

1. The beryl is a green stone, which never receives reflection from any other colour or shade, but remains unaffected by contact with other things, so commented an earlier expositor (Mrs Steven). If this is the colour of the beryl as set in golden rings of intelligence, power, etc. (as we have advanced from the cherubim), then this stone is indeed the seal or signet representing the perfection of the works of His hands. Nothing can be added to them, nothing taken from them. This we found in another place (What's in a name No.1, Numbers 33, p. 72) to be intrusive in the meaning of the word 'cherubim' itself. We may then find, or have found because the experience of the Truth of this symbol had taken place in every member of that constituted body of the multitudinous Bride, that they had experienced it time and time again. Now in immortality they can reveal just what it had meant to them in the days of their probation and time!

2. The pierced hands had supported her and guarded her during the long ages of separation (Song 2.6 etc.) In her own strength she had accomplished nothing worthy of continuance of enduring merit. Whatever had been attempted and finished she had done through Christ who strengthened her, and the endurance underlying all her labours she realised was of Him. She was comforted throughout her pilgrimage by this thought (2 Cor.1.3-7).

3. Matt.14.31. Peter, one of that glorious multitude, well remembered the time on tempestuous Galilee being full of faith, temporarily, he sallied forth, walking on the waters towards Jesus at His Lord's bidding. Then, Peter realised the angry seas, and beginning to sink, he said, "Lord, save me". And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand (Matt.14.25-33). Peter remembered as he estimated the worth of his glorified Lord from immortal nature and concept as the hands like rings set with beryl. He had sealed within His grasp the mastery of the cosmic elements when the winds ceased. Can we not discern among the other constituents of this immortal Bride, the mind of Peter on this wise, also Song 8.6-7. Many waters cannot quench love, etc., nor could they separate him from His Lord etc. Peter had on this occasion, amid tempestuous Galilee, personal experience of the strength and immediate succour of those hands as rings, set with the beryl.

Finally under this heading, a brief selection of Bible teaching in regard to rings found obviously in perfection in Christ:

A. The symbol respecting His person - the gold ring is emblematic first of freedom, sonship, dignity (cp Luke 15.22-24) - the restored prodigal is given back his former status - 'the ring on his hand', shoes removed when he lost his freedom to become the most menial of slaves feeding the unclean swine, are received by him, and the best robe, as Joseph received the coat of long sleeves or many colours etc. Also James 2.2-9, speaking of riches being compatible with goodly apparel along with the exhortation not to draw distinctions between the worldly rich and poor.

It would appear, then, that the present position of possessing a gold ring would suggest a pure token of restoration to sonship. How could this apply to the only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth? With Stuart we agree, "of all that have ever trod God's earth, Jesus the son of Mary is alone entitled to the gold ring on His hand, for it was Adam's and he lost it, nor was there any to claim it again till the second Adam appeared, and His it was peculiarly and pre-eminently as the Son of God". He took upon Him the form of a servant, was sold for the price of a slave, and died the death of a slave (and felon) with the iron nails piercing His hands;

but asserting that He was not liable to the tribute money for God's temple because "the children are free". He declared that He alone of all men was a child, a Son, alone of all men free. Most suitably therefore does the church affirm that He is more than 'any other beloved' because that He alone is entitled to the gold ring upon His hand. In this consideration the signal honour is passed on to the church in the fact that because He is the Son, those whom He is not ashamed to call brethren are sons along with Him, and He takes from us the iron ring of the slave and invests us with the gold ring of the child and free man - the Son making us free, we are free indeed!

B. The ring is the emblem of power and authority being set with the beryl, the ring enclosing the precious stone with the engraven signet. This aspect is readily discerned in Joseph, who was given the signet ring of power and authority, being brought from slavery and the prison house of Egypt, and whose feet were hurt with 'iron fetters' (Psa.105.17-20) to the authority of Prime Minister in Egypt (Gen. 42.38-44) and given the signet ring of authority direct from Pharaoh's hand. Gen.38.18-25 had already advanced this point of view regarding the signet or ring used as the authority of Judah. Esther 3.10, 8.8 further emphasises this teaching used as the seal of King Ahasuerus' power and authority.

C. Isa.3.21 brings the idea of adornment, particularly to the feminine mind. May we not discern then this aspect portraying Jesus as the perfection of adornment in her eyes.

D. Gen.24.22 and Gen.38.18-25 have brought forward the conception of betrothal and marriage associated with the golden ring, and these are found in the Song as we have seen (Song 5.14). The bonds of marriage are fixed in eternity between the King and His Shulamite.

E. Of the Son it is written that "Him hath the Father sealed": consequently, in Rev.7 and 14 the redeemed are also sealed with the signet of the Father's Name, 144 thousand having the name of the Father written in their foreheads. And with Paul, she is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, the many rings on the hands of Christ being another figure of speech representative of His head with many crowns, both highlighting His manifold authority, dominion and power over heaven, earth and hell (Matt.28.18, Rev.1,17-18), also of His dominion over the seven golden candlesticks held in His right hand (the symbol of power and might), verse 20.

F. The safety of the Bride is assured under this emblem of hands as rings set with the beryl because there is nothing more firmly grasped in the hand than a ring. The hand itself must be shattered before such a treasure can be plucked away by force, and so long as the hand of Christ retains its power, His people who are as rings can never be plucked from it. Compare the case of that wicked king of Judah, Coniah. There was nothing of old so jealously guarded as the signet ring. God speaks of plucking of such a signet ring off, as that which none other could do, and that which would be done by Himself last of all. "Though Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim, were the signet on my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence" (Jer.22.24). Consequently, we submit, there is no position in the universe so safe against all enemies, so safe for all eternity, as to be amongst those gold rings set with the beryl on the hand of our Lord.

We are happy to know that (a) "the Father loves the Son and has given all things to be in His hand" (John 3.35) (b) "the Father hath given Him authority over all flesh," that to all that the Father has given to Him, He should give them life eternal (John 17.2) (c) everyone of His sheep is in His hand and therefore will never perish (John 10.28) (d) 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! Hence Psa.2.12, "Kiss the Son (that is, His hand) lest he be angry and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are they that put their trust in Him". The Concordance studied under this heading will lead to greater expansion of this wonderful symbol if so desired.

Two closing thoughts relative to this beryl. The Hebrew word is Tarshish and if it was in reality the beryl as we know it, then it would appear to be tenth in sequence on the breastplate of the High Priest, corresponding with Zebulun, the tenth son of Jacob. Fausset's Bible Dictionary informs us that the ancients admitted several varieties of this gem, one of which was the chrysoprase, the name of the precious stone garnishing the tenth foundation of the wall of the Holy City, New

Jerusalem (Rev.21.20 R.V.). The men of Zebulun and Naphtali comprised the majority in the twelve disciples of Jesus, who Himself dwelt in Zebulun. The refraction of the light of the Holy Spirit within Him transformed that place of gross darkness and complacency. "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up." (Matt.4.13-16). The connection of 3 and 10 point out clearly that this manifestation will lead to spiritual perfection (3) and that ordinal (10) to which none can be added. Ten commandments, ten plagues, etc., agreeing with the application of the wings to the cherubim as we outlined a little earlier in our notes.

The R.V. gives an alternative rendering for beryl which is topaz and we have that wonderful yellow stone instead of the blue green of the beryl. Undoubtedly we can discern sense in this alternative in the name and the amber colour representing the immortality of this glorious Lord. Howbeit, time and space forbid further expansion. We have chosen to set out the teaching under the beryl aspect.

The Bride as she makes this contribution in immortality has herself experienced all the aspects of this right hand of the Lord that has done so valiantly on her behalf. Expressed again in the words of Paul himself (Rom.8.31-39), indeed "who can separate us from the love of Christ?" Read the whole sequence, and using the Hebrew expression 'Selah' pause and ponder over these things carefully, for they comfort no end, and strengthen mightily in the things most surely believed amongst us.

#### FEATURE No.7

Song 5.14 "His belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphire", or "His bowels" (as the word is everywhere else rendered) are as bright ivory overlaid or interveined with sapphire.

The first thought that occurs to mind is the fact that the bowels of compassion of our Lord are expressed here in this figurative language. Compare the following passages for the general idea behind it:

(a) "My bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him saith the Lord" (Jer.31.20).

(b) "Mine heart is turned within me; my repentings are kindled together" (Hosea 11.8, also Isa.63.15 etc.)

The expression bespeaks the depth of the riches of His tenderness and love. This condition has already been advanced in our last section, but in reality springs from this sapphire aspect. (For a fuller exposition see "What's in a Word No.1 The Significance of Blue in Scripture", Hall, under sapphire aspect). Briefly it is because Jesus had set the sapphire teaching within His heart or bowels (Psa.40.8) and the word for 'within' here is the same as 'sapphire' in Hebrew, that His compassion had been aroused and Jesus had compassion on the multitude etc.

In Ex.24.10, the first appearance of sapphire in Scripture, we have the vision of Jesus as it were standing upon a paved work of a sapphire stone or the body of heaven in clearness. The word 'body' actually means 'bone', so sapphire represents the bone or framework as bone is to the human frame or animal etc., the skeletal form outlined characteristically defining the sex or species of human or animal. The word pavement in Ex.24.10 is brought out in John 19.13 - the pavement of judgment, the Gabbatha - the place where judgment is pronounced. The word sapphire is of course applied to the translucent blue precious stone of the same name coming from the Hebrew 'sapphir' meaning to cut, scratch, inscribe. Moses was about to receive the ten commandments inscribed on two tables of stone (thought to be sapphires by the ancients) by the finger of God. (Ex.24.12, 31.18).

The basis of sapphire, then, from this reasoning supplied from the Spirit Word itself, is that it represented at that time the Law of God inscribed within the Word of God as found in that given to Moses, and that this Law was the very structure and bone of God's purpose with Israel; not only so, but that it also was a means of judgment. Seen in the act of standing upon or above this Law, we are directed to the effect that the very thoughts and actions of Jesus, the Bridegroom, would be judged by it, and that Jesus accepted this as realistic and true of all in Himself, and secondly those who lived during its ministrations. All the promises and curses of the Mosaic Law are found in this wonderful verse, proving also the statement of Jesus who came

as He said at that time, not to judge, but the Word that He spoke would inevitably judge those who heard it (John 12.44-50). The opposite is to be observed in the next sequence of sapphire manifestation, Ezek. chapters 1 and 10. In 1.26 we are introduced to the likeness of a throne as the appearance of a sapphire stone, and upon the likeness of the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. The vision applies, as no doubt we are well aware, to the Millennial throne of Jesus. Now He is no longer a matter of judgment for the sapphire word of God, but He Himself sits as a judge, dispensing the Laws of God to those who have been saved out of the day of rain, just as Jesus Himself had been judged by the Mosaic commands of God and stood upon or over the judgments found therein.

So now in Ezek.1.10 we are introduced to the fact that the Millennial age will be subject to the laws and dispensations of the millennial throne in Zion and judgment in righteousness the basis of it. Now we have to make these judgments reverting back to Ex.24.10 etc. effective in Himself. Jesus had first to hide them within His heart or bowels. In Hebrew thought we have already alluded to this process in (1) Psa.40.8 - "I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart". Precisely the sentiments expressed by the word 'within' = 'sapphire', from which sapphire is derived. (2) 40.9-10 result of this exercise (verse 10) could not be concealed within the heart of Jesus (v.9) "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation". He had not refrained His lips! (3) In fact a five-fold declaration of the attributes and character of Yahweh had been preached by Jesus in life and by word. (4) Psa.40.10-11 (A) righteousness (B) faithfulness (C) salvation (D) loving kindness (E) truth. Jesus had manifested in everyday life the five-fold exhibition of grace as seen here (see Numerology of Scripture Chapter in "Blue" by Hall, for evidence that No.5 is not only the number of blue and sapphire, but also of grace etc.) So the effect produced within the heart of Jesus has a definite lead in connection with our salvation. We must leave the further exposition of sapphire from this point of view at this juncture with the exception of applying to oneself the lessons in Colossians 3.1-2 etc. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth, for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (v.12). Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another" etc. "May the word of Christ dwell in us richly", that we may have part in the fellowship of the Spirit and bowels and mercies, having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind with and in the Christ body (Col. 2.1-3 etc., Phil.1.8).

The Hebrew idea of bowels and the Greek agree that it is the sapphire element in the sense that the bowels of love and mercies are the production of the application of the word given by the finger of God, sharper than any two edged sword (Heb.4.12-13). To one's own heart and affection, first of all this spiritual surgery will 'cut out' all the dross and afterwards fill it with bowels of mercies and love of the Christ-like variety of great price.

From these considerations we may now progress to the aspect of the ivory symbology of the belly or body of Christ. Differing ideas have been conceived in regard to this highly spiritual detail, some reasonable, others rather more extravagant. However, the actual identification may not trouble us too much, as the ivory aspect in itself is sufficient to give us what we are seeking. The most reasonable idea is the one that likens the ivory body with blue interweavings to the idea of the white of a perfect skin with the blue veinings delicately outlined, which is the natural state and is in itself a thing of beauty.

Ivory is the hardest animal substance. Bright or polished is the finest sort. It is intriguing to notice that the brightness, or polishing, is only arrived at through considerable friction and that ivory itself is the product of suffering and usually death. It is not like gold or gems or precious wood, but it is yielded at the cost of suffering (apart from the pearl, of course). Again we are taken back to the afflictions of our Lord speaking of His compassion being the entering in with His own spirit into all that was upon the creature, though yet at the same time remaining sinless (Heb.4.14-16).

- (1) "Himself took our infirmities and bore our diseases" (Matt. 8:17).
- (2) He was moved with compassion when He saw the crowds, "because they were harassed and cast away as sheep not having a shepherd" (Matt. 9:16).
- (3) He was moved with compassion when He touched the blind man's eyes (Matt. 20:34).
- (4) He had compassion on the crowd when they had stayed with Him three days and had not anything they could eat (Mark 8:2).
- (5) He had compassion on the widow of Nain, who was bereft of her only son (Luke 7:13).
- (6) The Good Samaritan (a picture of our Lord and Bridegroom) was moved with compassion when he saw the half-dead man (Luke 10:33).
- (7) Jesus, with His intimate knowledge of the Father, could speak of Him as being moved with compassion when He saw His lost son arise to return (Luke 15:20).

Why do we emphasise this sevenfold aspect of compassion in application to the Father and Son? Because in all these instances the word for compassion signifies "a yearning of the bowels", and it may be observed by a little investigation of these instances of Divine compassion that, with the exception of the case of the two blind men, these compassions were unsought by those upon whom they were exercised. In other words, they were truly sovereign in character and pure grace in operation - a merciful connection between the ivory and the sapphire in Yahweh Ropheka (the Lord our Healer). This is the true character of compassion. It flows out to need which is realised in the feelings of the one who shows it. What the Bridegroom said and did was the outcome of - "He felt things" (Heb. 2:17-18, 4:14-16). Perhaps in our speaking duties, and pastoral of course, we ought to realise this very important consideration, that the power of preaching (amongst other important aspects out of focus at the moment) lies in how the speaker feels things. Those who do not know God do not realise their needs, but we who humbly represent this great Bridegroom and gracious Lord represent One who does feel it, so that what we speak conveys to them what Christ feels. If our speaking is to be effective, the bowels and compassion of Christ must be in the speaker by the spirit of Christ found in the Word within us.

Song 5:14 The R. V. for the ivory body or bowels gives "work of ivory" or "wrought work of ivory", the delicate carving beautifully and skilfully executed by Eastern craftsmen. In this information we find at once a contrast, and at the same time a most wonderful comparison.

Ex. 26:31. Under the Law, the veil dividing the Holy and Most Holy Places was basically made of white fine twined linen of cunning work. This veil represented the flesh of Jesus. (Heb. 10:20). The coloured needlework need not concern us at the moment. The Hebrew word "shesh" for the white linen reminds us of the holiness and righteousness of Jesus (Rev. 19:8). "Cunning work" = Heb. "Choseb". A weaver is properly one who reckons or counts, from the Heb. "chasab" (Wordsworth), from Gesenius introducing the fact that the righteousness and holiness of Christ were based upon computation of facts - first of all, what God demanded, and secondly, the ability of Christ to appreciate and reckon the cost (Psalm 45:7, Luke 14:25-35). Jesus, through the ability granted to Him to discern clearly between right and wrong, was ideally the only person to make the correct computation, or "count the cost" - what God desired of Him and men in general. Part of this "cost", "woven" into the very structure of His office as Messiah and High Priest of Israel (Heb. 5:1-9), was the ability to have "compassion on the ignorant" (R.V. "bearing gently with them who are erring"). From the way of necessity, it implied that He Himself should be compassed or bound about with infirmity, that is to say, in our flesh, the flesh of sin. The passages already quoted under this heading plainly demonstrated this fact.

The cherubic embroidery on this veil adds further emphasis representing the saints or the Bride herself, as having some part in the rending of the veil. Paul later disclosed it - "helping to fill up what is left behind of Christ's sufferings for His body's sake", that is to say for His church (Col. 1:11). She too, following her Lord, has counted the cost of His sacrifice and accordingly has reckoned up her part in following Him in living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-3). Her life is truly hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3) and so it continues all the days of her probation and waiting.

With immortal eyes and from the vantage point of now being at His side at the Nuptial Feast, the various and multitudinous number of the redeemed of which she is composed remember with gratitude and love these eventful happenings, so essential to their perfection and salvation. She narrates, as we have read, that in



immortality that "linen sheet of the cunning weaver" has given way to "wrought work of ivory", the hardest animal substance, gleaming white, delicately worked. This she thought depicted truly, that glorified body now splendid in immutable holiness, impervious to spear thrust; the compassion set firm in eternity with all the exquisite work of the Spirit fully manifest in it.

Of the other colours in the veil, blue alone remained resplendent with the basic teaching of God's word and grace which, along with sacrifice and obedience, made up the essential factors of the ivory bowels of mercies. The body prepared (Psa.40.8 s.w.a.) "ivory interveined with sapphire". May our eyes be able to perceive such a glorious sight in that glad day!

Such is the Spirit's way of reconciling contrast and comparison. It is with great joy that we find our Bride appreciating the deep feelings of compassion as they have been expressed in the Son - (a) His groans, (b) His sighs, (c) His tears - - reveal a true man, but the compassions and sympathies are heavenly (John 11.33-38). A word of warning greets us. These aspects of the Divine compassion must be detected and matched by us in this life. Appreciation now is essential, because if they are absent now, tomorrow will not be for us. We must search for them as hidden treasure now, then in tomorrow full experience and expression of these will be ours as we take our part in this Divine eulogy.

Other considerations in this exquisite theme attract us again with very strong and vital connections with "The Significance of Blue in Scripture". Solomon "made a great throne of ivory" and we are informed "there was not the like made in any kingdom" (1 Kings 10.18-20). The thought occurs to us that the throne of the Kingdom is very elevated and majestic, but, as we have seen, it is a compassionate throne, and of the antitypical future, is there not a 'great white throne' (Rev.20.11) from which will issue judgment and against which none can stand?

The Bride vividly remembers that the One who will sit on this glorious throne is the One who wept at the grave of Lazarus. The three at Bethany - Mary, Martha and Lazarus in particular, and the One who wept over a Jerusalem that was about to witness His crucifixion! Think of Psalm 72.4, 12-14, Isa.32.2, 42.3, 61.1-3, Zech.6.13, in this light. The deep feelings which are symbolised by "wrought work of ivory overlaid with sapphires" give character to the throne on which Christ will sit. It will be a throne of grace and mercy which will be dispensed from it. When this throne is 'set' in the coming day at Jerusalem, the gold will be there, speaking of Divine Glory; the steps will have their answer in the elevation of the throne; the lion in its majestic strength; the sons of the King will be found in His saints etc.

The word for ivory is "tooth" etc., and Shinar according to Zechariah was the Land of the Tooth - the wrenching tooth of Babylonian ascendancy that rent Judah and The Land in its fury and might (Zech.5.11). The white throne of the Kingdom is seen in similar ascendancy during the Millennium. It too will have rent the Land of the Tooth - latter day Shinar, Roman Italy and all the kings of the earth which made war against the Lamb (Rev.17.9-18). But He is King of kings and Lord of lords. His tooth, the authority of the great white throne, will have destroyed all apostasy and rebellion. None can withstand its power and devastating might. It is controlled as we have seen by the sapphire aspect of the throne (Ezek.1 and 10) - the commands and statutes of God. Just as no one could break the bones of Jesus, who was the Word made flesh (for no command of the Father ever fell to the ground with Him - John 19.16, John 1.14, John 5.30, John 6.38-39), so, equally, will no earthly power be able to resist the power of the millennial throne, as we have seen, a symbol of the body multitudinous of Christ and also of His compassion.

Christ as King will keep and administer the commands and dictates of the Father, with a similar insight and devotion as He Himself kept the Word inviolate during the days of His flesh. This is the message of the sapphire content in His glorious body, and, as we have advanced, the Bride herself being discernible within this body of glory, she too will 'sit in His throne' (Rev.3.20), sharing this wondrous throne with Her Lord. The 'compassion' and strength, the severity and goodness of Her Lord, is truly reckoned and discernible to the spouse, and she gives them a place in her description of the King who is also her Beloved! Is He not our Beloved too?

A last thought under this heading brings us to Psa.45.8 - "All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad". This verse has come before us before. We have depicted the character of Jesus as determined in the holy anointing of oil used on Aaron etc. in Psa.133.2: we find it in profusion running down from off Aaron's head to his garments and to the skirts of his garments, wherein or whereon was found the pomegranate etc., speaking of the multitudinous seed. We have this picture in antitype before us in Psa.45.8. This Bride who now eulogises had first felt the (aloes) bitterness of death, lived with Him as a living sacrifice (myrrh) and through Him triumphed over death (cassia). Ivory palaces are also found within this body which is seen in the symbol of the holy anointing oil to allow for the ivory palaces or wrought work of ivory to be seen of the Bride of His making. (A little earlier we reviewed this point regarding the compassion of the Bride). Paul - "I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ" (Phil.1.8), and he exhorted the Colossians to put on "bowels of compassion" (Col.3.12). She had learned and appreciated the wrought work of ivory as seen in Him and through His strength it had been wrought in her, therefore the ivory palaces formed within His Bride, yet in His body will praise Him her Lord and husband upon the stringed instruments of algum wood seen in the temple and the King's house (1 Kings 10.11-12). The most precious of fragrant trees, brilliant in polish and steadfast in nature now covered with gold of Divine nature. Their praise will make the well-beloved glad as it ascends to the Father, the praise of the glorified Son and Daughter giving eternal delight to the Father who had conceived them in mind and purpose before the world was - "in the beginning" (Gen.1.1). Ivory palaces cannot be built without much suffering, as we have seen, but it is out of such palaces that music issues to gladden the heart of the well-beloved, typically speaking.

Humility and contrition sweep over us when realising our position as dust and ashes. We read in Rom.9.15 Darby Version - "I will feel compassion for whom I will feel compassion", meaning that from the teeming millions of the population of the worlds (ages of time) it has pleased God to choose us out, and, undeserving on our part, be granted the compassion of God and Christ and Paul etc., should we be found within the Bride. God disclosed His feelings towards His elect. Jesus had Divine compassion, as we have seen; Paul followed closely on in Philippians and Colossians. He showed a special yearning over them as saints. They were causes of undoubted anxiety, but they were the occasion of deep feeling and spiritual yearning. So in these days, the bowels of compassion to be put on by us refer to the deep and tender feelings which are to be in mutual exercise among the brethren, so even if things are not as they should be, there are the yearnings of love - "the wrought work of ivory overlaid with sapphire" appear in this. The time in our arranging meetings set out for spiritual welfare when undertaken in the apostolic spirit can rightly be classified under the heading of compassion. It is, however, a personal obligation that we show and use as a talent fit for our Master's appreciation, bowels of compassion to those around us!

So much for wrought ivory and sapphire imagery in the Well Beloved as envisaged by OURSELVES, we hope in that DAY! We pass on now to our next feature - in one sense reluctantly, and so arrive at No.8.

#### FEATURE No.8

Song 5.15 "His legs are as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold"

Darby gives "bases of fine gold": Coates (to whom we owe many fine thoughts in this narration of the beauties of Messiah) remarks, "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. Cp Heb.1.8-9. Darby's version - "Thy throne, O God, is to the age of the age and a sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of Thy Kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hast hated lawlessness". Back again to Psa.45. We cannot escape it in the exposition of The Song. It is complementary to the Wedding Ode to The Song.

The Hebrew word for marble is Shesh - the white linen of the tabernacle - and of course expresses the whiteness of the substance spoken of, figurative, as we have seen, of righteousness. Again we have our contrast yet comparison between the whiteness of fine linen and the gleaming white of marble.

A. The white linen embodied the white surrounds of the court etc., lifted up on brass pillars and their sockets of brass, with hook and fillets of silver (Ex.27. 9-18), the righteousness based upon obedience and submission to God's commands in this life, embodying the destruction of dictates of sin in one's personality. The quotation from Psa.45 and Heb.1.9 gives the only approach - "loving righteousness and hating iniquity". Christ alone accomplished this in perfection. The hooks of silver etc. speak of the redemption found in it, and the 60 pillars have their application to the three score valiant men surrounding the bed of Solomon or King of peace (Song 3.7-8), the mighties of Jesus which come under exposition at the above verses. The idea of protection is accordingly conveyed in this white screen of the dwelling place of God in the wilderness.

B. The more durable white 'Shesh' marble speaks of similar things, only in a different dispensational setting. Now as we have stressed before, the time is the Kingdom age: the obedience, submission and destruction of self have been accomplished by the Bridegroom. This righteous defence etc. will no more be taken down, carried in transit from one place to another: the travelling days are done and probation has given way to permanence of nature and stability of character, fixed as the Eternal Himself, durable and immovable.

A comparison may be made with the white marble surroundings of the temple of Solomon, where similar ideas may be found. These thoughts are all found exemplified in this symbology of legs of white marble found with Jesus. As we have advanced, the picture is depicted of stability in righteousness, and we are struck with the thoughts of whiteness running throughout the spouse's description of her Beloved: (1) 5.10 "My beloved is white", (2) 5.12 "washing with milk", (3) 5.14 "bright ivory", (4) 5.15 "pillars of marble" and (5) 5.15 "His countenance is as Lebanon". Lebanon has this thought of whiteness in it, probably so called from the snow that rests on it (Jer.18.14), and we have the suggestion that all that is of the Father must have this character. It appears, as we have seen, in the great white throne of the coming Kingdom (Rev.20.11).

He "shall be the stability of thy times" (Isaiah 33:5-6). This the Bride foreknew, even in the days of His flesh, as Paul rendered in Heb. 1:9. How much more so in the immortality of the Divine nature granted as a gift to herself through the grace of the Father centred in the Son! There is no uncertainty or instability about Christ; no possibility of anything being overturned or even moved. The whole created universe can be shaken and will be shaken, but Christ and what is established in Him stands firm eternally. In being brought to Him we receive a kingdom that cannot be moved! The bases of gold, of fine gold, highlight the fact that all in Christ is stable because it is purely of God! and is established upon the only true foundation of infinite survival - Divine righteousness and glory; because the promises of God upon which all stability is based are in Him, "yea and amen" (2 Cor. 1:20). The sentiments of Jachin and Boaz, the ornamental pillars of Solomon's Temple, give us much encouragement on this wise. Both pillars and legs have been "established" ("Jachin") by Yahweh, for in Him is "strength" ("Boaz").

The psalmist said that God taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man (Psa. 147:1), simply because men of flesh have never been able to stand in any position in which God placed him, unstable and weak knees that bow down under the strain, absolutely unable to endure the weight of responsibility and glory designed by God for His purpose. This suggestion of standing in might and strength recall to mind Micah's words, "And He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord" (Mic. 5:4).

As our thoughts linger around the gleaming beauty of marble and probably wander to the skill of Michael Angelo, we go back again in time to the glory of Solomon's Temple. Marble stones were in abundance (1 Chron. 29:2). And our thoughts go forward again to those who are to make up the temple of living stones (1 Pet. 2:4-7) in the temple of His body. The skill of the Divine Bezaleel is found in them. Do we have this hall-mark?

We have alluded to the impression of whiteness regarding Christ made upon the Bride.

Equally so we find upon consideration the emphasis of gold made on her in her narration in this chapter.

(Song 5.11) Gold above "head as fine gold" and (Song 5.15) below - feet?

(5.14) hands as golden rings. A golden Beloved able to bear and carry all the burdens of His people. We said that His feet are not mentioned because the picture of the legs and sockets is one of stability and not mobility, but the implication is there most certainly in the Hebrew, as the word translated 'legs' comes from a root which signifies 'to walk', so that the ways or goings of the Lord may be understood here.

(a) Cp Psa.25.10 "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth".

(b) Deut.32.4 "All His ways are judgment".

(c) Isa.55.8-9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways".

(d) Isa.40.3-4 "Not crooked but straight, not rough but plain".

(e) Ezek.18.29 "Not unequal but equal".

Sure as "pillars of marble set upon sockets or feet of fine gold".

As disciples first of all we are called upon to follow in the footsteps of Christ, not in darkness of mind causing us to stumble (1 Pet.2.8), but being obedient to the Word we realise "For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered, leaving us an example that ye should follow in His steps", "who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth", etc. Again the footsteps of the Word guide us to the basic elements of our belief - participation in the sacrifice of Christ so that in the way when this narration will actually take place we may be at His side as the redeemed Bride. We take our leave of this particular aspect of the Lord with renewed faith in the Divine strength as portrayed in "the legs of marble" Eccl.12.3. Can we find no place in Him? The day when the keeper (knees or legs) of the house shall tremble (with men they do, as the writer can testify, otherwise he would soon be out of work!) The knees of Christ never bent under pressure. They were always set and steady in the Father's purpose.

A. We have already commented upon the fact that His bones were not suffered to be broken on the cross.

B. The legs of the malefactor who was crucified beside Him were broken - for all the power of the wicked shall be broken into pieces.

C. The legs of the newly penitent were also broken, for his own strength was but weakness, and all his help was in another.

D. But they brake not the legs of Jesus: as Stuart comments, "For the Father while bruising Him would ever grant some token of His love and care and would leave in Him a type of everlasting strength remaining in the midst of weakness" Jno.19.31-33.

At the present moment of time, through the eyes of Stephen we have regard to the legs of marble, and see Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ready to mediate and give succour to those who approach the Father through Him in sincerity and truth: we behold and wonder in anticipation of the day when along with our brother Stephen we may assess the value of His legs. To us they have been and are as "pillars of marble in sockets of gold". We remember that the call comes to us in Heb.12.12 to "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees": alone in Him can we find strength.

#### FEATURE No.9

Song 5.15 "His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars"!

We are advised that this word for 'countenance' signifies not only the face but the whole structure of a person, or that which gives one the full sight of all his parts together. Compare 2 Sam.23.21 (in the original "a man of countenance") with 1 Chron.11.23 ("a man of stature"). It should read then "His stature is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars". The spouse, having already portrayed her Beloved from head to feet, now refers, we doubt not, to His general appearance, to all His glorious features together, His full stature - and His stature is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. This figure evidently illustrates His glorious majesty as Messiah and Bridegroom. The lofty cedars on that goodly mountain, Lebanon, are the standing type in Scripture of exaltation, glory and

- majesty. Resplendent as the "most fine gold" from head to foot, adorned with every grace, fragrant with all sweetness, glorious and majestic like the cedars of Lebanon, is the person of her Well Beloved. Truly there is none so glorious, none so full of majesty as Jesus. His elevation is as Lebanon - "white shining snow". From a similar root in Hebrew we derive Lebonah = frankincense. Whenever the Bride has looked upon her Lord during her probation, this elevation of holiness and righteousness has extracted her praise either as seen in -
1. The prophets, for instance in Psa.45 into which we have looked most closely. Isa.7.14 - the Emmanuel = God with us. 9.6 - as the Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.
  2. Luke 1.30-35 - before birth by angels. Luke 1.41-44 - by Elizabeth's child leaping in her womb.
  3. Luke 2.8-20 - by shepherds at His birth.
  4. Luke 2.21-39 - At the temple by Simeon and Anna in earliest childhood after 8 days old.
  5. During formative years - Luke 2.40-52 - Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in-favour with God and man.
  6. John 1.29-51 - By John the Baptist at His baptism, completing the second half of a two-fold testimony making it sure (Gen.41.32).
  7. Luke 5.18-21 - the multitude after the miracle of healing on the paralytic.
  8. Luke 7.37-50 - the woman who washed His feet with tears etc.
  9. John 11 - Mary and Martha etc. at the death and raising of Lazarus.
  10. Luke 23.39-43 - the thief on the cross who repented and fully believed on Jesus as the Son of God. (How great will be his rejoicing in that day. We are thinking of how vivid will be his memory of that day when he realised who Jesus really was and praised Him by his faith. Our brother really gave Jesus a close up from the Old Testament prophecy and grasped the whole elevation of His holiness and righteousness in one dramatic sweep - "Lord remember me when thou comest into Thy Kingdom" ! May the Lord do so to us !)
  11. John 19.38-42 - The preparation of Joseph and Nicodemus by spices and in heart at His death.
  12. John 20.24-29 - The dedication of Thomas - "My Lord and My God" ! In so many particulars and in many more, did the Bride praise her Lord whilst yet in her flesh. Whenever she looked at Him she saw excellent bearing comparable with the majesty and dignity of the Son of the Highest. The Gospels have testified of Him in an immense variety of situations and circumstances. In every one with friends, individuals, crowds, Pharisees, Scribes, rationalists, lawyers, kings and governors, High Priests and other dignitaries, with the traitor Judas and as with ourselves, feeble and failing believers. Whenever, in public or private, there was nothing lower than Lebanon, or less noble than the cedars.
  13. Mary Magdalene, or Simon, or James his half brother, or the two walking to Emmaus, or with the assembly of the disciples on the first day of the week - His bearing was truly excellent.
  14. Rev.1.13-14 - His bearing as He walks amidst the ecclesias, His excellency is still discernible, and how suitable it is to the conditions which He reviews and upon which He passes judgment.
  15. And so it will be forever, as whether reigning in the Kingdom or finally as placed under subjection to God in the eternal state. Supreme excellence is there, and it will be the eternal joy of the Bride.

Those of us who have been able to look on that goodly mountain, Lebanon, and the excellence of the cedars in this life, no doubt will look forward with eager anticipation to the substance in actual narration at the nuptial feast of the Lamb and His Bride, and at that time of rejoicing return in thought and nostalgia to those snow riven heights and majestic cedars that called forth the imagery.

What did or will the Bride really see in this vision of supreme excellence? Surely in its fulness "He who hath seen me hath seen the Father". If this could be said in the days of His flesh, how much more so as He is surveyed through the immortal eyes of His Bride?

In the days of His flesh the nations saw no excellence in Him. "There is no beauty that we should desire Him". "His visage is so marred more than any man and his form more than the sons of men". Isa.53.2, 52.14. Such was the world's estimate of Christ. His countenance like Lebanon and His form like the cedars is the church's estimate! They all naturally regard Him as a tender plant and root out of a dry ground, not to be numbered among the trees, a mere heath of the desert; not to be numbered among the sons of men, a worm, and no man! But to the believers who have made up the Bride "He is fairer than the sons of men", more excellent than all the trees of the field, noble and lofty above all men as the cedar is above the bramble, the thistle or the hyssop. Like the cedar He is full of and is excellent in greenness, perpetual greenness, for the trees of God are full of sap. This tree of God is full of the sap of life or the perpetual spring, this cedar which the Lord hath planted.

#### FEATURE No.10

Song 5.16 "This is my Beloved, saith the Bride. His mouth is most sweet; yea He is altogether lovely".

Her final thoughts are conveyed with His mouth, or R.V. palate. In themselves they are a remarkable summary of all that has transpired during the eulogy of perfection that has occupied the Bridal powers of thought and memory which have been collected in the various experiences of her relationship with Him during the ages of time that have witnessed the formation of the multitudinous units into this most glorious Bride invested now with immortal nature and recollection.

We have on an earlier occasion written of the importance of the palate with its sensitivity and remarkable powers of taste etc., how naturally we possess but six senses of taste - salt, alkaline, metallic etc. But Jesus had seven; this the Bride now appreciates. The seventh can only mean that of spiritual perception. This was granted to Jesus as we saw from Isa.11.1-5, and we also noted His personal appreciation of it in Psa.45.8. His perfect love of right and absolute hatred of sin (see Numbers 33 for further expansion under this heading). The point we wish to emphasise is the fact that Jesus knew clearly and full well which was sin and righteousness, and always took the correct course, no matter how He Himself should fare as a consequence! In the natural sense the necessity to keep the palate clean by abstemious living etc. is well known, so in its spiritual element Christ never allowed its sensitivity to be clouded over by wrong doing. He always did those things that pleased the Father.

"O taste and see how gracious the Lord is" was in Him never allowed to become inactive through neglect or coated with the rime of life, contrary to truth. Each of the nine particulars were possible because of the right use of this delicate indicator and of course in personal dedication of its owner to the things of the Spirit! "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for His mouth is most sweet". She has already asked because of this knowledge she now praises in Him. There is unutterable sweetness in all the words of Jesus that flow from His lips (Luke 4. 16-22 we have quoted in this respect). "They all wondered at the words of grace that fell from His lips".

We think now of the breath of the lips of Jesus which is most sweet! John records how Jesus breathed on the disciples and said "Receive ye the Holy Spirit", and from that hour this breath hath filled this world with sweetness, wonderfully manifested now in the Word of Truth we love, which is given by the inspiration or the breathing of God (2 Tim.3.15-16). The breath of Jesus is indeed the breath of Him who was conceived of the Holy Spirit; the breath of Him who was anointed without measure with spiritual fragrance; the breath of Him who rose from the mountain of myrrh, and stands on the Hill of Frankincense, exhaling all the fragrance of that infinite frankincense and myrrh. With the breath of His lips he slays the wicked, and the righteous answer - "True and righteous are Thy judgments". "His mouth is most sweet". With the breath of His lips in keen conviction, he pierces through the self-righteous soul, yet even then His mouth is sweet to that soul.

So we must conclude with the sentiments "His mouth is most sweet" in the words of an old poet:

"His mouth is most sweet  
 His mouth a triple heaven reveals  
 His Word, His breath, His kiss,  
 A triple doom to all it seals  
 Who spurn the proffer'd bliss."

We are called to be followers of Him who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, who when He was reviled reviled not again (1 Pet.2.22-23). Peter also quotes the Psalmist in a very touching plea to us (1 Pet.3.10), "For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile".

The same feature is testified of the glorious Bride herself reflecting the image of her Lord - "In their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Rev.14.5). John omits to tell us that they (or she) are presented faultless by, or in, or through Jesus before the throne (Jude 24.25).

If we have been able (as divinely taught by The Song and the other portions of the Scriptures consulted and analysed) to appreciate the glory of the beauty of Christ, we shall exclaim along with Psa.45 - "Thou art beauteous beyond the children of men", and in understanding the figurative and symbolic description of Him by the spouse I am sure we shall be ready to say with her (Song 5.16) "Yea, He is the altogether lovely". Each of His features, then, that we can trace, is lovely in its perfection and no feature of perfection is lacking.

"He is altogether lovely". "What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved?" it may be asked. The Bride has replied - "Christ is all and in all". Why? For in Him dwelleth all the Godhead bodily (Col.1.19, 2.9), as we advanced a little while back.

What did Newton the poet think?

"If asked what of Jesus I think,  
 Though still my best thoughts are but poor,  
 I say He's my meat and my drink,  
 My Life and my strength and my store,  
 My Shepherd, my husband, my friend,  
 My Saviour from sin and from all,  
 My Hope from beginning to end,  
 My portion, My Lord and my all."

To which we may add, "For His name is the only name given under heaven whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4.10).

Note again the threefold application (Song 5.16).

(1) the altogether lovely, (2) my beloved, (3) my friend. This is the first time she had used the word friend - "my friend". Christ Himself had used this word in Song 5.1, but it is new to her. (Coates) we find that its usual meaning is 'one who is near', very generally translated by the word 'neighbour' bringing us to the apex of the lawyer's question to Jesus - "And who is my neighbour?" (Luke 10.29). Jesus went on to teach that anyone who is in need or dire circumstances, whom we know and to whom we are capable of rendering assistance, is OUR NEIGHBOUR. He taught this in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10.30-37). Again within the confines of our Song we find a threefold application and of course, incidental proof that the Bride had heard, understood and carried out the exhortation of Jesus, and putting aside all the intermediate considerations why she had done so, it would appear to the writer's thinking that the issue begins in Ex.22.21 - "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt". In other words, because they had suffered under these conditions, they were to treat a stranger as a neighbour - one who dwelt among them in peace. As Jesus introduced in the parable, particularly if they were converted to Jewry they too should partake of the Holy things - Passover etc. Cp Ex.12.43-49 - one law for both. The Gentile position in Christ which is ours is governed by a like act of remembrance on our part (Eph.2.11). "Wherefore remember that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at

that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are MADE NIGH by the blood of Christ". Strangers once - made nigh - now as neighbours - friends - made nigh through His blood.

- (1) When Jesus named His Bride friend or neighbour it had this implication and understanding.
- (2) When the Bride makes this claim "my friend" it is founded upon this basis that we have expounded - that through the blood of Jesus she has drawn nigh and become accepted in the Beloved.
- (3) She can never have made this claim without obeying what we have called the intermediate clauses, which are implicated in the Good Samaritan parable (Luke 10.25-37), the bestowing of consideration, compassion, expending herself on behalf of others, who it would appear are strangers. The Priest and Levite were concerned neither with the identity or nationality of the man stripped and wounded by the thieves. All they desired to do was to keep themselves trouble free and ceremonially clean and so they passed by on the other side, but the Samaritan, beyond the pale so far as Jewish thought was concerned (Jesus no doubt under the strict commands of the Law) made himself as one near, disregarding the letter of the Law, yet fulfilling it in substance and spirit. He loved his neighbour as himself!
- (4) What of its application to ourselves in our day, apart from the obvious responsibilities outlined so far? They have been dealt with under ch.4.11, under the smell of thy garments etc. For our purpose at the moment, to further our third part of my friend' sequence (Matt.25.34-40), the Bride is saying "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred and fed Thee? or thirsty and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger and took Thee in?" etc. "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me"!

The Bride had heard the Son (Simeon). She had understood His words and actions and she had proved herself to be a friend - one near - a neighbour to those less fortunate than herself in practical Christianity, pastoral activities, in spiritual attention, conveying the Gospel by word and life. She had followed her Lord. The circle of kindness and friendliness is complete. Those called drew nigh and made up another constituent of herself. Now complete and radiant in glory, she can claim of Jesus - "He is my friend". Her task is done and she says, "This is my Beloved"! Can this claim be ours? Shall we have part in this glorious Bride? If our claims regarding the Bridegroom beauteous beyond the sons of men are sincere and true, then we shall very soon.

To summarise then, "What is thy Beloved more than another beloved?" "He is altogether lovely"! His character and person are composed of elements which are faultless and most lovely, and all are combined into the utmost loveliness, in one glorious whole. His person in all His character, in all His words, in all His works and in all His ways. He is lovely in His birth, lovely in infancy, lovely in boyhood, lovely in manhood, lovely in His mourning and lovely in His rejoicing; lovely in His speech and lovely in His silence; lovely as a prophet, as a priest and as a king; lovely as a shepherd, a saviour, a husband; lovely as a Son, lovely as a brother, lovely as a servant, lovely sitting on the throne of grace and lovely seated on the throne of judgment. Christ is lovely when without a pillow whereon to lay His head, and lovely in the mansions of His Father; lovely in His rebukes and lovely in His consolations, lovely in His cross and lovely in His crown. He is lovely in Himself, lovely in His ordinances, lovely in His saints; lovely yesterday, lovely today and lovely for ever. Yes, He is the altogether lovely - this is my Beloved!

This eulogy can be applied only to Jesus, the Bridegroom, and can have no application to any human personality as such, neither shepherd love nor even Solomon the king. There is one altogether lovely - He is our Lord. Let us reverence Him, "the chief among ten thousand and altogether"!

#### Watts' Song

"All over glorious is my Lord,  
Must be beloved, and yet adores;  
His worth if all the nations knew,  
Sure the whole earth would love Him too".



It is with the sense of unutterable unworthiness that we have tried to expound "the altogether lovely" in keeping with Isaiah, who saw His glory (Isa. 6.1-6, John 12.38-41) in this life and in immortality. Thank God for the cleansing of the coals from off the brazen altar. "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Isa. 1.5-7. May our attitude be so framed that Christ may see fit by His grace to immortalise it in the Seraphim sequence of the Kingdom.

## THE SONG OF SONGS Chapter 6

Song 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?" This is a very important verse, for it contains several precious thoughts which suggest themselves to our mind as we read these words from the daughters of Jerusalem addressed to the Bride of Christ.

- (1) The query "Whither is thy Beloved gone - turned aside" with "O thou fairest among women" is most instructive. It is first found in Song 1.7-8 where she asks Jesus the question - "Where thou feedest thy flock?" Christ replies using the term "O thou fairest among women".
- (2) She is found asking the whereabouts of Christ again in Song 3.3.
- (3) In Song 5.8 her query this time is addressed to the persons who reverse the question in Song 6.1.
- (4) Could it be that the eulogy of the well Beloved has convinced them that the lapse on her part is only temporary? They at least are convinced that she is the only one of her Lord, and use the term applied to her by Christ Himself - "O thou fairest among women". and allied with this alignment we have the obvious implication arising out of the statement in Song 1.8 (see notes on that verse). "If thou knew not" be defiled, because she did not belong to Christ, and her claims were spurious. These witnesses, however, had sorted out these statements. Her eulogy of the beauties of Messiah had convinced them that she was the Beloved of her Lord and that she could lead them to Him. So they enquired of her and, addressing her by the very terminology which linked her with Jesus, gave their combined testimony to the fact of this divine union!

We commented in Song 5.9 and the wondrous and desired result produced by the testimony of the Bride in her tenfold eulogy, convinced the daughters of the beauty and desirability of seeking Christ. This glowing account of the beauty and attractiveness of Christ seems to be reflected on her. More seek after Christ, than are found witnessing for Him; nevertheless when God intends comfort and teaching for others, it is through the testimony of those He has already comforted and taught that He does so.

We see here also the blessedness and profit of having the mind fully occupied with Christ Himself. The Bride seems to lose all self-consciousness as she meditates on Him. Self-indulgence had been the cause of the sad experience she had just passed through. Now her mind is entirely taken up with Him. Not even His promises and gifts are in her thoughts, for Christ is MORE than all His gifts and promises. They are but as it were the outer rays of His fulness, which in itself is not of Christ but the Father and as all the gifts and promises of God are in Him, Yea and Amen. Again our thanks fly to the Father. "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!"

We note the impression made on the daughters of Jerusalem. It is no longer "who" or "what", but "whither" twice emphasized. Has thy Beloved TURIED ASIDE and "left you", is the implication. The daughters of Jerusalem have a lot to learn on this point. Christ never turns aside. He remains faithful. Paul said it is the Bride and before her the Jewish nation, who turned aside. For a little while the Bride had turned aside and wandered out of the ways of understanding. She and they in particular have to get back into the way from which they had turned aside.

"The Word" said John. Greek was "face to face" with God, and when the Word became flesh in Jesus that accuracy was maintained. It never varied. The only

shadow cast by turning between the Father and the Son was that which descended as He bore the sin of the world. "Why hast Thou forsaken" was not only an agonised query prophetically recorded 1,000 years before His birth, but an actual statement of fact testified to both prophetically and actually by Jesus. Jesus never turned aside. The sins He bore caused the deviation. The Bride and the daughters of Jerusalem will find theirs also within the evidence of the pierced hands etc.

He will never, never, leave us or forsake us (Heb.13.5-6). Yet we must not treat the daughters of Jerusalem too harshly. The Bride had said that He had withdrawn Himself and consequently they thought He had "turned aside" from her.

Another grave lesson comes out to us. How careful must we be in our testimony so that we do not cast a stumbling block in our brother's way, rendering it difficult for those who would seek Him in sincerity to find Him. Rom.10.6 comes to mind once again - "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven (that is to bring Christ down from above), or who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead), but what saith it? The Word is nigh thee" etc. The word is in thy heart. Such is the close proximity of Christ to His own. May we strive to make sure that as far as we are concerned it will remain so!

"That we may seek Him with thee"

As she recalled these incidents in the glory of immortal nature, she rejoiced in the fact that indeed incorporated within her glorious self she had many "daughters of Jerusalem" who had sought her Lord after her testimony. Acts 4.4 - "Many of them which heard the Word believed; and the number of the men was about 5,000". Acts 5.13-14, Acts 2.41. They learned where Jesus had gone and why in their generation. The daughters of Jerusalem of the present age in their interested capacity will again seek the Lord and will ever surely find Him when He comes to manifest His Bride to Jerusalem, and their hearts will once again be zealously stirred again to seek and serve Him during the Millennial reign of Messiah and His Bride, whom they have recognised as "the fairest among women". Again one of the old poets puts it:

"Thou fairest of us all,  
Whither is thy love gone?  
Tell us and we will go with thee,  
Thou shalt not go alone."

Drayton.

We commenced this idyll with Christ calling her to Himself, to share His suffering and affliction. This she was reluctant to do, but eventually, when fully awakened to her position, she did so, casting all fear and uncertainty away! Now, these daughters, interested witnesses of both sex, wish to join her. We have seen how many did join the guest after the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Stuart comments "In the dark night of Christ's crucifixion and burial the daughters of Jerusalem begin to join themselves to the children of the Bride chamber (i.e. the multitudinous Bride herself). Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus now mourn for Christ along with His disciples, openly associating themselves with His professed followers; and there must have been hundreds of others both among the thoughtful men of the city and among the daughters of Jerusalem who followed Christ to Calvary whose hearts were now moved with various convictions and desires which soon were to break forth in the cry - "What shall we do?" "

How true this is. We too have sought Jesus in the dark night of affliction - Gentile night. All who come to Him must follow this course if they desire redemption and eternal union with Him. Ruth, our Gentile forebear, did just this - lay at his feet (that is, Boaz, who was a type of Christ-the redeemer), covered herself with his robe and asked for redemption (Ruth 3.1-8 etc.). "Tarry this night", and if the nearer kinsman in the Law defects from redeeming thee "then I will do the part of a kinsman to thee. As the Lord liveth, lie down until the morning". So were his gracious words.

(1) We seek Him then at night.

(2) We find Him and He graciously bids us "tarry with Him until the morning".

We are not forced to do this, but it is most foolish and usually fatal to leave our Lord, our city of refuge, for the terrors and hazards of the night. The darkness

of the night must not overtake us-as a thief, but we must be watchful, girded with the armour of light (1 Thess.5.4-8).

Song 6.2 "My beloved is gone down into His garden, to the beds of spices to feed in the gardens and to gather lilies".

The Bride can now with confidence point out where He may be found, and with not a little gratification. It is a precious experience, for whilst speaking to others of Jesus, her own problems and sorrows were entirely forgotten. Her thoughts were turned away from herself and all her affections called into exercise towards Him.

Now the eye of faith has been restored to her, it is fixed upon Him, and she sees Him, and regaining her assurance finds Him present. He had never really departed from her, only veiled His presence to draw forth that wonderful eulogy of Himself born of faith and love on her part. Thus, like Magdalene, we may be seeking for Jesus when He is standing beside us, and actually speaking to Him, though we know it not (John 20.14-15, Matt.25.37-40) "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" !

Another aspect of the Divine Lord is brought before us in Song 6.2 - The husbandman tending, feeding and gathering of the fruits of His garden. Historically, no doubt, we could refer the beds of spices to those He was wrapped in at the crucifixion surrounded with the effusion of perfume given by Joseph and Nicodemus (already commented upon). He was taken from the Garden of His sorrow and affliction - Gethsemane - where He underwent the fierce and heavy pressings of the olive (Gethsemane = the Garden of the Olive Press) to Jerusalem which should have been His inheritance of peace, but as the cross must come before the crown, He found it only offered further cruel mockings and open shame, and the very necessary bruising by being beaten with rods and scourges to bring out in Himself for the Father's satisfaction and our urgent need, the purest oil - olive, which does not smoke when lit, but remains pure and unsullied until it is snuffed out in light. That holy life remained even so, though afflicted and tormented beyond human endurance, and now shines for ever as the light of the world !

Yes, Jesus was taken to a bed of spices, laid in the tomb wherein yet never man laid, and ascended from this bed of spices in the Mountain of Myrrh (Moriah) to the Hill of Frankincense, the place of prayer and praise, into heaven itself, there to minister and meditate for this Bride who had now found her faith again. Again from the poet :

"That Garden in the Holy Mount,  
Where He designed three nights to be  
In spices wrapt."

In glory her memory now is crystal clear with the clarity of immortal insight. She remembers that awful day when she thought that it should have been He that would redeem Israel from Roman domination, and it is the third day since these things happened (Luke 24.13-21), "And she knew Him not that He was there" !? What was the outcome? "She knew Him in the breaking of bread" - "And their eyes were opened and they knew Him" (Luke 24.30-31). He had gone "to feed in His garden". Song 6.2 reminds us, and who and what is His garden. We expounded it at length in Song 4.12. "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse". It is none other than herself as she well knew now that spiritual appreciation had returned. In it were all manner of fruits (4.13, 4.12). The water of life (4.14). All the chief spices etc. Had she not invited Him to come and feed? (4.16) - "Let my Beloved come into His garden and eat His pleasant fruits."

As both Bridegroom and Bride look back with nostalgia from the immortal aspect of this feasting, no doubt the awakening surge of faith and joy found in the Bride when she is defined in Peter, James, Thomas and all those who had sought Him - Nicodemus, Joseph - who gladden the heart of Christ, will awake from her a mighty paean of praise and gladness.

He was found by her (A) feeding in His garden in fellowship at Emmaus by the privileged two; (B) later on Galilee's shore after preparing for her, this time in the guise of the eleven disciples. Bread and fish for their substance (John 21.1-19).

Again we notice 20.13 - "Jesus then cometh and taketh bread and giveth them and fish likewise", and although, as Paul said (2 Tim.2.6) "the husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits", yet the Divine husbandman will always share His meal in fellowship with those who are His own and are found within the Bride. Here we find Jesus feeding among the spices indeed those who would make up His Bride, and the result of that Name poured forth in Him, the spices of the Divine Yahweh Name itself :

We notice the last phrase in Song 6.2 - that the task of the Lord also included - "gathering lilies". We have in Song 2.1-2 thought upon this aspect - lilies in glory - red Shoshanim of the plain. Passover lilies of the spring, bespeaking His sacrifice and passion. Lilies also in Solomon's temple around Jachin and Boaz. Lilies of Priesthood and the glory of established strength and divine power. The time has come for Christ not only to feed among the lilies, but to gather them in.

How wonderfully this tale is told in John 21, in the exceptional catch of great fish - the best fish of their kind - 153 all told for expansion (see "Significance of Blue", chapter on Numerology - Hall). Suffice it to say, 153 represents in Hebrew the Sons of God. John 21.11 etc. 153 persons by name accept Christ in New Testament etc. The fish are just another figure for the lilies. Christ shows how the Apostolic net will collect this precious catch. The teaching of course in our day and age, and their labour along with the word of His grace, will help to "gather in the lilies" at the great day.

As the Bride directs the daughters of Jerusalem towards the garden, the feeding, and the gathering, she is revealing the way in which this finding of Christ will be accomplished. It is our directive today and we pray that many more will say, "Whither is thy Beloved gone? O thou fairest among women. Whither is thy Beloved turned aside? that we may seek Him with thee".

The gathering is in two sections and obviously two dispensations. The first actually takes place over many dispensations from Adam to the return of Jesus. The second after the judgment at His coming. (1) Now to Christ as disciples (2) then if worthy as 'The Bride' in glory. We have passed the first stage - we are in Christ through the belief and washing of baptism, BUT shall we make the temple version in glory?

A further three points emerge as we think on this garden sequence :

1. Christ is best sought in the fellowship, society and companionship of His people. In His garden "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them". How true this is. Rev.1.13 reveals that Jesus is moving amidst the ecclesias or candlesticks.
2. Again where Christ loves to visit, there let others dwell = in the garden - among the ecclesias. In the Bride (each is only a different expression of the same thing) He feeds among the spices. He gathers lilies. Jesus loves the graces of His children that stem from the Spirit and are a reflection of Himself (Isa.11.1-5, see Eph.1.17-18 etc.) They issue from a love that rests on Him, the faith that clings to Him.
3. "My beloved" she says (and we are happy to see that her faith and love are not dead for all her wanderings) "is gone into His garden which is her own, now cultivated with all personal care and attention. No longer do her relatives have any perceptible hold over her. Those shackles causing unfruitfulness have been removed through the strength found in Christ (Phil. 4 : 13). Happy communion is here delighted and delightful. The Beloved in His garden with beds of spices. The aromatic plants of the Spirit must of necessity never be bruised in order to obtain their fragrance. The old poet said :

"If David's heart had ne'er been wrung  
David's songs had ne'er been sung."

Her heart had been wrung through remorse; and the wonderful fragrance of the spices that tell forth the mystery of the Divine Father in the Son, have filled the whole house of faith through that eulogy of perfection that we have just considered in Song 5.9-16.

Rainford remarks that the question and answer in Song 6.1-2 is one of the many spiritual indications of the character of this book. If otherwise it surely would have

been an unacceptable proposal to the Bride to have their company. But in this case it was evidently a delight that they should seek Him with her. We have given emphasis to this part all the way through.

Song 6.3 The closing verse of this fourth idyll ends on a triumphant note - "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine" ! No doubt drawn from a deeper and chastened intelligence within her; enforced again with the emphasis upon His relationship with her first of all - "I am my beloved's". (1) All that she had was found by the grace of God in her through Christ. Her very name - 'Shulamite' - was such because of the peace only found in the Prince of Peace. (2) She alone could be peaceable because she was found in Him who is peace, who made peace between man and God. (3) Again, she had regained that peace that passeth all understanding'. (4) She had found her Lord and in that marriage feast, as she remembered these things, she knew that peace was hers for eternity, unchanging as her very nature. (5) At peace in the Prince of Peace !

Because she was accepted in the Beloved, then consequently "My Beloved is mine" ! The Beloved in her capacity as the multitudinous Bride or Body of Christ, and although we may see in this the personal aspect - that Christ is one's own Saviour - we may never wander from the principle that Jesus can never be appropriated to one's own self entirely. Paul defines the body of believers as a loaf made up of many grains of flour etc. Redemption in Christ can only be obtained within the whole body of the redeemed which is the Bride and never in isolation away from that body !

Again her thoughts in chastened exercise take her back to the unpretentious lily, lowly and humble, yet beautiful and full of future glory, as we have indicated. Her Lord loved to feed among them. So may the elements of this most glorious creature of our day provide for themselves such humble food in lowly esteem, but anticipate that day when after inviting her beloved to come and eat, He will delight her by accepting her position as a lowly lily, and take His fill of food found there, and after sufficing Himself will gather the lilies to Himself that remain.

This would appear to be the position at this closing scene in this idyll from 5.2 - 6.3 of our Song. When in fulness of time this comes to pass and by God's grace we may attain to the point of time when these words are really being rehearsed, then the Bride as the lily will be giving delight and spiritual refreshment to her Lord in glory = the daughters of Jerusalem and other interested parties will, after full acceptance of Christ, be finally gathered unto His bosom, so that the family of God might be fully manifested and the Yahweh Name finds its fitting conclusion. I Will Be will be fully resident in the Father - the Son and the Daughter. This consummation is beyond our imagination and narration (cp 2 Cor. 12.4), for they are words and thoughts which cannot be uttered in the sense that the finite mind, however spiritual this may be, cannot cope with the unspeakable experience of Paul (a giant in spiritual capacity).

Upon this note and with confidence in the merits and ability of Christ our Lord and husband, we leave this idyll and pass on to the next - 6.4 - 7.10 - the King's meditation on His Bride with interjections, 6.10, by her companions the daughters of Jerusalem (also 6.13).

Idyll No.5 The King meditates on His Bride, ch.6 v.4 - ch.7 v.10, with interjections at ch.6 v.10 - 13 by her companions the daughters of Jerusalem.

When on her way to the gardens, Song 6.2 and 11, and accompanied by her companions, the Bride suddenly meets her husband. He does not upbraid her, as He might justly do, but on the contrary, overwhelms her with a gracious overture of tenderest affection and passion (6.4-10). Prior to the failure of her love for Him, He had testified to her preciousness in his eyes (4.1-7). Now again He speaks of her beauty, and with the same love and affection. One is tempted to think that this is repetition from the corresponding wording in ch.4. Yet, there is a distinction. Before, in ch.4, He pointed rather to her perfections as peculiar to Himself (although they were of Himself): now He speaks of that of which she is for Himself: He recalls her beauty, but it is in order to delight in His possession of her, and to

praise her in the presence of the companions. She belongs to him - and SHE IS HIS ONLY ONE. Other princes may have countless wives and concubines. (One wonders what Solomon, with 1,000 wives, concubines, thought as these words came to him by inspiration?). Or had he pursued the political road until he became as heartless as those whom he tried to outsmart by making obvious political unions with their daughters. Such is the way of man, and of his world and ways. Not so our Bridegroom, the greater Solomon Himself. He has but ONE WIFE and she surpasses all others in beauty and grace. We combined thoughts with Williams on this point, but thought how apt this summary was of the relationship of Christ with His beloved. We might think then with considerable profit, that the following description of the beloved is what she in particular means to Christ. It is always fascinating to the present writer to delve into matter like this. (A) What Christ thinks of the Bride born of His labours and sacrifice. Because (B) he wants, along with his readers, no doubt, to have part in that glorious Bride at the Bridegroom's coming.

Song 6.4 "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners."

First of all a note concerning the date of the Song. Fausset says, "There is no ground for assigning a later date than the time of Solomon to the Song, as Tirzah was, even in His time, the capital of the North (Israel), as Jerusalem was of the South (Judah)." A very interesting pointer to this dating of our Song, and quite destructive of the critical ideas of later dating.

Returning to the spiritual capacity of the Song, however, we note again, in keeping with our theme of the actual presentation of this Song, at the wedding feast of Christ and the Bride, that the features unfolded show us that the portrait deals with the future, not only as regards the perfected nature of the Bride, but in the work that forms her destiny in the purpose of God. Once again we note a threefold sequence in this Song 6.4. (1) The first is pleasantness. (2) The importance of the possession of peace. (3) Terrible, as majestic with banners. The overall picture we have is the pleasantness of fellowship, and peace, safeguarded by a bannered host, glittering, flashing and terrible in their appearance, absolutely impregnable in their defence of the city. This is how the Bride in her glory appears to Jesus. The figure of the troops or army with banners is a military one, and of troops that have never sustained defeat. Their banners are flying as completely victorious. What are the banners of this mighty host? This information must have astounded the Bride, at least in the natural state. She is regarded as completely victorious. Only a short while in the Song (ch.5) in dream, and actually in AD 30, she had suffered what she considered to be shattering defeat. Her astonishment is greatly intensified when she hears the further words of ch.6 v.5. "Turn away thine eyes from me". Her most noble victim was none other than her Lord, even He had succumbed to her charms!

"Terrible as an army with banners"

The reason why Christ said this will emerge, as we apply more detailed exposition. What do the names give to us? Song 6.4 "Thou art beautiful O my love as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem. (A) We note this is the first of two mentions of 'beautiful' to the Bride. Ch.6 v.4, ch.7 v.1. Accordingly we see further that this application has to do with two royal cities, as were Tirzah and Jerusalem, and the beautiful feet with shoes as a prince's daughter. (B) As a slave girl previously in the vineyards she would not wear shoes. Now she does because she is free and a prince's daughter. To understand the second point there must be necessary reference to Ps.45.10, 13, 16. We will deal with this sequence when we comment on Song 7.1. (C) Enough to say now, that the inference is that she is 'beautiful' because of royal connection, and that she has been freed from bondage and slavery and has assumed the shoes. (D) Again the dual mention in the science of spiritual numbers. '2' has the significance of a thing being 'established' by God (Gen.41.12), which is not without importance, particularly in regard to Jerusalem. (E) The reference has a very important bearing on our understanding, concerning which Jerusalem is in context. "With shoes" in other words. Gal.4.26, Jerusalem which

is above is free, which is the Mother of us all. This is the significance of the shoes. It has not to do with Israel after the flesh, which even today are classified. Gal.4.25 "Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children". However, more when in direct examination of the context. Returning to our names.

Tirzah The city originally was the royal seat of the Canaanite kings (Josh. 22.24) and after the revolt of the ten tribes (Israel) became the royal city of its kings, Before Omri built Samaria, Zimri built this city (1 Kings 16.15-20). Tirzah means 'pleasantness', from a Hebrew root 'Ratsah', "to delight in any person or thing". Other derivatives that stem from this word are - favourable, pleasing, conciliation, approbation, etc. Apparently from a natural conception the site was set conveniently in pleasant surroundings on a hill lifted up, the modern name until recently being Taluzza. It has been thought that this city provided the basis for the remarks of Jesus when he taught of a city that cannot be hid. For such naturally was the setting of Tirzah, site of royalty in Northern Israel. One of the old Bibles paraphrases "Thou art pleasant, O my love, even as loveliness itself". Stuart compares the beauty of pleasant Tirzah of the Song with the city set on a hill that cannot be hid. He considers "the terms not widely different" and the lesson to be extracted that we must do nothing either to deface, or conceal, the comeliness of an object, at once so beautiful, and so conspicuous; beautiful as Tirzah, but on account of its beauty, set upon a hill and incapable of being hid. Mar not that beauty, because it is not yours but your Lord's, for you have confessed that you are His. To such spiritual insight may we add the comments of Paul in 1 Cor.6.17, 19 - "But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. ... What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's". Who among us can stand before this spiritual searchlight? Not only are we blinded by its light, but also withered by its scorching heat. All the present writer can pray is "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Lk.17.13). Maybe the grace of God will smile upon us, and if we really try to empty ourselves of all pride and self-seeking, then in Christ's strength we may deface not this beauty of the Lord, for it is not our own; conceal it not, for it is not our own; it is both His, and the reflection of His comeliness. We will not hide from men the beauty of Him "who is fairer than the sons of men". We have written before of pleasantness, Song 1.16. What the Lord says in 6.4 is but the assurance of what the Bride said, with her heart filled with Him "that He is fair" and pleasant, see references at Song 1.16, and with what she shares with Him. "Our bed", "our house", "our rafters" - a restful and pleasant association in suitable conditions, very intimate indeed, a nearness which is not found after this first section of the Book. Jesus, however, in 6.4 lays stress on this particular point, and we shall find other reasons why this is so. Passing on to the individual application of the comeliness of Jerusalem (we shall return to the double aspect afterwards), we find that comeliness means attraction, or old-world comehitherness. We find our Lord fascinated by the Tirzah beauty and equally attracted by the "comehitherness" of the capital of Judah - Jerusalem. Why? Jerusalem - "the inheritance of the possession of peace". The habitation of peace. Dwelling place of peace, foundation of peace, constitution of harmony, vision of peace, abode of prosperity. The above are only a selection of thoughts that come to us as we contemplate "Jerusalem the Golden".

We have noted in another place that 'Shalom' or 'Shalem', adjective = peace, perfect, whole, Nahum 1.12, Deut.25.15, Amos 1.6 etc., the basis being peace in city, king (Solomon) Shularnite, feminine for Solomon (peaceable or at peace). All are found in Christ, His city and His Bride. Particularly in Zion, David's stronghold in Jerusalem, do we find the "threefold cord not easily broken". Zion has the meaning of a place established, Psa.87.6 - "The Highest Himself shall establish her." Play on the word Zion itself, "stable" same word in the divine blessing, also "fortress" or "constituted". Who by? God Himself! The tabernacle of David "reared up", never to be taken down (Amos 9.11). When will this take place? On "a morning without clouds", "clear shining after rain", 2 Sam.23.4, leading to another construction of the name Zion, meaning "splendidly apparent" or "unobstructed sunshine". We find all three definitions constituted within the One who is glorious, and this is what she means to Christ. John the beloved disciple will remember when he hears

his Lord making in turn this eulogy of His Bride, because he was privileged to behold in vision "the Holy City, new Jerusalem" coming down from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

- (A) Jerusalem is builded together as a city, and much of the beauty of the church, that is His body, consists of this unity.
- (B) Two companies His Bride is made up of. Song 6.13 "What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies".
- (C) She is indeed made up of Tirzah and Jerusalem, as seen in this setting.
- (D) She is also composed of Jew and Gentile - Eph.2.11-22.
- (E) It is of interest to see the sequence of this twofold unity in Christ, His Bride and the blessing they bring to the daughters of Jerusalem, penitent Israel at the coming of Christ in Psa.133.
- (F) "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity".

Precisely the same setting in the eyes of Jesus as Song 6. "Pleasant" as Tirzah (10 tribes of Israel), goodly as Jerusalem or Judah, the pleasantness and comeliness are linked together in unity (Ezek.37). "Moreover, thou Son of Man, take thee one stick, and write upon it: For Judah, and for the children of Israel His companions: then take another stick and write upon it: For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for the house of Israel his companions, and join them together, one to another, into ONE STICK, and they shall become ONE in thine hand." This could only come to pass in - the return of Jesus outlined in Psa.133. The natural gives the lead to spiritual understanding in Ezek.37 and Song 6.4, Psa.133.2 joining them together both natural and spiritual. The appointment of Levi whose meaning is joined is observed in the figure of Aaron, High Priest of Israel, with the unction of the precious ointment of the Name, streaming in great effusion down beard and garment to the pomegranates etc on the hem of his garments. The greater Aaron after the order of Melchizedek is in time focussed really with the grace of the Spirit flowing down His robes (as we have commented before), down to the multitudinous seed of His body; as a Bride she had partaken of the grace of the fullness of the Spirit, and as the dew of Hermon descended to bless the arid region, so the dew of the Lord gathered up from the Mediterranean ascended up to Hermon's height, there to be transfigured with Him (Lk.9.28-34). The Bride herself has descended upon Zion with the blessing, long silent, but now the Ark has returned to rest and the priestly blessing can be pronounced (Numb.6.22-26) - "The Lord bless thee and keep thee, the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace". Therefore we stress the threefold application of Tirzah, Jerusalem and Zion, and we have at the last, natural Israel blessed, and joined to the Lamb and His Bride (as the daughters of Zion), to whom this narration in Song 6 is being said by Jesus (Psa.132, 133). Briefly also in this section, culled from Isa.35.1-2, we see Jesus bringing the glory of Zion, taking place at one and the same time: the well-known works of - "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose (or autumn crocus - R.V.) It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon." They shall see the "glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God". They shall see the glory of the Lord. Not that devastation of cosmic power that shook Sinai, that tore the rocks before Elijah, nor yet the splendour of the voice of God in nature (Psa.29; Ex.19.18-25, 1 Kings 19.11-12), nor yet the returning glory to Ezekiel's temple (Ezek.43.1-5). These realities and virtues of the glory are not in context here. In Isa.35.1-2 rather a field, a Sharon (plain), of autumn crocus, the peace and serenity of this blaze of white and purple crocus. This is Isaiah's depiction of glory to Israel after the flesh.

You will have noticed the mention of the glory of Lebanon, already touched upon, the glistening whiteness of the eternal snows that cap its peaks, and the mighty cedars that clothe its sides. The excellency of Carmel also is added to this picture of pastoral peace and fertility. In a nutshell what does it imply? All the figures of speech found in Isa.35 are to be seen in the Song, so we are in near proximity, but with the reference to the autumn crocus we find a shattering omission. Song 2.1. "I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley". The lily is omitted from Isa.35 1-2 text. Why? And a rather strange paradox is to be observed in this springtime Sharon complete with an autumn flower blooming - autumn crocus. It is only in the realm of the Spirit that we find such language. Shall we just check and see what we



The time we have been thinking around is the return of Christ, or in the Song 2.11-13, the Spring of the year, '10'. "Rise up, my love, and come away. For lo the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth: the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." The time of the lilies, verse 16 - Shosannim lilies. Passover time - this is the Song's indication at what time the Lord will come to fetch His Bride. This is why we emphasised the fact that this aspect in Isa.35.1-2 was that of a Sharon or field in springtime, and yet the only flower mentioned is the autumn crocus. The very flower of the Song in springtime, the lily, is not mentioned. The lily is not mentioned. Why? Because the lily phase, the sacrificial aspect of the work of Christ, is over. Heb.9.26-28 - among the instruction Paul says "Now once in the end of the ages hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb.10.9. "By the which will we (have been RV) sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Therefore we find no lily (Shosannim) passion lily in Isa.35.1-2. That phase of Christ's work has been accomplished, fulfilled, ONCE FOR ALL! What we do find, of course, is the companion flower of the lily of Song 2.1-2, the autumn crocus. The colouring is a basis of white, whiter than any fullers' earth can make it (Mal.3.1-3) - holiness associated with the atonement - eternity, eternal life. The Ancient of days, the hair of whose head was like unto pure wool. Anyone who has worked in the processing of merino wool will realise the dazzling whiteness meant to be understood here, together with a similar array of garments like driven snow, The brilliance of the snow-covered Alps, the Jungfrau at close quarters, under the azure blue of the sky, again give an indication of the pureness, holiness and eternity of the state of the Ancient of days, and of course, Rev.19.8 is in context here, "To her (the Bride) was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of Saints". So on this basis of holiness, righteousness and eternity of nature, we find our crocus. The purple tingeing gives us the right aspect. Purple, as we know, is a mixture of red and blue. Here we have the scarlet of the lily. It is involved in purple, but not put forward as the leading idea. Sacrifice and the blue of healing, accomplishment and completion of the Divine purpose, is indicated in purple, and of course royalty too. The sacrificial element completed, now found glorified first as King of the whole universe as in Jesus, secondly as found in the Bride as the Consort of her King, now raised to His side from the position she formerly assumed at his feet (Ruth 3 etc). The crocus, then, will tell us of the universal domain of Jesus, when the mountains of men's domain shall depart and wax old like scrolls, and "the rough places" of the nations (the upheavals which afflict the earth at the present time of writing - Vietnam, China, Africa, America, Israel's victory in Arab State confrontation, the Union waves of discontent and oppression currently rampant throughout even Great Britain herself)-become a "plain". Isa.40.4. As this plain of Sharon and the crowning glory - its crocuses, righteousness and holiness of divine rule (Isa.32.1, 15-18). "Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness and princes shall rule in judgment", also Psa.72.15, when the "Spirit shall be poured upon us from on high, then the wilderness shall become (RV) a fruitful field (or plain) and the fruitful field be counted for a forest (v.17). The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. Then my people shall dwell in peaceable habitations" one of the derivatives of Jerusalem, and all basically found within the conception by Jesus, as the comeliness or attraction of Jerusalem in His eyes, that is, Jerusalem from above. It is noticeable, however, that both in Isa.40.4-5 and Isa.35.1-2, after the introduction of the plain we find in Isa.40.5 "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed". Isa.35.2 "And they shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God". It is, as we have seen, found not in the majesty of cosmic force, but in this gentle aspect of a beautiful plain, full of crocuses. "They shall see the glory". Isa.40.1-5 points out quite clearly that this refers to the manifested glory of the Father through Jesus, John Baptist himself being the foremost, as all the gospels point out. Isa.40.3 = Matt.3.3, Mk.1.3, Lk.3.4, John 14.23.

This manifestation to Israel, at the second coming of Christ, is going to be one of great magnitude; in fact Isa.35.2 mentions the excellency of Carmel attached to it. Carmel means to be exceedingly fruitful. Supply the evidence we require for this point, and we find upon careful inquiry that the mention of Carmel is another reason for the exclusion of the lily in Isa.35.1-2. Carmel is the Hebrew word for crimson. We introduced thoughts under this heading in Song 1.5, under the aspect of the curtains of Solomon, where crimson takes over from scarlet in the curtains or veil, teaching quite clearly that when the dispensational fulfilment has taken place, and Solomon's temple is a type of these things (see Essays Christadelphian Mutual etc. 1966), then Christ will have seen his seed, seen the travail of His soul and been satisfied. Isa.53. Some of our readers may demur, saying with Isa.1.18, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" - pure white as we have seen. The difficulty is removed when we use the Hebrew word Carmel here for crimson, meaning, though they may be exceedingly many they shall be removed and replaced with the shining white of wool.

The lily is found in the temple, as we have already indicated in our exposition. She is found innumerable in the very structure of the temple, the lily work on Boaz, Jachin, etc. The lily of sacrifice has given way to priesthood and rest in glory. We find then that the glory of God revealed to Israel in the very near future will be that of (A) Jesus as Messiah and King and (B) His glorious Bride as these points have applied to her in the Song 2.1 etc. (C) He will reveal to them this glorious creature made up of all the redeemed, up to that precise moment of time, (D) and Israel, who called the Gentiles "dogs", will be surprised to find multitudes of such "dogs" as Caleb the Gentile "dog" who attached himself to Israel. (E) They will then understand why Jesus rode into Jerusalem just before He suffered, 'on the foal of an ass' a redeemed animal, (F) why the apostles threw their garments on this ass for Him to ride on, (G) why the apostles' net in Galilee was found with 153 great fish, (H) and why the consort of Messiah their King is spoken of as a Gentile Queen in Psa.45.9. Because the Gentiles had received Him and they had not! He was obliged to go to the Gentiles to find His Bride, though she should be nurtured in the Abrahamic Covenant etc. (Num.14.24, Mk.11.1-10, John 21.1-11, Gal.3.11-14, 27-29). The glory of the Yahweh name as manifested in Bride and Bridegroom will be shown to Israel in that day already envisaged in Psa.132, 133, Isa.35 and 40. It is when we meditate upon these things that we realise a little of what Jesus meant in Song 6.4, beautiful as Tirzah, and as comely as Jerusalem. He envisaged in these two cities the completion of His work as Saviour and Redeemer, and saw in them the unity of Israel and Judah, the unity of Jew and Gentile, the final unity of the millennium when in the absolute. The unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God will attain to its perfection in the consummation of that maturity of his stature and fulness, when all the children of the marriage between the Lamb and His Bride, will all be gathered into one, that God might be all in all; which will include the 'daughters of Jerusalem' if they attach themselves in faith to Christ, to whom this most remarkable narration is made.

Jesus reflects in His eulogy, how His Bride, pure and holy in the loveliness of immortality, is brought to stir up Israel, to a godly jealousy and blessing upon the united tribes of Israel, when Israel repented and moaned with deep moaning after looking upon Him whom they pierced. With Joseph the answerable sympathetic element of the Bride, He forgave and graciously blessed His brethren. Both Lord and wife as seen in Jesus and Joseph will greatly rejoice at this narrative of what she meant to her Lord. The latter third of Song 6.4 explains how this great purpose came about. "Thou art terrible as an army with banners". Absolutely victorious in might, even to overcoming her Lord by her winning ways in the Divine purpose. The Lord her Banner had done it for her, Yahweh Nissi. Through his strength she was able to overcome the flesh or Amalek (Ex.17.8-16). She had kept the Lord's memorial down the ages by waging an unceasing combat against the flesh (Rom.7 etc). At times she had fought until a deadly weariness seized her, and in her anguish she had cried with Paul, "Who will save me from this body of death?" (which I am bound to and carry with me wherever I may go). And the reassurance of the Word comes to our aid, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb.6), and we repeat in

triumph, "Thank God, through Jesus Christ OUR LORD." Rom.7.24-25. The Lord had been her banner. She had held it, along with Moses, Aaron and Hur, by pleading for intercession through her Lord. Again the banner of the Song, as we have said, is Love (Song 2.4). This love is the strongest force in heaven and earth (Song 8.6) "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm, for love is strong as death" (that never relents). "Jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame". Heb. Flame of Yah. "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 be utterly contemned" (it cannot be bought for money or exchanged for power, because it already has all power in heaven and earth). Such is the overwhelming force of love as it is found in the Divine mercy. These are only two of this bannered host, and just as the walls of Jericho fell flat when the power of love represented by the blue-covered Ark of the Covenant carried by the faithful Kohathites, and reinforced by the peoples' chant (see Blue in Scriptures - A.Hall), so the world and its inherent evil ways will fall at the coming of Christ and His Bride. Such is the power and majesty of this glittering and bannered host defending Jerusalem (see also in attack, Rev.19.11-16, Zech.10.3 etc.) Absolutely invincible in powers and persuasions, we view this wonderful Bride, militant, and yet extremely lovely in the perfection of divine womanhood. Already Song 1.9 had compared her to Pharaoh's chariots or horses that drew them, the crack cavalry of their day glittering with chains and jewels, we see the idea of the brilliance attaching to this combined host. As we advanced, this is what the Bride meant to Jesus, and in Song 6.5 we see what they did to Him or what she did to Him. "Turn away thine eyes, for they have overcome me". Her Lord, her divine husband, overcome by the loveliness found in her. Even Christ is unable to stand against the combined might and alluring influences of the purpose of God as revealed in her through Himself. "Thou hast unhearted me", "taken my heart away" - the expression used, as we know it, as when a man is completely in love with a maid, and she takes him over entirely by her charms. What a lovely thought and gracious acknowledgment to her. No doubt her prayer had been like ours today, "May the beauty of our Lord be upon us."

1. Like Jacob, the Bride had power with God and prevailed, Gen.32.28, Hos.12.4, though the angel had said "Let me go".
2. Like the disciples going to Emmaus who constrained Him to go in with them, though "He made as though He would go further" (Lk.24.28-29).
3. Like Moses too, whom God forbid to pray, saying "Let me go" as though his prayers could prevail with God - and he did pray - and overcame (Ex.32.9-14).

What a blessed result of looking unto Jesus Heb.12.2. "Thine eyes have overcome me". Alas, how much we lose by looking at our hearts instead of looking unto Jesus. Thus we ought to cover the high honour and privilege of thus enrapturing His heart, a privilege that might be ours, if only we walked "worthy of our high calling". The expression "Turn away thine eyes from me" implies a fixed and steady gaze, such as David's when he said, "Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord", Ps.25.15. We should cultivate this steady "looking unto the Lord" or Jesus, that our eyes may wait upon the Lord our God (Psa.123.2). One old commentator says, "The words may be rendered thus, 'Turn thine eyes toward me, for they have lifted me up', for the Hebrew word 'turn away' signifies also 'turn to', as in 1 Chron.12.23, and the expression 'they have overcome me' is literally 'they have lifted me up' - with strength and comfort as in Ps.138.3." Rowbotham. However, the latter half of Song 6.5-7 is another indication, and added information, as to why the pleasure of Jesus is found in her, and is, as mentioned, a repeat of ch.4.1-3, and it would appear that they are included here as a double emphasis, also to fill out further the reasons why the Lord "has no more spirit left in him" (refer to ch.4 for further expositional details). Briefly Song 6.5-6 - "Thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead" we saw had reference to her being separated to Him in Nazariteship. Coincidence showed identity with the male conception of uncut hair, and this she had done in Gilead, meaning "the place of witness". No wonder a happy surge of joy will fill her, as she listens to his testimony by the Lord, Heb.11 etc., and all worthies of whom the world was not worthy, we hope even from our day and age. This gave Jesus a good deal of courage in the time of the 'olive press' in Gethsemane, particularly as he went back in time to Gen.14, when His type, Melchizedek met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings. This happened in the King's Dale, the very place

where He now felt the bitterness of suffering. In the future time of which we are speaking the antitypical King's Dale will have seen Christ Himself, offering bread and wine, the symbol of his perfected sacrifice, to Abraham and his seed once again victorious as seen in the bannered host we have been thinking of.

The place of witness must of necessity supply its quota of pain, as seen in the Gilead aspect, but will most certainly issue in triumph in the end. For each there is a Gethsemane to be endured, but also a King's Dale to be entered, and feasted in victory through Yahweh Nissi - The Lord our Banner.

Song 6.6 "Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep, which go up from the washing, whereof everyone beareth twins and there is not one barren among them".

Again Jesus would have us to be reminded of the pleasure of this figure of perfection of colour, symmetry, faultless in form of the perfect set of teeth naturally, as they apply spiritually to His Bride. No unevenness or irregularity, no tooth playing truant, 1 Thess. 5.14. Twins in upper and lower jaws working together in exact correspondence, the steady walk of His Bride coming up from the washing unspotted. Whiteness of the purest wool, the rumination and the eating of the Word of Life, both mind and heart, or head and hand working in unison, Jno.2.22 etc. "Faith and works uniting perfectly, walking in the love of God" (1 Cor.13). She has exemplified her Nazariteship in His strength, "none barren", full of good works and faith.

Song 6.7 "As a piece of pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks"

The multitudinous aspect is still prominent in the thoughts of Jesus; a cloven piece of this fruit revealing the multitudinous seed in regal red and white, again reminding Himself that He was the one who had, by the grace of the Father, overcome the world, John 16.17, and that through Himself His Bride had conquered. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God, this is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood." She had overcome through His strength. Now she would sit with Him in His throne. No wonder her flashing eyes unhearted Him". They had overcome Him, or literally, "have taken me by storm". Could we say in her access to the throne of God, she is in the place of power, for the eyes of the surrendered one, turned towards Him in helpless weakness and dependence, have power with God because they are, as Jesus Himself described, "dove's eyes" (4.1), spiritually enlightened and as elegant in pleading, as the sorrowful loving glance of the dove in silent pleading - saying in spirit, "Lord be merciful unto me a sinner", or "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom" (Lk.18.13, Lk.23.24), or our sister bound with a spirit of infirmity (Lk.13.11-16): our repentant brother who suffered justly on the cross, side by side with his Lord who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, will recall to mind that incident very vividly when he hears this saying from his Lord at this time. So will our late Syrophenician sister, when her faith prevailed with the compassion of her Lord, saying "Even the dogs" (and she was a Gentile dog at that time) "eat of the crumbs that fall from the table" (Matt.15.21-28). And how often has the unspoken look of repentance, love and faith on our behalf overcome and prevailed with the compassion of our Lord? How many handfuls of purpose have delighted our hearts when least expected and almost never deserved. Finally under this heading, Lepper comments, "Turn thine eyes from me" "There is a language of the eyes" (as we have already suggested). Here the Bridegroom is so overcome with delight, so overwhelmed with the love which he has begotten in her, causing her to look upwards into His face, that He says "Turn away thine eyes". It is a figure of speech. We often use similar language when there is not the slightest desire that the request should be obeyed. It really expresses the unbounded pleasure of the Bridegroom, in knowing that the heart of His chosen one has been so captivated, that her uplifted eyes are riveted upon Him. So be it. We turn to the next two verses.

Song 6.8-9 "There are threescore queens and fourscore concubines and virgins without number"

"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". The excellence of the Lamb's Bride is further emphasised in these verses, and it would almost appear to be the

confession of Solomon himself, were it not for the fact, that though he had 1,000 of such cohabiters he failed to find even ONE, in fact quite the reverse of the sentiments of these verses. His many wives were no help to him, and finally turned his heart in his latter days, that he forsook God whose blessings he had proved so long, and turned to idols (Eccl.7.26-28, 1 Kings 11.3 etc.) The identification clearly can apply only to the "fair and beautiful spouse of the true King Solomon", and no one else, the partner of His royal throne in Zion, and not only do we note that once more is she the object of the King's supreme delight, but she is also the object of universal admiration. "The daughters saw her", i.e. the daughters of Jerusalem to whom the narration is given, yea "the queens and concubines, and they praised her". "The Gentile power". Again Psa.45.12 assists, "And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift", type of the wealth and power of the Gentile nations. "Even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour". She reflects the glory and beauty of the King, and all the nations admire His comeliness in her. "And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty; for it was perfect through my comeliness which I put upon thee, saith the Lord God" (Ezek.16.14). Compare the confession of Thomas to Jesus, "My Lord and my God" (John 20.28). When using this passage as we are in its Messianic setting (antitypical that is), no doubt the comeliness, as we have advanced, could be ascribed to the unction of the Yahweh Name, as it passed to her by grace from her Lord. "All that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed" (Isa.61.9), and take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus (Acts 4.13) in His day. "In the ages to come" Jesus will be emphatically "glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe", even when His perfected Bride "shall appear with Him in glory", and be NO LONGER "hidden with Christ in God", but openly manifest to Israel and the remnant of the Gentiles that have escaped the judgments of God. As we have advanced a few pages back, it may well be that the literal Israel will then discover a meaning in these words, as they gaze upon the Sharon or autumn crocus and "the Bride, the Lamb's wife", which cannot be understood in the present dispensation, when the veil will have been removed and they are able for the first time to see "the end of the Lord" 2 Cor.3.7-18. We see in these verses that with Stuart "the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Solomon, the long expected King, comes surrounded with NO earthly pomp of the kings of the earth, Jew or Gentile, and (a very stirring lesson for our times) He comes restoring the marriage covenant to its original oneness and simplicity." They had contravened both the primitive institution and the special command to the kings NOT to multiply wives, yet so permitted on account of the hardness of their hearts. But the second Adam brings men back to the simplicity of the first, and announces again, that 'a man shall leave father and mother and cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one' - not many gathered together, but two united in ONE. Restoring the early institution, and bestowing on it the honour of the first display of His glory, he seems to announce that in contradiction to kings and their courts, the Bride of the Messiah is ONE. The promised King appears in His glory at a marriage feast, typical of His own marriage. But His Bride is to be ONE and undivided, not many as in the courts of earthly kings. Many in one, as Song 6.7 taught, but even as Her Lord, a single invisible unity. Not many churches or creeds multiple, but ONE, as Paul so plainly put forth in Gal.3.16-18 etc., yet inclusive of myriads of peoples, from all nations and tongues, because Paul is using a plural noun in Gal.3.16 (Rev.5.9-11, 7.9 etc.) pointing clearly to the New Jerusalem which has come before us, the Bride adorned for her husband 'the prince's daughter with shoes', 'the free'. Her commendations are threefold -

(1) She is one with unity in her affections, but with a kind of oneness in herself, as we have just demonstrated. Thus in another figure (A) the church is one garden (6.2), comprehending many beds of spices, (B) one church made up of many ecclesias of all ages and dispensations that have witnessed her formation, (C) and thus oneness of unity is a great commendation to her, or a special part of her excellency; (D) a visible proof of the working of the eternal purpose within her and of the scrutiny of the Divine Father, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, (E) As Durham, one of the old commentators puts it, "the invisible church is but one, all believers make up one body, though there may be many of different growths, yet there is but ONE Bride." This is a singular thing, and this makes for the scope

of commending the Bride, and points out two things: that all the excellencies in believers combine in one, and that must be excellent; every one of them partakes of another excellency, by virtue of the natural union, by virtue of the fellowship and communion they have with Christ, the head and husband, and one with another, as the beauty of the face adorns the legs, and the straightness of the legs commends the face, because both hold forth one glorious body".

(2) "She is the only one of her mother". This sets her out singularly and exclusively, there is not another but she. The mother we have already identified earlier, the true church wherein children are conceived and brought forth; the mother of all that believe (Gal. 4:25), "Jerusalem that is above, is free, which is the mother of us all". This church, considered as from the beginning of the world to the end, is ONE, and is the mother of the church or Bride, considered as being in this or that place for the time present, which is understood by us all; wherever we live, we belong to that mother (Gal. 4:26). There is no church but that one, and those who are begotten by God are brought forth of her, and belong to her.

(3) "She is the choice one of her that bare her". This sets her out comparatively: (a) She is the choice one in respect of the world - this one society of believers, church or ecclesia, more excellent than the multitude of all the societies that are there. (b) She is the choice one in respect of all visible professions as such. She is beyond the daughters of men, and even amongst all her mother's children, or professing members of the church, she doth excel, in comparison with these professing members who say, "Lord, Lord", and to whom the answer will be, "I never knew you" (or, you stand in no relation to me), Matt. 25:1-12. (c) The church or Bride, considered complexly, doth excel particular believers, as having all the excellencies combined together, the scope of these two verses being to prefer the Bride as singular, and eminently beyond all other beloveds. My love saith He hath not a match, but is chief, and as she called Him the chief of all beloveds (Song 5:10), so here He commends her as the most lovely of all brides that can be wedded or wooed, although there be many of these.

Yet (a) my dove is but one; that is, in respect of her singular excellency, she comprehends all. (b) She is the only one of her mother - there are no more of that family, that are born of that mother, besides herself, that I can set my heart on or be matched with. (c) Comparatively, "she is the choice one of her that bare her" - that is, not only by comparing her with the world, but by comparing her with all mere external professions, she is still the choice of all and the unique product of grace. When we read in verse 9, "my undefiled", we are to understand by the revised text that the meaning is that of perfection. "My dove, my perfect one, is but one". Even as He, His church is as one pearl of infinite price - just as the pearl when it is found is perfect and complete and is born of affliction and suffering. It needs no chiselling or carving, or even polishing, these processes having taken place during its formation. It is beautifully perfect. This is one aspect of the Bride of Christ. He sees the perfections of His own work and purpose in her, and at the moment of speaking she is seated with Him in glory "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, perfect in His comeliness, complete in herself.

His prayer in John 17 was "that they may be one in us", i.e. the Father and the Son, not only bound up in the "bundle of life" eternal, but bound with the perfectness which is love. The Bride of Christ is but one. (The great unity formed before the world began, and shall last when the world has passed away). And she will yet declare the secret of her unity before amazing multitudes (Rev. 7 and 14, etc.).

"She is the choice one" or, another translation, "the pure one". Not already perfect, said Paul in his day, but going on to perfectness. Before Christ in that glad day she is already perfect and pure, having passed the Judgment Seat. The Bridegroom sees no fault in His chosen one. He sees her in the purposes of grace, and can say again and again, "Thou art fair, thou art fair, thou art all fair, my love". Again a threefold cord and impossible to be broken. No impurity is seen where the blood of Christ has washed the guilty stains away (Rev. 1:5-6). "The daughters saw and blessed her; the queens, they praised her". All the daughters of the universe shall see the Bride of Christ in her glorious apparel and they shall bless her and call her blessed. "Blessed and holy are they that are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" - blessed with every blessing, the children of the blessed God.

"The praised". One with her Beloved, she shares the dignity of His throne, she shares the praises ascribed unto His holy Name. As Lepper says, "But should all heaven combine with all the kings and queens of the earth in sounding (from her viewpoint) the praises of the unworthy Bride of the Lamb, she will yet prostrate herself at her great Redeemer's feet, and say, as Israel did of old, and will again in the future, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us is glory due, but unto Thy Name is glory due, for ever and ever".

Song 6:10 "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"

There are two possible interpretations of this verse: (1) either the words are spoken by Christ as further contemplating His Bride, and in the prospect of her coming glory, or (2) they represent the admiration of the queens, concubines and virgins present, in the sense that they are found, as we have expressed, within "the Daughters of Jerusalem" to whom the narration was given by Jesus of the beauties of His Bride, the interjection coming as an expression of surprise and wonder, which is natural in view of the picture painted by Jesus of her.

(a) "Who is she?" What manner of being is this rapturous creature?

(b) We have this same manner of speech in reference to Christ in Isaiah 63:1, "Who is this that cometh from Edom?"

(c) In Song 3:6 we have a comparison with this outburst of admiration, "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke?"

(d) Yet again, in Song 8:5, "Who is this that cometh from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?", where the Daughters of Jerusalem express their admiration and wonder at what they witness. The point at issue is that in neither case does their language express ignorance of who she is, but rather wonder in surprise and admiration at what she is.

In 1 Sam. 17:55 is Saul's question to Abner, the field-marshal of his hosts concerning the exploits of David in despatching Goliath, the giant of Gath: "Whose son is this youth?" Abner replied, "As thy soul liveth, I cannot tell". And in verse 58, Saul's question to David, "Whose son art thou, young man?" David answered, "I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite". David was personally known to Saul (1 Sam. 16:21). He was Saul's armour bearer, and Saul, we are told, loved David greatly. Verse 23 records the soothing influence that David and his harp had upon Saul during his moments of agitation. The position is precisely similar in these verses to that in the Song and in Isaiah 63. The expression does not hazard a query as to the identity of the Bride, but is one of surprise, wonder, etc. and admiration of what she is, or what David did in 1 Sam. 17.

In Song 3:6 and the following verses, as we defined at that juncture in our study, the Bride is regarded as "militant" in the wilderness, but "coming up" fragrant with myrrh, and carried under the protection of the guards of her king, because of fear in the night, but safe in the true Solomon's chariot or couch, covered with purple and paved with love.

"Looketh forth as the morning". Consider this beautiful picture of a child of God, the child of the day, coming up out of the wilderness and looking forth as the morning. Not coming up and looking back like Lot's wife, but coming up and looking forth as the morning. What a magnificent sight it must be, the morning when first appearing above the eastern hills and mountains, cloud after cloud becoming irradiated and the landscape flooded with the glory of "the morning without cloud and clear shining after rain"! Even so the Bride is represented here as emerging out of the darkness of the wilderness and the shadows of death and the night into the meridian glory of the eternal day. But look not on the Bride; look rather on Him whose boundless grace called her out of darkness into His marvellous light, for "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord".

In Song 8:5 there is a beautiful climax observable. Here the Daughters of Jerusalem were attracted chiefly by the beauty and charms of the Bride. The exclamation is, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning on her Beloved?" Not so much is the Bride seen as her Beloved on whom she leans. Rainsford asks, "Is there not something in grace that resembles everything lovely and attractive in

earth and in heaven?" If we compare Song 6:4-7, "Beautiful as Tirzah and comely as Jerusalem", these are terrestrial things, and here in Song 6:10 we have celestial things: "looking forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun". "Terrible as an army with banners" - the banners, from this consideration in the celestial application, are the starry hosts. God leads them forth, "calling them all by their names, and, because of the greatness of His power, not one of them faileth". The Bride of Christ represents the beauty and fulness of both terrestrial and celestial objects.

- (4) In Song 3:6-8 we have the Bride as the church militant on earth in conflict.  
 (5) In Song 6:10 she is found as the church triumphant and at rest, looking forth as the morning.
- First the conflict, then the rest.
  - First the wilderness, then at home.
  - First the night, then the morning.
  - First the morning, then the day,

"When they who with their Leader  
 Have conquered in the fight  
 For ever and for ever  
 Shall shine as stars of light" (Rev. 22:16). - Anon.

It has been thought that the description of the Bride of Christ in these passages is amongst the most magnificent in the Song. This four-fold description of the Bride is wondrously beautiful.

- (1) "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning?" - compare Hosea 6:3, speaking of that same "day", "His going forth is prepared as the morning". Solomon in Proverbs had already said, "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18), or, to paraphrase, "the path of the shining light that shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day".
- (2) Her "looking forth" is compared to His "going forth" as the morning.
- (3) 2 Samuel 23:4 gives further information: "He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds", and yet - not alone?
- (4) Psalm 110:3, "Thy people shall be willing ("Aminadab") in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning". "Thou hast the dew of Thy youth". Surely one of the most exquisite passages in the word of God.
- (5) Imagine a beautiful morning after a dark night, innumerable dew-drops glistening in the light of the rising sun, crystallising the earth, as it were, with diamonds. Spiritually speaking, such a scene is portrayed before us: Christ Himself our light and life, and His people the Bride, His body, the dew-drops of His morning, bright and beautiful in His Divine glory. His Bride is as the morning and looking for the morning.
- (6) In Gen. 1:5 we read, "The evening and the morning were the first day" - first the evening, then the morning, we note. The Bride is not described as looking forth into the morning, but looking forth as the morning, herself receiving and reflecting as in a mirror the beauty and glory and loveliness of God. She is that morning in Christ (Psalm 133:1-3, etc.). Well might the exclamation ring out, "Who is this?" What was she at her beginning? A poor sinner, a home-born slave. In that coming day she will be resplendent in glory as the King's Bride. The Lamb's Bride in infinite charm.

"Who is this, fair as the moon?" - a receiver of the reflected light of the sun of righteousness, her only light! The moon, as we well know, shines with a borrowed light, reflecting the beauty and glory of the sun, and so it is here. The sparkling dew spoke of the glory of the resurrection, life essentially of the "morning without clouds". The moon shines only in the darkness of night and it is from the vantage point of eternal day that the Bride is taken back in nostalgic review of the times when she was "bright as the moon" - a sombre interlude as she reflects upon the changeful light she sent forth in the darkness of Gentile night. Never could she be seen without a shadow (the contrast would be true in every case) and never reflecting fully the sunlight as she now does at this Marriage Feast and with the Bridegroom at her side. She remembers full well that her outshining or epiphany was more or less bright only as she came nearer to or receded further from the sun, the centre of her life. With the physical eye we have never seen the dark side of the moon, and it is only recently that television cameras have conveyed pictures to our eyes of this side.



Without the illumination of the sun it is black and grey, lifeless rock and barrenness. The moon was set to give light in darkness and the fairness of the moon Bride is only a reflection of the Sun of Righteousness Himself.

In "fair as the moon", thinking of the refraction, and reflection angle again, we see the moon celestial and the dew terrestrial, in harmony with the Bride's destiny of showing forth her Lord. Meanwhile, for those who look in hope towards this glorious consummation, we strive to think on "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise"(Phil.4.9-10). We will think on these things, "and the God of Peace shall be with you"- the God of Jerusalem that never slumbers nor sleeps - the One who will alone give peace, as we have expounded, to Jerusalem, a city troubled and divided, as these words are penned! (A correction since these words were penned! Jerusalem is wholly Israeli for the first time since AD70) - in vivid contrast to this moon, what has been called an illuminated vessel of clay of changing light and shade and only partial reflection. We think of James 1.17 and thank God for His goodness and condescension in calling the children of men to such a high and holy calling, for "every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of (or cast by) turning". This allusion, comparing the immutability of the Godhead with the constant performance of the sun, which in reality never sets but gives life and comfort to man and beast, brings us to the third aspect of Song 6.10.

#### "Clear as the sun"

There is great beauty in the connection of the two figures here chosen by the Lord as characteristic of His church, "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun". We have seen the moon shines but not with its own light; neither is it wholly free from spot or shade, nor does it always shine with equal light: a fitting emblem of the child of God as in himself a dark opaque body, shining only with the reflected beams of the sun of righteousness - he never reflects that light perfectly. As his orbit varies, so does his light; yet in whatever measure that light shines upon him, he is fair. We behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor.3.8). And just as the moon was Divinely constituted "to give light" by night (Gen.1.15-16) and to rule in the night, so does the church of God shine forth as a light in the world, all through the present night of darkness "until the shadows flee away"(Song 2.17) and her shining forth is as "clear as the sun". "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father" (Matt.13.43).

From the first moment of her union in Christ, she is in Him. "Clear as the sun" - that is, in prospect. The "dawn" of the Kingdom day is to be seen in the spouse. Peter, himself of no mean part in this glorious creature, spoke of the day dawning and the morning star arising in the hearts of believers (2 Pet.1.19). If the day has truly "dawned" in our hearts it is that we may appear in public as those who are "sons of day" (1 Thess.5.4-5). It is the Bride's duty to exhibit moral features of "day" in contrast to all that marks the night. Coates remarks that "the Bride is for display" in Rev.21. Whatever she is adorned for, her Husband does not cover all that she is to be, though of priority it comes first. But she is to be seen of myriads a luminous body, and this she is called to be now, reflecting Christ and shedding forth to the best of her ability in Christ the effulgence of God, and seen as overcoming what is of the world. The Beloved had seen her in overcoming character (in verse 4) from an intensely personal angle "Himself", and now as he exhibits her in glory at the marriage feast, she has that character in the eyes of the witnesses that behold her. She appears publicly in the character of one who has "banners flying"! She has not sustained defeat, whenever she has been hard pressed in battle. Her reserves have been called in to rout the enemy. They were seen at Rephidim and the outstretched arms of intercession (Ex.17.8-16, already mentioned). Her intimate nature with Christ was to be seen even in the days of her flesh. She is found "complete in Him"; righteous through His righteousness: perfect through the comeliness which He has put upon her, for "as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4.17). She is one with Him, nay part of Himself, "members of His body,

of His flesh and of His bones" (1 Cor.12.12-27). "We are made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor.5.21), "without spot", "faultless", "unblameable" and "unreprovable" (Eph.5.27, 1 Thess.3.13, Jude 24), yea, as "clear as the sun".

We cannot see ourselves too strongly in this light - in Jesus, justified and sanctified in perfection (that is, of course, if we are truly in the Beloved); for, says Acts 13.39, "By Him all that believe are justified from all things", washed, sanctified, justified, etc. (1 Cor.6.11). Yet in ourselves we are as dark as the moon, and ever prone to wax and wane in holiness. Our light depends solely on our nearness to, or distance from, "the sun of righteousness" - naturally 93,000,000 miles! How far spiritually, may we ask? And whilst on the one hand we are ever variable, ever changing and fluctuating, we are, on the other hand, always clear - as Jesus is - clad in His righteousness, hidden beneath His body-covering robe, and perfect in His comeliness. "The glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17.22). So our Bride's "fair as the moon and clear as the sun" is an appropriate description of witness to, and dependence on, the Wellbeloved. The moon is a "faithful" though not a complete "witness", as we have observed, and His redeemed are to naught else. We have spoken of her native darkness in herself, simply reflecting faithfully the light of the sun. She remains the same above all clouds. She moves as her sun moves, wholly dependent upon his upholding power; he is her centre and her all. She has nothing apart from him; if he were removed she would sink into space, useless and helpless.

Thus, as she hears these words in glory, the Bride reflects that it has been so with herself. She was utterly dark in herself, as dark and helpless as the grave, until she was brought into the life of God (Ephes.2). She had no light but Him, she rested upon her heavenly sun as her centre and all; she moved with Him, and was in absolute dependence upon Him, above all and through all the changing scenes that have led to the present moment at her marriage feast, for with her vision turned wholly towards Him, her one work was to move in her orbit in the path marked out for her in correspondence with her Sun.

The R.V. gives "pure" for "clear" as the sun, which in other words can mean "transparent", giving emphasis, we find, to the words of Jesus that she is "comely as Jerusalem" (Song 6.4), for the Revelation reveals that the principal character of the Bride-City is its clearness. It is said to be "clear as crystal" (Rev.21.11), "transparent as glass" (Rev.21.21 margin), because it is only a medium for transmitting the glory of Him who is the light thereof (Rev.21.23). Penn Lewis says, "Moreover the soul united to the Lord is not conscious of this clear light of God shining through her. If she were to look within to know why the onlookers speak thus of her, she would be dark to herself. She is only filled with light, as she is occupied with Him who is her sun. Whilst full of light (Lk.11.34), she is terrible indeed to the works of darkness; she is terrible as an army with banners, for, clothed in the armour of light, she is composed of those of whom it is written, 'they overcame by the blood of the Lamb and they loved not their lives unto the death' (Rev.12.11)". In this day and age of mortality she becomes more and more an illuminated vessel of clay (2 Cor.4.6-7), through which the Lord will show Himself again to weary hearts lying in darkness and in shadows of death; whilst she is increasingly being prepared for the hour when her body of humiliation will be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able to subject all things to Himself.

Fausset sees in this verse a kind of passage from sanctification as yet incomplete, the moon, to her future glory (Matt.13.43), "army". The climax is this phase "terrible as an army with banners", which he thinks requires to be applied to the starry and angelic hosts, from which God is called Lord of Sabaoth. Quite true, as its working out is all found.

(1) The law of first mention in Scripture helps and portrays its meaning. Yahweh Sabaoth is first found in 1 Sam.1. We find Hannah pleading with this God, "I will be of irresistible might and power, adding to us 'Sabaoth', meaning hosts. Nothing could withstand His will, all life was with Him. "Look on the affliction of thine handmaid and remember me, thine handmaid, bondmaid." Notice three times this term handmaid under the law the Lord or master provided all things for those of his household. A wife for his slave and so forth. All this thinking is at the base of the remarks of Jesus, we believe, in Lk 12.22-32, with of course the opposing

picture of a bad master or lord in the parable of the rich fool in verses 15-21. The picture painted in verses 22-32 is one where faithful service is in sight, in the sense in which we are thinking that all things are provided by God for His servants. What is required on our behalf is implicit obedience. It is the prerogative of God to provide for His servants as He sees fit, even the kingdom itself.

Taking this principle back to Hannah, whose name in Hebrew means "Grace, compassion, favour", we find this devout soul in silent supplication to her Lord and Master, "The God of Grace", mistaken by Eli, the worn-out High Priest, for a woman in her cups. How wholly was he mistaken! Not only was his natural sight dim at this time, but his spiritual conception was absolutely nil. Hannah was in her cups all right, but her cup was full of sorrow. So she poured out her soul before her Lord as a drink offering on the sacrifices (1 Sam. 1.9-17). She came to the Lord of Hosts as a humble suppliant. Her designation of "handmaid" or bondswoman is used before Him three times (1 Sam. 1.11). She had in mind a spiritual project and in her thoughts it would issue in spiritual perfection, as No.3 in Scripture signifies. In the whole sequence 'handmaid' is used five times, the number of 'grace' in Scripture. It was also the meaning of her own name. Her God was the God of Grace, so once again we have the definition of a threefold cord that cannot easily be broken. Hannah wept sore before the Lord, and vowed a vow - "O Lord of Hosts" (who will be a host of unconquerable beings to whom all might belongs and nothing is too hard or beyond His power), "O Lord my Master (Adonai), wilt Thou give unto thine handmaid a man child? Then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." How complete was this spiritual cord! Samuel, the ensuing child, means "The Lord hath heard what I asked Him" ("Meta Dictionary" Names, etc.). There was no reservation when Hannah had weaned him. She brought him to the Lord to do service at the Tabernacle, and so began a life of utter and absolute devotion to the Lord, including forty years as Judge over Israel. No razor came upon his head - life-long Nazariteship. The son of the handmaid or bondswoman born within the Lord's house of grace chose to have his ears bored, because he loved his Lord and would not forswear the oath spoken by his mother. How wonderfully had Hannah taken away or overcome the Lord her Master, Who granted her request and so received in payment a son in perpetual service. This is indeed a fair example of the Lord of Sabaoth, how He may be served, and His name revealed to His obedient children in grace. Hannah ("grace and favour") and Samuel ("asked of the Lord and heard of Him") will no doubt, in the day when these words are spoken, recall these stirring incidents.

#### "Terrible as an army with banners"

The mercy and grace revealed in the Lord of Sabaoth is seen in Isa. 1.9, quoted by Paul in Rom. 9.29, and found again in Jas. 5.4, in the sense of Yahweh Sabaoth being strong on behalf of His little ones, who were advised by James to endure unto the coming of this mighty Lord, grudging not lest they be condemned, and taking the position of the prophets who have endured under affliction. There is happiness to be found in this endurance. Job is always before us in this position. And what is the conclusion of the matter? Jas. 5, "That the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy", as we saw in the first mention in 1 Sam. 1.11. Fausset, then, has been proved correct when he thought that this section of the Song 6.4-10 should be applied to the Lord of Sabaoth. It may well be a great lesson to us in the spirituality found in the Names and Titles of Deity apart from their outworking in history and prophecy, having to do rightly of course among the nations.

The personal and spiritual application should be sought out diligently and worked out from the context with the help of the concordance. We may well find deeper wells of spirituality, as we have found in "Sabaoth" - "The Lord of Armies indeed" - but what a different aspect has confronted us, as we worked it out from the context! The one overcame none other than himself, so to speak, even as our Lord Himself was overcome by the love and the supplication of His Bride. This application of "Sabaoth" is only for "the overcomers", who are found within the Bride and who, as Hannah, are seen in grace with Him, and who have asked, howbeit silently, though in deep emotion and agitation.

Another son also found in the glorious Bride will have immense happiness when this recital takes place; none other than John the Baptist. The circumstances of his conception and birth are somewhat similar to Samuel's. Lk.1.5. His father Zacharias (= "remembered of Yah"), of the course of Abia (= Yah is Father"), which was the eighth (1 Chron.24.10-19). His wife Elizabeth (= "God is her oath"), daughter of Aaron (= "High father", "illuminated", "the enlightener"). Both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless. Yet they had no child. Elizabeth was barren and had been so for a lifetime. They both were now "well stricken in years". How often has a daughter of God suffered such humiliation and affliction (as it was counted in these days under the Law, and before, of course). Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, the wife of Manoaah, Samson's mother, the woman of Shunem who entertained Elisha; now Elizabeth (Gen.16.1-2, 25.20-21, 29.31, Judg.13.1-3, 2 Kings 4.13-17, Lk.1.7); and how many more daughters of God have mourned over similar circumstances? But Job's answer is always in context, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the Lord" (Job 1.21). Yet it can be truly said, particularly in these days of delinquency and frustration, when discipline is taken for something inhuman and sadistic, when disrespect to older people and their property is the order of the day, that the old saying holds good, "If there are no children to joy in, there are none to grieve over". And comfort is given in Isa.56.3-5 to those who have sought to please the Lord, "Let not the eunuch say, behold I am a dry tree, for unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths and choose the things that please me and take hold of my covenant, even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and daughters. I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off". Joshua, John Baptist, Elijah, Elisha and Jesus belonged, so it would appear, to this class. Jephthah did by defect, caused through the keeping of his oath. So our list could grow, but back to Lk.1. Elizabeth was barren, no son to give to the Lord, as Hannah before her, nor the hope of any naturally.

In Lk.1.8-9 comes the most auspicious moment of Zacharias's priestly service. He was to offer the incense, the great moment in a priest's life, once only. He was alone in the Holy Place. To his amazement and no doubt trepidation (1.11), an Angel appeared at the right side of the altar, and the meaning was evidently plain. His prayer had been accepted (1.13). With great bewilderment of joy Zachariah grasped that his name had seen fulfilment, "Yah hath remembered". "Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call him John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness and many shall rejoice at his birth" (1.15). The angel goes on to say that, similar to Samuel, he would be a Nazarite from his birth, and just as Samuel preceded David (for Saul was taken away in God's wrath), so he, John, 'The grace of Yah', should precede and announce Jesus. Temporary unbelief (it would appear through joy and surprise) cost Zacharias his speech at least nine months, 9 a Scriptural number always signifying finality. Hannah before the Lord dumb in her affliction, and yet very much alive in supplication, and now Zacharias dumb because of temporary unbelief, at this marvellous fulfilment of his prayer even beyond all his desires (1.16-17). No doubt both sons of righteous parents, God given, would delight not only Yah, but also their parents, in the performance of their lifelong Nazariteship, of which we have written concerning Song 4.1-6, verse 5 etc.)

So we find once again happy corroboration with -

- (1) The Song: "Army with banners",
- (2) "Yahweh Sabaoth",
- (3) The prospective Bride, now again, we stress, at the time of narration, immortalised and having true nostalgia, as she is directed backwards in time. Hannah, Elkannah (no doubt, we would think), Samuel, Zacharias, Elizabeth, John Baptist, they, with myriads more who are unknown and unsung and "of whom the world was not worthy", will find satisfaction, and as the Seraphim (Isa.6.1-6) will veil their faces before their wondrous Bridegroom. The operation of this gracious purpose is all defined in the name of Zacharias's child John, 'The grace of Yah', found in the tender mercies of "Yahweh Sabaoth".

We thank God for the hint that Fausset gave to us in the suggestion that we should apply this application to "Sabaoth". Although the name God appears only once in the Hebrew text of Song 8.6, "Most vehement flame" (literally "flame of Yah"), we have seen that many are found by true implication within its scope. Nissi = Banners, Rohi = Shepherd, Sabaoth = Hosts or armies, Ropheka = Healer. All these and many more are contained in this "Heart and jewel of the Song", recalling all the wonder of the Divine purpose found in "the way of a man" (even the Man) with His or the "maid". Is it not because of the outworking of these great names and titles found within the scope of this Bride that both the Father and Christ are 'unhearted'? How precious is this knowledge to us when we call in our distress upon Yahweh Sabaoth. He will ever attend to our cry and answer according to His good will. "Blessed be the Lord"!

A final observation on this section and in summary with Stuart, who adds, "The Bride of Jesus is walking in brightness within, yet above, a benighted world; fair as the moon in the midnight darkness of earthliness, error and sin. Nor is her beauty to be disparaged, or her light despised, because borrowed and reflected; for it is the sun's own light, so reflected that men may look calmly on it" (and who is original, save God? Gen.1.1). "In the absence of the sun, the moon aids the ingathering of thousands of harvest fields every year, thousands of travellers it guides on their path, and thousands of mariners it rescues from a watery grave. Christ, the sun of righteousness, is not personally here, and the world can see his light only as reflected by his church". And all in summary these thoughts presumably arising from Fausset, many writers seem to echo.

- (1) The church Patriarchal resembled the faint dawn, when she "looked forth as the morning".
- (2) The church Levitical was "fair as the moon" with light imperfect that was to change and pass away, with types and ceremonies to change like the moon by whose fluctuating seasons they were ordered.
- (3) The church Evangelical, now that the darkness is past and the true light shineth, is "clear as the sun".
- (4) The church triumphant in the Resurrection will be dazzling as the hosts of heaven, "terrible as an army with banners", the stars promised to Abraham in the great and precious promises.

Song 6.11-13 "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. Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Ammi-nadib. 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".

Opinion is divided on 6.11, as to whether the speaker is Christ or the Bride. Fausset again, with Stuart, maintains that it is the Bride who is speaking, "For she is the narrator and often soliloquises, which He never does", and Stuart: "My Beloved is mine and I am His, etc., and while she constantly tells of her transactions with the watchmen and others, He never introduces any narrative except what forms part of a direct address to the Bride." Song 6.13 would appear to give credibility to this idea in that she has left the scene and is twice urged to return, return, by the Daughters of Jerusalem whom she had left on her way down to the Garden of Nuts. This does not preclude the idea that the Bride was accompanied or led by the Bridegroom.

The only query before us, as the writer sees it, concerns the identity of the speaker in 6.11-12. Incidentally, we are informed by the Englishman's Bible that chapter 7 of the Song commences with the words "Return, return, O Shulamite" (6.16 in our text). The chapter notations are uninspired, as we are aware. The originals would be one uninterrupted sequence of Hebrew characters, unpointed before the Massorites took up their text; consequently the divisions are mostly the opinions of the various bodies of translators, and, whilst we may take note of the structural information they would have for us, we are in no way bound to accept them as infallible fact in dividing the book. Perhaps by applying sweet reasonableness and not dogmatism in our searchings, we may be able to assess more definitely who is the speaker of Song 6.11.

First of all in regard to the garden. The Garden of Nuts into which the descent is taken is, we find, the third of the gardens of the Song, and is marked by very peculiar features. They are briefly outlined as follows :

(1) Song 2.10-13 The time is spring, Passover season, full of flowers and tender with nothing mature.

(2) Song 4.12-16 The time is autumn, with abundance of spices and ripe fruit in evidence, with nothing imperfect.

(3) Song 6.11 The time is the end of winter but with the immediate prospect of spring, a new Spring, should we say. There are no spices - these no doubt have all been gathered; neither pomegranates nor pleasant fruits - they have been plucked and eaten at the Bridal Feast. We do find, however, nuts from the previous autumn, either in storage or still hanging on the trees. It is still winter with the promise of early spring, the pomegranates already budding and the young vines flourishing; in other words, the first sproutings of the valley. What have we here before us in beautiful symbol and type but the calendar of REDEMPTION as effected within the relationship of Bride and Bridegroom? -

(A) Song 2.10-13 Sacrifice of the Lamb. The time of firstfruits and dedication of identity with Him (Lev.2.14-16) (Ruth 1.14 etc.). Through His sacrifice arose the possibility of her finding the place of separation where she might meet His returning call (2.17), "The Mountains of Bether".

(B) Song 4.12-16. The Garden of Autumnal Fruits. What He had found in His garden at His return, 5.1-2: The marriage feast had been held and she had partaken with Him of these fruits, etc.

(C) Song 6.11: The Garden of Nuts is not in one sequence as the garden enclosed (4.12). The latter as we have seen is the Spouse, but it would appear that the Garden of Nuts is a wider sphere to which He will presently lead His spouse. This is implied by the use of another word for garden, to distinguish it from the one mentioned in ch.4. There is greater expansion, for "the verdure of the valley" is referred to, corresponding more with the "fields" and "vineyards" of Song 7.11-12, to which the Bridegroom is invited by the Spouse to come with her. It has been suggested that in its strict interpretation it refers to the Lord as looking to see the signs of spiritual springtime in the Israel. Now this can only come to pass after the Marriage of the Lamb in prospect in the Song, as we have developed, particularly in Psa.133 when Christ and His Bride descend upon Zion with the blessing, when Judah and Israel will be joined together as one stick, which historically will result in the children of the Marriage, Psa.45.16 etc. In this particular aspect of the Garden of Nuts in expanded application, we have the project of the budding pomegranates and the flourishing of the vines, consequently the prophecy of the birth of spiritual Israel in the Millennium, and we note, the pomegranate is in view. Again a multitudinous seed is to be added, and once more comes through blood and water, born of the Lord's sacrifice and righteousness cleansing the peoples of the earth. Not Israel alone, but all nations as we have seen from Psa.45.16-18. We find both of the happy pair very interested to find out whether or not "the little vines flourished". Would spiritual Israel be pleased to pour themselves out willingly to God, as the wine of the drink implied under the Law? There is a retrospective application of this verse to which we will turn in a little while.

Christ has found "precious fruits" in his Spouse now glorified with Him in immortality, but both are anxious to see if any promise of fruit can be found in this extended garden (of the valleys). Note again the correspondence with Song 2.1-2. The Bride was the lily of the valley. These features are eagerly sought for in those who should follow on in the Millennium and finally arrive at the great consummation of the Bride, consisting in giving Christ the travail satisfaction at last. So whilst this glorious Bride is perfection in every detail in the sense in which we are thinking; there is another grand completion to be attained - hence this further garden.

If they can find such signs of life showing that God is quickening Israel (Ezek.37 etc.), then the fruition of the ancient Promises is within sight (Rom.11.25-26 etc.)

Christ looks to the work of God in His people (the millennial Israel and nations) as that which will provide "chariots for His movements among them". He will not only have the Spouse as the enclosed Garden, but He will in due time have all Israel and the whole wide sphere of millennial fruitfulness (Psa.72 etc.) Psalm 110.3 speaks of this time when "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power; in holy splendour

from the womb of the morning shall come to thee the dew of thy youth". When the Lord sees signs of spiritual life in Israel, when buds and blossoms appear there, He will know that the time spoken of in Psalm 110 is at hand. His soul will set Him upon the chariots of "His willing people", which is the literal meaning of "Ammi-nadib", or the "princely people", "Ammi" signifying "My people" (Hosea 2.1, margin). "Nadib" is the same word as "willing" in Psa.110.3.

In following up the name Ammi-nadib along with the teachings of the various gardens in the fulfilment of the purposes of redemption, we have been led to believe that whoever may have been the speaker in ch.6.11, both Christ and His Bride go down together in their quest of "fruit in the Garden of Nuts". Why, then, may we ask, did the Bride take the lead at this time, as though she herself would go? The answer is quite intriguing. There is a first century fulfilment of this verse. No doubt we may find the answer there. The setting is found in Acts 1.13, when one dispensation was just closing, the other not yet begun, the hard shell of the old needing to be broken, and its inner sweet kernel to be extracted. Origen (Lk.24.27-32) At the least this is one idea in which we feel he is rightly guided. Waiting for the Holy Spirit to usher in the spiritual Spring.

- (1) Historically, then, we find Jesus at the close of the Old Covenant, which He himself had fulfilled.
- (2) After His resurrection He gives commands to His army with banners, the army under His leadership and found in His name, unconquerable in strength and blessed by grace, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature".
- (3) The authority of their mission: "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned".
- (4) Their assurance: "And these signs shall follow them that believe". "In my name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues", etc. After giving them their commission to go forth as an Army with Banners, Jesus leaves them and returns to His Father, Mark 16.15-16, Matt.28.16-20. Having led them out as far as Bethany, He lifted up His hands (nail-pierced) and blessed them, and was carried up into heaven, leaving them with this promise, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high" (Lk.24.49-53); and so they descend from Olivet to Jerusalem to wait for the promise of the Father, i.e. the Holy Spirit (John 7.39, ch.14.16-18 etc., ch.16.7-14, Acts 1.8). They go down into the garden, to watch for the fresh outbreak of a new spring, the instant that the Spirit is poured out from on high. Ten days the church waited for the Promise (see chart, "Calendar of Redemption", by Hall). The pomegranates were about to burst open, the young grapes to flourish.

What else have we left in the verse, Song 6.11? "The Garden of Nuts", the fruits of the previous season. If ever there was on earth a Garden of Nuts, it was contained within that upper room in Jerusalem. John Mark's house? They had the treasure of the whole Word of God opened to them (that was the Old Testament at that time).

- (A) Jesus had expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself and had opened their understanding to apprehend ("catch hold") of all things that were written of Him in Moses and the Prophets.
- (B) He had commenced this instruction to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24.13).
- (C) Now to the whole church (Luke 24.36-48).

It could not be imagined that in such a brief space of time there would be communicated the explanation of each separate type and promise, etc., but rather the principles of interpretation, illustrated by numerous examples through all the Old Testament, along with the inward gift of seeing through the Spirit's eyes to give light in all the mysteries of the Word. In other words, in homely phraseology "they were able to crack the hard outer shell of the walnut" and extract at once the innumerable sweet kernels of the Word from their enclosing shells and promise of further hidden treasures - a whole garden of unopened nuts freely opening for the eater. While gathering and breaking these nuts or treasures of the past they were all the time watching for the first breath of summer, when suddenly there came a "rushing mighty wind from heaven". The Spirit was expected, in itself, yet came

- (1) at an unexpected moment (2) in an unexpected manner and with (3) unexpected

power ; which could not be described more exactly than in the words of The Song, "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Ammi-nadib", known as the spiritual counterpart of Jehu, who drove furiously (2 Kings 9.20).

This is how the ancients understood the "Garden of Nuts" sequence. It was brought to our notice and close scrutiny by Fausset and Stuart. Additional explanations and points have been added by the present writer, "things old and new", indeed, Jesus as the wise householder must certainly have provided for His household (Matt.13.52). Little did the Bride think, as she heard those parables only a short while before, that she herself would be in the position to enjoy these treasures laid up for her by the GoodHouseholder, her Lord. That there was purpose behind it all we see in Song 7 12-13, a parallel passage wherein we get many suggestions at least, as to what one of the fruits of the valleys was, "mandrakes". Reference is also made to the fruits being stored, laid up at the entrance to the gates, which she had laid up for Christ : reciprocation once more. Where He goes, she will follow : what He does, she will endeavour to do ! She has taken to heart the advice in Matt.13.52, having received full benefit from those laid up for her by her Lord. Song 6.11, more later.

If we may be permitted a personal testimony, it has taken full thirty years to crack the walnut of the Song ; hard unremitting toil to prize open the tough outer case of Victorian approach to the symbols that gave us the principles which "spring the lock", so to speak.

Also the general approach in modern times of the Rich Tyrant and Shepherd Lover ; and we might add it will require far more pressure and persuasion and spiritual insight than is possessed by the writer, to open fully. What has been extracted has been "sweet as honey" and it is our prayer that many more will be encouraged to pry into these treasures of the "Garden of Nuts".

(A) Is it not remarkable at this time (Song 6.13) that for the first time in The Song the Bride is called "Shulamite" - "Peaceable", the feminine of Solomon, the spouse of Solomon the Prince of Peace, by the Daughters of Jerusalem?

(B) Is it not equally remarkable that Acts 3.11 and 5.12 reveal that Solomon's Porch was the place where the pentecostal ecclesia assembled? (Please do not confuse with the latter-day Pentecostal Church, as there is no affinity whatsoever). "They were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch".

(C) The suggestion has been put forward that since they had not yet received the specific name of Christians many would call them "The People that met in Solomon's Porch", the Solomonite or Shulamite.

(D) This is all contained within the higher meaning of this name : (1) It is the Bride of the Prince of Peace, (2) the Daughter of the God of Peace, (3) it is the anti-typical Daughter of Zion publishing Peace.

The following incident is given almost in the very wording of the Acts of the Apostles - Song 6.13, "Return, return O Shulamite ; Return, return, that we may look upon thee". This is the language of The Song. Historically it runs, "As the lame man that was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together in the Porch called Solomon's, greatly wondering". The scene is vividly drawn in the Acts narrative. A man lame from his mother's womb, suddenly standing after being lifted up by Peter. Now leaping and walking with joy, praising God (an experience anyone in the art of healing can enter into even if the cure described is way beyond the power of men). The lame man suddenly holding Peter and John, then the rush of the people to them in the porch of Solomon's, greatly wondering, and the reply of Peter to this upsurge of popularity. "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this, or why look ye so earnestly on us?" (Acts 3.1-12 etc). Why look on us indeed ! The people were intensely desirous of seeing the Apostles. The lame man held them as they passed forward through the porch, and the throng ran to them, unwilling that they should enter the Temple, but virtually asking them to return that they might look on them. "What will ye see in the Shulamite?" the meek answer of the Bride, always self-conscious that all she has is not her own, all she has received is from her Lord. "Why look ye so earnestly on us?" in Acts 3.12. "Why look ye on us as though by our own power or holiness we made this man to walk?", or, as Paul later said, "We are men of like passions with yourselves" (Acts 14.15).



We have already advanced the idea that the nuts represent the Word of God. The older interpreters understood these nuts to be of the larger species, like walnuts, and they described the several parts as -

- (1) the outer husk which is bitter
- (2) the enclosing shell, usually hard and tough and sometimes rough
- (3) the kernel within which is sweet.

There can be no doubt that the Word to every man first of all appears hard and bitter. How many times have we found the truth of this fact as we have advanced the word to our contemporaries, particularly in these days of higher education (not higher criticism, for that died the death upon the anvil of God's Word long ago), self-expression, and when the psychologists' advice is to leave religion and restrictions that frustrate and discipline; the one-sided opinions of theologians, who advance only the goodness and not the severity of God. The world in general has been softened up since the Victorians and upon this ill-conceived diet of misconception the principles of robust divine truth are too much for them and they turn away from the Word because its outer cover appears to them to be bitter and distasteful. They conclude from their sickly condition and conception, that there can be no sweetness in it for them, and cast it away. Or could we say that they more commonly leave it untouched and untasted? - sometimes pleased with certain palatable preparations from it, but never really tasting the Word itself. The first contact with the Word is indeed like bitter aloes, medicine necessary to the sick and dying, and we neglect this medicinal value of the Word at our peril. From God's angle the whole body is sick and dying; consequently the medicinal properties are first administered by the good physician to regain spiritual health. Then the patient, now reduced by this exercise to the proportions of a babe, is given nourishment and growth in Christ "as a newborn babe" (1 Pet. 2.2) and steadily continues in growth until "the priestly portion is our lot", the red meat or strong meat of the Word (Lev. 6 etc) will then fully represent the plea of the Psalmist, "O taste and see" how gracious the Lord, or Word, is. Upon removing the bitter surface we find the hard rough outer shell, and the sweet kernel appears further away than ever; and no doubt we are hindered this time, not by distaste, but helplessness. One thing is certain - if we only have 'milk teeth' spiritually, we shall never penetrate this covering, and we see that we have in our hand a coveted treasure, but without the least power to impart life unless it is opened by a more powerful hand. (A) Jesus did just such on the Emmaus journey, and in the upper room, as we saw from Lk. 24.13-30, 24.36-46. He cracked the hardest outer shell of any spiritual nut for His disciples, His death and resurrection.

(B) Acts 8.26-38: Philip also broke open the nut which troubled the Ethiopian eunuch, Isa. 53. This great man acknowledged his plight when Philip said to him, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" The reply came, "How can I except some man should guide me?" And may we add, this has been the cry of the Bride way down time - "How can I except some man should guide me?"

(C) Apollos was a mighty man in the Scriptures, but because of insufficient knowledge and leverage, he was unable to prise open all the second shell of the nut. Consequently Priscilla and Aquila taught him the way of God more perfectly (Acts 18.24-28).

(D) The thanks of the Bride all down the ages have resounded to the Father for Paul, who most certainly 'cracked and opened' the outer shell of the Law, revealing the sweet kernel of the antitype of the better Law, better sacrifice, better covenant in Christ. Thank God for Hebrews.

(E) How would the Bride have fared if Jesus had not been manifested as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and root of David, (Rev. 5.1-5 etc). The Book would have remained sealed unto this day, but He was revealed and did prevail to open the book with the seven seals thereof, as we well know. Back again to the fundamental principle "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me". We are convinced that Christ is the key to open the Song and not the paramours of Solomon. Christ alone is the key. We say rather plaintively along with the old poet Herbert, "O that I knew how all thy lights combine, and the configurations of their glorie, Seeing not only how each verse doth shine, but all the constellations of the storie".

So with persistence that outer shell can be overcome, if we are able to remove from our lips the bitterness of the first contact, and helplessness of the second. Should not God guard and preserve His word from careless hands and tasteless palates, that it might not be besmirched, nor swine tread it underfoot and the little

foxes rend. This Word is exalted or magnified above all His name (Psa. 138.2) and will most certainly be withheld from those who treat it lightly, but, to the devout seeker and diligent student who trembles at its precepts, it shall be opened. "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you, for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. 7.7-8). Stuart again reminds us that we might go to some length and trouble to find a Garden of Nuts, and with some great effort open up the nuts and find to our great disappointment only "vanity and vexation of spirit". The fruit tasted is rotten and more bitter within than without, and at the best a mere empty shell that can yield no real sweetness, no satisfaction, no food to man. But in the whole Garden of God there is not a single fruit that is bitter within, not a single fruit that is empty and void. All is full, all is ripe, all is sweet. It is all the fruit of righteousness, the fruit of peace, the fruit of eternal life. As the Acts of the Apostles have shown us, "the pomegranates had budded and the young vines were flourishing". The name of Christ was becoming victorious in the earth. The upsurge of love and faith on the Bride's part made her swift to do the service of him like the chariots of Ammi-nadib. Christ was borne in the chariots of His willing people in glorious array in the campaign against heathendom and darkness so successfully that the defeated said, "they have turned the world upside down" (Acts 17.6). Gesenius translates it, "the chariots of the princely people or people of the prince". The chariots of Messiah, "the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels". Christ rides upon the chariots of the cherubim, His willing people. In this sense the Bride in a surge of love and longing feels herself attached to her Lord before she realised that she was transported to Him; as quickly, so to speak, as when we speak out of turn - the thought is out before we know it. The result we have seen - Christ is carried to every creature under heaven. Under the power and stress of this bridal emotion, carried as in the chariots of His willing people, both in the first century, and when, as we saw earlier, He returns in the future, and Israel and the saints combine to make the finest cavalry unit this world will ever see. The Man of Sin and his hordes destroyed, to rid and cleanse the earth of all evil and wickedness. In Zechariah 1.10-11 we have the effect produced. "We have walked to and fro through the earth, and behold, all the earth sitteth still and is at rest or peace". It has become the kingdom of the Greater Solomon, peace and assurance for ever, the combined effect of peace and peaceableness upon a repentant and renewed Israel and the remnant of the Isles of the Gentiles (Isa. 2 etc).

Song 6.13 The cry of the attendant daughters of Jerusalem is again heard. They had asked in ch. 6.1 - "Whither is thy beloved gone? that we may seek Him and admire Him". They had also heard His complimentary remarks concerning her beauty of countenance, and character; and they ask her to return to them from the Garden of Nuts. They readily saw in her the spouse of Christ, the Shulamite, as we said. Here we have a new name for the spouse. Christ has used many endearing titles when addressing her - "my sister", "my love", "my dove", "my undefiled". Now is added this new name, "Shulamite", to bind her closer to Himself, a proof that He could not change. There are various interpretations of this name.

(A) The female of Solomon, referring to her union with Himself, that is "peace and peaceableness".

(B) Shulamite also means "perfect one". He Himself is our perfection, a reflection of Himself, "moon" etc.

(C) Shulamite also means "my reconciled one" through his sacrifice.

(D) Shulamite also means "inhabitant of Shunem". Trace through 2 Kings 4 regarding "that great woman of Shunem" who entertained Elisha the prophet of grace - Salvation of God: one who entertained the prophet not unaware, but fully aware who he was - "an holy man of God". This meaning of Shunem gives us much pleasure, as we have long been an ardent admirer of this faithful sister in the Bride. The example she leaves us is a sterling one in appreciation, attention and faith in God's power through Elisha, a most wonderful type of Jesus, reserved for future treatment, should the Lord preserve us. The cry of the newly instructed Daughters of Jerusalem is heard, "Return, return O Shulamite, that we may look upon thee". The narration of Christ has not only opened their eyes, but also their appreciation of her. "That we may look upon thee", intensely gaze upon thee. They can see that should they wish to

please Christ they must become like her, consequently the query "what will ye see in the Shulamite?" "for she has found peace". And that, to far storm-tossed Jerusalem, trodden down of Moslems, just freed at the moment, was a very intense question. How is she made up? What would they see in her for themselves? These faithful attendants, when she was sorrowing after her beloved, saw in her "the fairest among women" (even then through her tears and wounds; and they had suffered all down their long history such affliction and misery). But now, when the Bride had been found of Him, He had called her, and made her as "beautiful as Tirzah", the great ones of the earth were made to fear and admire her, and more still praise her. We who were not without interest, they claimed in their sorrow, would see thee in thy gladness and beauty. "The fairest among women" they called her when in sorrow, but Shulamite now. "Being justified by faith, she has peace with God through Christ Jesus her Lord". He is her peace, and she herself is at peace, for the "peace of God that passeth all understanding" keeps her heart and mind in Christ Jesus, and in His name she is proclaiming peace to the perishing - AND THAT APPLIED TO THEMSELVES. Their nature was neither at peace nor yet fixed in immortality as was hers, although they claimed to be residents in the "inheritance of the possession of peace" - Jerusalem. They wanted to do something about it? They too had been vanquished by the combination of this glorious pair. Thrupp on the Song has just come to hand, and we note that his thoughts are very instructive here (Song 6.12) - "Or ever I was aware" - the church of the ancient days knew not the grandeur that she should eventually attain. Even when after their Lord's ascension the Apostles went forth from Jerusalem to preach to all nations the gospel which they had received, they hardly dreamed what an army of spiritual warriors, soldiers of Christ no less than themselves, should rapidly spring up from all regions of the earth, to join in the Christian conflict against the powers of darkness (Eph.6.10-17 etc). It was contrary to all his previous expectations that Peter found himself compelled to acknowledge of the Gentiles to whom he had himself become the first minister of the tidings of salvation, that "God which knoweth the hearts bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith". (Acts 15.8-9). No doubt these stirring events will be vividly recalled to mind by Peter and his first century brethren and sisters who form part of that glorified Bride, speaking at this moment of time in the Kingdom of God.

Thrupp continues, "My soul had made me the chariots of my people the free willing". Let our first care be to explain the designation "the free willing" here assigned to the newborn people of God. That it is a special designation, and is to be viewed in the light of a proper name and not a mere epithet, is shown by the adjective being used in Hebrew without the article (although after a noun made definite by a suffix? !). Now both the verb and the adjective are in the earliest passages in which they occur, employed to denote liberality, in a sacred cause, spontaneous readiness to make offerings in the service of God (Ex.25.2, 35.5, 21, 22, 29). The verb in the "hithpael" conjunction thus appropriately signifies the making of that noblest and truest of offerings - the offering of oneself (Judg.5.2-9, 2 Chron.17.16, Neh.11.2). It is manifest that no offering whatever can be thoroughly genuine where the heart of the offerer has not first offered itself, and thus the adjective must in its highest sense express this self dedication. Such is the meaning here. The essential characteristic of the true people of God, more especially of His Christian people, on whom no bondage of outward constraint is imposed, is that they have dedicated themselves freely to His service. Most justly then is the description of them summed up in this one word "The Free Willing" or the "Shulamite" (2 Kings 4.8-11). And the present verse of the Song manifestly implies, although without directly asserting it, that God should eventually have such a people to serve under His banner, and to show forth His praise. Psa.110 is quoted in a similar application to what has already been advanced. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" but "shall be free-will offerings in the beauties of holiness". Next, "What is meant by the Bride being made the chariots of the people?" Thrupp asks. He suggests with remarkable insight that two passages from the Books of the Kings will help to a true interpretation. In 2 Kings 2.12 Elisha calls Elijah "the chariot and horsemen of Israel". In 2 Kings 13.14 King Joash addresses Elisha by the same title. It is intended that Elijah and Elisha had, each in their turn, been the true strength of Israel. They had been to Israel what chariots

are to a military host. Thrupp goes on to expound : "So then here (in Song 6.12) the meaning is that the church had unconsciously become the source and channel of victorious might to all the willing people of God". What a fund of nourishment and strength we find in this point for the church in all ages and dispensations.

Hengstenburg observes that the word 'soul' in Song 6.12 similarly appears as the seat of courage in Judg.5.21 - "O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength". The doctrine here delivered is that as it is a man's own personal courage that nerves others to attend him in the conflict, so it is the unshrinking and devoted zeal with which the church prosecutes the task set before her that makes her the rallying point for all who would join in the service of her Lord". Not to attract them to herself, but simply to do Christ's will is her own primary and immediate aim, and meanwhile it is in that direct obedience to Christ that the true magnet of her attractions to others lies. That she really attracts them is shown by her speaking of them (A) not as God's people, (B) not as Christ's people, (C) but as my people. (It is to be understood, of course, always in this exposition of the Song and to arrest any false or one-sided inferences that might be drawn from this language, that we always have in mind the strength she communicates to others, she derives from Christ: and that her influence depends not merely on her own unaided example, but by the presence of the Spirit of Christ that is within her, and of which she partakes.) How fully the anticipations of this verse agree with those of Isa.60.4, lit. "Return, return thou peace laden" - "return" that is, "in peace from thy victorious conflict". The Daughters of Jerusalem here prophetically celebrate the conquests which the Bride should achieve, and the blessings of divine peace with which, successfully issuing from all her struggles, she should return homeward to enrich her children (Gen.14), and consequently should enrich even the Daughters of Jerusalem themselves. The phrase "to return in peace" means "to return triumphant from battle", see Josh.10.21, Judges 8.9-11, 31, 1 Kings 22.28. "What will ye see?" She answers, "As it were the company of two armies" or Mahanaim (Heb.). These thoughts of Song 6 were narrated at the Marriage Feast, returning the Bride, as we have seen, to various events in her long history of formation, her thoughts will flood in, in remembrance of the stunning events, the treasures old and new even in the days of her flesh, and Jacob will no doubt linger long and deep on the wonder of Mahanaim - the two companies or dances! We have already seen part of this in figure when the Bridegroom admires His Bride, and she him, in the camp of His relatives, and also has part of the ancient ceremony surrounding a wedding in Israel. The Shulamite looked back during the days of her flesh, her name "Peaceable". But was it all peace that they should find in her, particularly in the days of her flesh? Jesus, the Greater Solomon, had said - and this she recalled to mind vividly - "Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth", warning his followers of war as well as peace. All was not peace in these days, the Daughters of Jerusalem would be informed, all was not peace either within or without. She found peace, desired to diffuse peace, and cherished the name peace, but within herself she found war, as Paul himself would say to these daughters. "It is all set out for you in Romans 7 and this is my own personal testimony", would be his explanation. "When I wanted to do good, evil was present with me, a constant war, a personal Amalek dwelt in me, until I cried out in agony of mind." Rom.7.22-25, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin". He goes on in the 8th chapter to expound just how this could be brought about, ending in that well loved passage, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Nothing in any way if we are truly in Him, ch.8.31-39. Here then the Daughters of Jerusalem would be able to see the personal battle with Amalek (Ex.17, Rom.7) found in every member of this glorious Bride and the outcome only through Jesus Christ our Lord. She is seen returning victorious, unconquerable, an army with banners. The two camps are a double witness to overcoming power, so that there can be no question about it. Jacob in that day will recall to mind that he said, "This is the camp of God" when the angels met him (Gen.32.1-2), "and he called the name of that place Mahanaim" meaning two camps, s.w.a. Song 6.13. There it was "two camps" of angels, as the pledge that God was with Jacob in his returning to Bethel - "the House of God" (Gen.35.

6-15). But here it is in "the Shulamite" that the dance of "the two camps" is desired to be seen. The dance inevitably suggests that every enemy has been so completely routed, that nothing remains to be done, but to DANCE IN TRIUMPH (Ex. 15.20, 1 Sam. 18.6 etc). So the "Shulamite" is called into view, and is seen to be completely victorious. She is to be seen as in the fullest sense, an overcomer. The Lord would have us to come into view in that character. As we have advanced, the Shulamite is introduced for the first and only time in this Song 6.13, the nearest approach to a personal name that is used of the spouse - feminine of Solomon. We have already seen it is used as a local designation, that is Shunem, and one of the reasons as to why it is so, is to be observed in the conduct of the great woman of that locality (herself a sterling component of the now glorified Bride), who lovingly attended to, and had startling faith in Elisha, the prophet of Samaria, meaning "the Salvation of God", a wonderful type of Jesus (2 Kings 4.8 etc). Speaking literally, she was "the Shulamite" of those days in that place and locality, and we have the Spirit's intimation that her particular overcoming took place in this same locality.

(1) Hers was a faith that wanted and made provision for Elisha (the typical Christ of that day) to lodge at her home.

(2) To accept the fact that through the Holy Spirit, though barren, she was able to conceive seed and bear a son.

(3) To receive him again from the dead through the Holy Spirit found in Elisha. In this very locality - Shunem the place of "the Shulamite" - she became splendidly victorious, and was in the fullest sense an overcomer, through the Spirit of Christ resident in Elisha.

(4) This great lady will remember at the dance of the Shulamite that her banner never faltered, remaining erect under the most strained circumstances. May we share in her victory.

(5) Think of Mary, the mother of our Lord, and her tremendous battle to overcome under the most adverse circumstances. All her life onwards from the announcement of the miraculous conception - apart from the unsurpassed glory of womanhood, that of bearing the Yahweh Child - she lived a life of questionable virtue from the angle of those who were her contemporaries in that locality of Nazareth and Capernaum. (A) She had conceived a child out of wedlock, hence the filth thrown at Jesus (John 8.4), "Then said they to him, we be not born of fornication" - apparently the common opinion in those days, at least amongst His enemies. David Baron cites instances of this belief in his wonderful treatise on Isaiah 53, "The Suffering Servant", quite the best we know on this subject.

(B) Joseph, although personally informed by the Angel of the circumstances that brought about the birth of Jesus, a man of faith and belief indeed, yet human, must at times have had his thoughts wondering greatly.

(C) After all, only Mary and God knew the whole truth.

(D) The burden of only partially understanding her Son, and of His apparent opposition to all her religious beliefs, must have worried her more than a little, until did she also think, as her other children, "Thou art beside thyself, Jesus". It would appear to be so.

(E) The final encounter at the cross finally turned the sword into her heart, as she too with Jesus tasted the bitterness of myrrh in His death. There can be no doubt that she too conquered in her own particular locale: the virgin who should bear "the Holy Thing" was not chosen in any haphazard way. The Handmaid of the Lord (Psa. 138.6-8 - Note Mary's quote from this Psalm in Lk. 1.48 etc) will take her place not only in the Dance of Triumph, but also in the great rejoicing at this time (Ex. 15.20, Judg. 11.34 etc).

(F) The Daughters of Jerusalem once wept for her as Jesus went on His way to Calvary, Lk. 23.27-28. Women lamented Him etc, but He, turning to them, saith, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren and the womb that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck". Jesus rightly discerned, and His appraisal was, that they wept not only for Him, but also for His mother who should have her son come to such a terrible end, a common felon (as they thought) upon the cursed tree.

(G) But they will rejoice with her with exceeding joy as they perceive her now in glory with the rest of this multitudinous Bride dancing the Dance of the Mahanaim at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb.

(H) Because she, of necessity, His natural mother, will be found by Grace within the Bride of His Redeeming. (1) Mary, then, of Nazareth (the Flower Town - the Branch Town or the Nazarene Town) will have conquered in her own particular locale, (2) that saw her chosen, (3) her performance as a mother (4) her departure under evil slander, (5) her extreme trial in partial understanding, (6) her fear for the safety of her Son who had deliberately opposed the official Religions of Israel, (7) His cruel treatment at the hands of Rome and Sanhedrin and (8) now finally His dereliction and agonies of the cross. Jesus, however, mercifully supplied succour at the end. "Woman, behold thy son". John was to take His place from now on. (9) Bethlehem - House of Bread. Nazareth - the Flower Town. Jerusalem - the inheritance of the possession of peace. Capernaum - the Village of Consolation, the Shelter of Comfort or the Covering Compassion. These were the localities that had tried Mary. (10) But she, as a true Shulamite, had returned freely, and "peace laden" with the spoils of spiritual warfare, all supplied by her Son, now her Lord, and also in this spiritual definition her Husband (Psa.45.16 etc).

In such a way must the different localities witness our spiritual conflict. It is our duty to strive to effect a good report both inside and outside the Truth, as exhorted by our Brother Paul (1 Tim.3.7). Only Christ, of course, can give us the victory, as He Himself is the standard and rallying point of the Gentiles who believe (Isa.49.6, 22 etc). May we then, along with all the rest of the Mighties, return to Zion "peace laden" secure in the merits of our Lord and Husband. Perhaps the words of the poet Hart, of bygone days, quoted by Stuart, may aptly conclude this sixth chapter of the Song.

How strange is the course that a Christian must steer,  
How perplexed is the path he must tread.  
The hope of his happiness rises from fear,  
And his life he receives from the dead.

His fairest pretensions must wholly be named,  
And his best resolutions be crossed.  
Nor can he expect to be perfectly saved,  
Till he finds himself utterly lost.

When all this is done and his heart is assured  
Of total remission of sins:  
When his pardon is signed, and his peace is procured,  
From that moment his conflict begins.

#### THE SONG OF SONGS Chapter 7

Song 7.1 A "How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter".

The enquiring Daughters of Jerusalem, having rightly named her the Shulamite, the Peaceful and Peace Laden, after her husband the Greater Solomon, now dub her O Prince's Daughter, with shoes.

(1) The relationship with Christ is rightly placed. Christ Himself is designated The Prince of Peace in Isa.9.6.

(2) She has entered as joint heir with Christ in the Divine Family. Consequently she is a child of God, or in the multiple sense she is composed of Children of God (Rom.8.17).

(3) To her it is said, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Lk 12.32) for "He hath called you unto His Kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2.12). These things have already come to pass at the actual time of The Song.

(4) She is also seen as the Prince's Daughter because of her relationship with the Prince of Peace, again to quote for clarification Psa.45.16 - "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth".

So in this aspect Abraham, David etc are to be reckoned as Christ's children; they go to make up this glorious Bride along with all the faithful in Christ. Therefore collectively they are reckoned as the "Prince's Daughter", because Jesus as the Prince of Peace and antitype of Solomon, will also be known as the Father of the age, a title used for the King of Israel in Old Testament days (Isa.9.6), revealing at one and the same time the exaltation of Christ etc. This "Prince's Daughter" note with shoes, a description of her exalted position, no longer a slave because as such she would not be allowed to wear shoes. Durham, one of the old expositors of the Song, says beautifully at this juncture, "The past is commended in 'the feet' by which a believer's walk and conversation, as grace shines in it, is understood as we may see frequently (Psa.119.59, 101, 105). So likewise the shedding of blood, or other defiling sins, such as leave foul prints upon a man's conversation behind him, are called the 'iniquities of the heels' (Psa.49.5) by which the nakedness and offensiveness of one's conversation is set forth; and on the contrary, the Bride's feet thus commended, sets out her good conversation." Her feet are commended from this, that they are not bare, but "beautiful with shoes". To be barefooted imports three things in Scripture, (1) a shameful condition (Isa.20.4), (2) a present sad affliction, the sense whereof makes men careless of what is adorning; so David (2 Sam.15.30) under heavy affliction, walks barefooted, (3) an unfitness for travel; therefore, when the people were to be in readiness for their journey (Ex.12.11) their feet were to be shod.

So then, to have on shoes, doth on the contrary import three things :

- (a) the honourable estate and dignity to which believers are advanced and more especially, it holds out a singular beauty in their walk, whereby their shame is covered,
- (b) a thriving in their spiritual condition,
- (c) a readiness and promptness of obedience, to what they are called unto; all which are beautiful in themselves and adorning in the believer.

Now she is peace laden, free and willing to serve her Lord, with all the exaltation and dignity of her position as Royal Consort. We note this survey of her commences from bottom to top, very significant in itself, her shoes or sandals striking the very note of this narration, giving to us the tempo of the eulogy. The feet of the Prince of Peace's Daughter are feet shod or in the sandals with the preparation of peace, indeed "the Glad Tidings". The development has now taken place within her, both internally and externally, and we are led to a greater development and fulness than in the previous description of the Spouse, royal dignity, whose movements are concerned with the glad tidings of the everlasting Gospel.

What greater contribution could she have made than the tenfold description of Himself to these very same witnesses, one wonders? It has been thought that Christ Himself is the narrator in these verses 7.1-9 etc. Undoubtedly He is present, and the Daughters of Jerusalem. Note with renewed interest how completely captivated He is with her charms, agreeing with 4.9 etc. "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister my spouse". They exclaim with intense delight, 7.5 - "Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the King is held in the galleries" etc. Undoubtedly Christ is speaking in 7.8-9, and no doubt from 7.6-7 also. The first half of Chapter 7 could be attributed to Christ because He is present, but it would appear to the writer that verses 1-6 at least come as the result of the Daughters of Jerusalem's request "Return, return, that we may look upon thee" (6.13). (A) So they could be giving their opinion of this fairest among women, (B) or Christ Himself be demonstrating once more the beauties of His Queen to them. (C) 7.5 is important in the correct interpretation according to my mind. "Thine head upon thee like Carmel and the hair of thine head like purple", and presents the acknowledgment by Israel of Isa.35.1-2. "The Bride herself represents the "blossom of the rose'(or autumn crocus, RV).

Carmel, as we have already advanced, is the Hebrew for crimson, and is found in the veil of Solomon's temple, and highlights the double pattern of the firstborn, meaning exceedingly "fruitful". Scarlet is not found in Solomon's temple because the travail of His soul is ended and the Bride purchased of His sufferings is presented to Israel as seen in the plain of purple and white crocuses, as the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, the glory of the Lord and reflected in the Royal pair. Christ is provoking

the natural children of His mother (Jerusalem) with the perfection of beauty as outlined in her, in the sense that because of unbelief Israel forfeited the right to be His Bride (Ezek.16, Rom. etc), but at the same time encouraging the remnant who would now repent and believe during the millennium, to seek Him, and finally be found in the final "numbering" of this glorious creature when "God should be all in all" (1-Cor.15.24-28). In other words, could it be the answer to their intense desire in 6.1 - "Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?" - "that we may seek him with thee"? It would appear to afford the highest encouragement held out to these Daughters - the aspect of this glorious multitudinous Bride, of whom they might finally take part after undergoing their probation as the children during the reign of this happy pair, who are the parents of the age. This is one of the reasons why the writer inclines to the idea or view that 7.1-5 describe the appreciation of what the Daughters of Jerusalem have closely observed in the Christ way of "the man with the maid", and not only "the King" but also themselves are well and truly held within the galleries. More later.

We cannot much doubt that in view of their reaction to this showing of the-Bride, in the Dance of the Mahanaim, they follow on into the King's palace (Psa.45.9-16) and by the grace of God to the final perfecting. The aspect of the narrator does not mar the exposition of these verses in Chapter 7: the outcome is similar, as we have seen. Christ, it would seem, is present, surveying no doubt the rapture of the Daughters as they enter into the processes of redemption revealed through the experiences of Himself and His Maid, and at the least, interposes ecstatically upon their reveries at 7.8 etc.

We come across a similar situation with Christ and the Bride in Song 6.11 in the "Garden of Nuts". Although apparently the Bride went down as is Acts 2, ch.1.2, etc., Christ went also, but stood aside for her comments. The flourishing of the vine and pomegranates budding was due without doubt to His presence in the Holy Spirit that descended (Acts 1.4-8 and 2.1-4 etc). After this necessary diversion may we return to our exposition of Song 7.1.

We continue the description of this one whom the Daughters have realised is one equipped for service. The work of the cunning workman of the Spirit. Their ability to understand is deepening, that in Biblical protocol a person cannot "return" unless she first is "sent". The implication supplied in the word for feet is also that for steps supplying obviously the rhythm of the Dance, but more spiritually perceived in the work of redemption.

The Shulamite realised through Paul in Eph.2.10, "We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God afore prepared that we should walk in them". So not only is the Shulamite and her feet etc the creation of the Greater Bezaleel, an antitype of Bezaleel who wrought with Aholiab in the cunning or skilful work in the Tabernacle (Ex.31 etc), but as the Daughters realised, she was also cunningly wrought in the Divine mind way back in Gen.1.1 (see Chart, The beginnings of Redemption, from Debir Press), for good works, and the way of her steps that she should walk in Christ Jesus. The prepared way in Christ is obviously seen in the fact that "her feet are shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace (Eph.6.15), in keeping with all the other elements found in this Song. Peace in Hebrew, Shalom etc. The way of peace followed out in the strength of Christ affords peace within and without, keeping her stayed upon him in peace. Safe protection from all contact with the earth. The peace of God that passeth all understanding, all found within the Beloved, the Prince of Peace. (See earlier referen ces to this aspect). This way of peace, the Daughters realised as they beheld her in this Dance of the Marriage, would finally bring Jerusalem to her true meaning, "The inheritance of the possession of peace" and with her peace their own. As we write (May 1967) once again her troubled peace is threatened, the Cairo taxi driver is rattling his broken reed like a sabre, the whole political world is momentarily pushing Vietnam into the background, and the burdensome stone Jerusalem causing consternation and alarm, and the troublesome centre of divine concern reverting to its central axis. The preparation of the elements of the Bride in these latter days is fast being concluded. How do we stand? Will the call come before this exposition is concluded and put in print, or even before these immediate notes are penned? These are the days into which the prophets looked. What is our concern in them? How do we stand? Can we truly say that we have peace around us, that our feet are found in the preparation of the Gospel of Peace? Who



ever can really say that they are truly ready? "Every heart knoweth its own bitterness". Our every and only hope is centred in the Divine mercy.

June 1967 dates our next consecutive thoughts on the Song. What a transformation overnight has taken place in Israel and Jerusalem. Overwhelming victory in one short week - the prophecy of Obadiah obtained a full if somewhat incipient fulfilment. A letter received from Australia only today beautifully reminded us that maybe these events are "a gentle reminder from the Lord to get our household in order". Again we wonder, shall we be able to finish this exposition before our Lord is in the earth again? May we be found at peace by Him at His coming.

Thrupp summarises this section of &.1 A. The steps indicate the activity of the church in bearing forth the tidings of salvation. The sandals the due preparation which she makes, and the equipment with which she furnishes herself for this work.

Song 7.1 A We notice that "How beautiful are thy feet with shoes" (or paraphrase "How beautiful are thy steps in sandals") is found in Isa.26.6, where "steps in sandals" is translated from the same Hebrew word as "steps of the needy". Isa.26 may be taken in its entirety as a wonderful picture of this time so near at hand now, when (just the bones of the findings!)

Isa.26.1-3 The perfect peace brought to Israel (Shalom indeed)

6-7 The feet of the poor, "steps of the needy", shall have trodden down the oppression.

9 The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness as viewed in these "steps of the needy" or "feet with shoes" of the Bride under the direction of Christ, after treading down the wicked, will beautifully preach the Gospel of Peace, to the remaining inhabitants left after the judgments.

12 "Lord, Thou wilt ordain peace for us" - the cry of the Daughters and remainder of the peoples.

14-16 The time when Israel is in trouble and reduced to a whisper (RV) and apparently all was thought lost.

14 "But the enemy are dead, they shall not rise". "Even their memory shall perish".

19-21 Judgments plague the earth terribly, but for God's people found in this "glorious one with shoes", along with Isaiah himself, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body they shall arise." They shall be found as the dew of herbs refracting the glory of Zion's morning and the refreshing scent of herbs. See 5.13 - the beauty of their God.

Isa.26.7 They will exclaim, the witnesses, the Daughters of redeemed Jerusalem, as they view the steps of the Bride, "The way of the just is uprightness, thou that art upright (RV) dost weigh the path of the just".

Isa.26.1 Should be duly appreciated in the text of our remarks and in connection with Song 7.1. "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah" for further information on "the sandals" or covering of the feet. "The Significance of Blue" by the present writer may be consulted, section "Blue in the journeys of Israel". Several quotations are relevant to the "feet" or "footsteps".

- (A) "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord" (Psa.37.23).
- (B) "To guide our feet into the way of peace" (Lk 1.19).
- (C) "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psa.119.105).
- (D) Deut.8.2, Col.2.6. Moses who had to put off his shoes, because the place whereon he stood was holy ground (Ex.3). Now in the Bride, Moses will be found - with shoes, himself within this holy state (Heb.10.19, John 14.6).  
May we walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.
- (E) Well may we pray with David, "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not" Psa.17.5, so that we with Moses and David, and all the worthies, be found in her, at that day.

Song 7.1 B "The joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning or skilful workman".

We are reminded by this quotation of the beautiful symmetry of the Bride or Church of Christ. "The whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth." "The head, from which all the body, by joints and bands having

nourishment ministered, increaseth with the increase of God" (Eph.4.13, 16, Col.2.19 etc). "The joints of thy thighs are like jewels" : how true. We are not to forget the Divine Architect of the body "so fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psa.139, 14.16, with Eph.5.29, 30, 32). "All is the work of a cunning workman". "Ye are also builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph.2.22); the same spirit as we have mentioned before, that filled Bezaleel with wisdom, knowledge and in all manner of workmanship to devise cunning work (Ex.31.1-5), also rested upon our Lord (Isa. 11.1-2). It is also instructive to notice that the typical tabernacle could not be reared up until this spirit had filled Bezaleel. Neither would the Bride of the Spirit have been fashioned unless Christ had first been filled with the spirit of God.

It is splendidly evident that these words present a beautiful image of the glorious unity of the Bride or Church in the sight of every earnest beholder, as we have seen from the immediate context of our remarks. The joining of the limbs to the body is likened to the perfect setting of the gem in the gold by the hands of a skilful artist. The joints have been likened to the perfect union within herself (this must be used in the qualified sense of the unity existing between the various elements in the Truth, selected by God to be built into this multitudinous unity of the Bride). In the early centuries of the Christian era, it was very obvious to the outsiders; "Behold how these Christians love each other" exclaimed heathens, for "Hereby", said the Master, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another". Consequently, the union of all the members of Christ in subjection, in harmony, in love, is consequently represented by the parts of the body perfectly joined together in one. "Behold how good a thing it is and how becoming well for brethren in unity to dwell" (Psa.133 paraphrase). It will be obvious that in the description of the entire person, there is no part so suitable as this admirable joining with the trunk of the body to set "the joining together" and the compacting of the whole body of the Church; from Christ, in Christ and unto Christ. The binding together is truly the 'agape' love of God, cemented firmly in place and gem-like setting of the Holy Spirit cunning and skilful in power. Again it is instructive to realise that in regard to thighs like jewels, the Hebrew word for 'joints' comes from a root signifying 'to turn round', 'to turn away', and may well be taken as denoting a convex curvature, which, as we follow it, recedes from the eye. And as well-formed limbs contribute to gracefulness and ease of movement, may we read here an encomium on the organisation found within the brotherhood for carrying forth effectively the tidings of salvation. The idea of jewels inevitably calls to mind the time when Christ will "count up his jewels". He too will look for the beauty of His workmanship. The point of comparison is the beauty and fulness of shape. It is in the beauty of form to which the jewel is wrought, that the evidence of the skill of the artificer is seen. As a contrast to this imagery we think of Jacob's sinew (in the thigh) that shrank, causing him to halt. Jacob wrestled with an angel for a blessing and as a consequence his thigh was put out of joint. So the healing and return to fulness and beauty is the work of the Lord of a cunning (skilful) workman, even Christ (Gen.32.24-32, Song 7.16). There is considerable scriptural evidence to regard trials and adversity as the spiritual counterpart of "halting".

(A) Psa.35.15 "But in mine adversity (or Heb. halting) they rejoiced".

(B) Heb.12.13 "Lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed".

(C) Micah 4.6 Identical thoughts are expressed in God's Word to natural Israel,

"In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out and her that I have afflicted".

"In that day", the glad day when the Bride then glorified shall be united to her Beloved, her halting will have been healed and Israel no more two sticks, but fused together into one; her halting in like manner will be ended. The lesson for us today becomes loud and clear. Natural energy has to be crippled under the discipline of God, to make room for a new character of movement in spiritual power. Paul got a thorn in the flesh, but he learned that it was better to have the "thorn" and the grace of Christ than to be without it (2 Cor.12.7-9). He learned that power was perfected in weakness. If we want to move in a beautiful way spiritually, we must be prepared for reduction and crippling on the natural side. Every movement that shows the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ is a jewel in His eyes. There is divinely artistic beauty about it. There is nothing clumsy or ungraceful about "the work of the hands of the artist". We know that movements of a lovely character are possible, for we

have seen them at sometime or other. They are ever seen in overcomers. No doubt our father Jacob will remonstrate deeply within himself as he hears this eulogy in his capacity as a constituent of the Bride in this day. Unless our natural self pride and thinking is crippled under the hand of God and the thigh of our strength and self assertion is dislocated by Godly discipline, we shall never take heed to the Divine voice and be found to halt before Him, pleading with tears for the blessing (Hosea 12.4). And unless we are thus halted, we shall never attain to the way or walk of Godliness, to this spiritual dexterity and skilfulness in a great measure, and there is no other way of attaining it but by submitting ourselves to it. When her feet are once shod, this commendation follows, that "the joints of her thighs are like jewels".

Song 7.2 "Thy navel is like a round goblet which wanteth not liquor" (or margin, mixture). "Thy belly is like a heap of wheat set about with lilies".

The description therefore ascends to the approximate centre of the body - the navel. The body of exposition is split into half regarding this verse, which is -

(A) Those who say that the description fits the attire of the Bride.

(B) Those who say the symbology is built upon the actual physical body itself.

We find upon a careful study that this duo approach has much to offer on both accounts, although our preference has to do with the second application. We will briefly lay out both ideas and leave our readers to form their own opinions on the verse.

(A) "Thy navel" is considered to be "Thy girdle (clasp)": It is suggested that (1) the first key to this whole description is found in the circumstance that its words proceed from the Daughters of Jerusalem. (2) The second and more essential key, in the fact that the dress of the Bride is described throughout, except where clothing is not worn, on the neck and face. The proof of this is ample and irresistible in the first line of the picture, the feet "beautiful with shoes". The person might have been clothed while the feet were unshod, for the slumbering Bride did not say that she had put off her shoes, but that she had washed her feet and could not defile them: but it was impossible that the feet should be beautified with the finest sandals without the whole person being arrayed as a bride adorned for her husband. It is their contention that both the terms in Song 7.2 are of necessity parts of dress, covering the corresponding parts of the person, according with the tendency in all languages to transfer the names that designate the living body to the dress that both conceals and adorns it; and in their costliness and beauty exactly agreeing with the Apostolic declaration that "on our uncomely parts we bestow more abundant comeliness". Grad.Cxf.verse runs:

"The golden knot, which all thy vests  
Firmly secures, beneath thy breasts,  
Like wine-crowned goblet shows".

The well-filled goblet of wine is said to be the goblet which wisdom invites, saying "Come, drink of the wine which I have mingled for you", and it signifies spiritual drink origin. The new wine of the kingdom, drunk first by the Church herself, and then handed freely to the perishing multitudes. "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, shed for many for the remission of sins: drink ye all of it", said the Anointed Messiah.

These are the kind of thoughts associated with the present dress or raiment theory. Again they continue saying, After Jesus had given this wine cup to His disciples, and after the intervention of the night of sorrow, they were filled with the Spirit as with new wine of the kingdom".

Then was fulfilled, they contend, the prophecy from Ezech.9.15: "The Lord of Hosts shall defend them, and they shall drink and make a noise through wine, and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar, for they shall be as the stones of a crown, for how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty: corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids".

They also contend that like the "corners of the altar", the disciples had their conscience sprinkled with the blood of the great atonement, like bowls, their hearts were filled with the wine of the Kingdom, and both the blood and wine were like the stones of a crown, thereby stones that studded a royal diadem. The Bride's girdle clasp is like that ruby crown, and like the blood-filled corner of the altar; and the wine-filled bowl is this "goblet that wanteth not wine". The corn that maketh a young

man cheerful is none other than "the heap of wheat set about with lilies", and the round goblet is filled with "the new wine that maketh cheerful the maids". Again from this angle the teaching is that "the resemblance was so great that as soon as the Bride came forth as the Prince's Daughter, with her feet shod with the Gospel of Peace, the mockers immediately said (Acts 2) 'these men are filled, or full, of new wine'; and filled with new wine they were, but it was the new wine of the Kingdom, that inebriated not, but gladdened with overflowing joys. The Spirit of God Himself takes up the image again and commands, "Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit". But this 'goblet that wanteth not wine', being first to her own lips, was freely handed to them, and this made the noble daughter of the Prince so lovely in the eyes of the enquiring Daughters of Jerusalem: freely she had received and freely she gave. "Repent", she said, "and be baptised for the remission of since, and ye shall receive the Holy Spirit". Ye shall also drink out of this full wine cup. You shall also rejoice in the new wine of the Kingdom. They see the reviving power of the Holy Spirit in the bright wine of the Kingdom of God, which is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, saying "If we are a stranger to this sweetness, we are still a stranger to gladness." Moody Stuart provided the information on this point. We appreciate the wealth of spiritual thought behind it, and now our thoughts which are based upon the physical beauty of this Prince's Daughter, are not separated nor foreign to them, neither have we to ascend into heaven, nor cross the seas, nor the depths of hell to find their counterpart, but they are very closely interlinked with them, and, we might add, the underlying thoughts behind them, so we have our exposition in underlying depths of meaning. (3). We take the navel to mean just what it says, the navel of a young woman, first of all signifying that

- (1) the navel is a healed wound after sustenance by a life stream,
- (2) it is an outward and visible sign of an essential separation from the natural parent.
- (3) The separation here in Song 7 has been clean cut and sutured, leaving a round goblet cavity - quite the opposite to Israel after the flesh, with her umbilical cord uncut, still in her natural filth, cast out to die (Ezek.16.4). Her navel is like a cup - a cup of blessing - the belly like a heap of wheat, suggesting the bread that makes peace in our borders (Psa.147.14) (Tom Griffith), relating to the millennial age of peace decorated with lilies as was the temple and as Israel will be (Hosea 14.5).

Durham's thoughts are excellent but very quaint on this verse. He says, "The navel hath much influence on the intestines, and when it is sound it furthers much the health of the whole body, so Prov.3.8, it is said 'the fear of the Lord shall be health to thy navel and marrow to thy bones'. That is, it will be exceeding useful and profitable for thy well-being, as it is useful for the body to have that part in good case. It is known also, that in nature the navel hath much influence on the child in the womb, which may be especially taken notice of here, as appears by the following commandation, namely that it is like a round goblet. Well formed and proportioned (opposite to a navel not cut (Ezek.16.4). 'Which wanteth not liquor', that is, furnished with moisture for the health of the body, or ENTERTAINMENT (?) and nourishment of the child in the womb." Durham further expounds, "Before we are further clear of the words or observe anything from them we shall join to this fourth part here commended (viz. in the narration, A.H.), and that is, the 'belly'. The word differs in the original from that which is translated 'belly' being spoken of him (5.14); the King himself as 'belly of bright ivory overlaid with sapphires', and is taken for the inward parts (Prov.18.8). It hath a special influence on the health of the body and the bringing forth of children: it is here compared to a heap of wheat, 'a heap' to show her bigness, as being with child and still fruitful, and that in abundance, to a heap of grain of wheat to show it was not big with wind, but with good grain, even the best, whereby she feeds Him, herself and others and so as in the former similitude, she is represented with liquor. So here she is set forth to be furnished with bread, whereby her spiritual liveliness and healthfulness may be understood." Quaint indeed, but very much to the point, as we observe. Durham also would compare this heap of wheat that is said to be "set about with lilies" not only to express its beauty, with its usefulness, but also the fruitfulness thereof, in having particular graces as lilies growing about it which are moistened and nourished by these two parts, the navel and the belly. "Now we conceive, that most likely (though it be hard to be peremptory), the graces of the Spirit may be understood here, which being infused in their habits and drawn forth in their

actings by the influences of the Spirit, are compared to waters and liquor, and are said to be in the belly of the believers (John 7.38) 'He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of waters', because they have such influence on the new man, and (to speak so) are the health of the navel". In summary it would lead to this -

O Prince's Daughter, thou hast a lively spiritual constitution, by the inward flowing of the spirit, whereby thy navel is formed and beautified (which was by nature otherwise), and therefore thou art not barren, but fruitful, and that of the most precious fruits.

So we conclude

(1) The believer's inward constitution and frame is no less beautiful than his outward conversation and walk. This King's daughter is "all glorious within" (Psa.45.13).

(2) Soundness within, or heart soundness, is no less needful than outward fruits for completing a believer's commendation: to have the navel well formed is as necessary and requisite, as to have the feet beautiful with shoes.

(3) "Inward liveliness or a well furnished inside hath most influence on a believer's liveliness in all external duties". Durham thus keeps all fresh, being like precious liquor which makes Christ's spouse fruitful and big, and that not with wind, but wheat. We feel the outspoken language under this heading is well justified if we allow our minds to adopt a right attitude, and as we have the physical forming a basis for not only the garments of the spouse, but also the spiritual basis upon which we feed. In the natural body, the navel is the centre of life for the embryo and its spiritual expression is based on the natural. The good seed, to change the metaphor, that fell into good ground, and brought forth abundantly "the finest of the wheat", set about with lilies. We recall to mind Psa.147.14 - "He maketh peace in thy border" (or set thee about with peace in thy border) "and fillest thee with the finest of wheat" (Psa.34.9-10). "O fear the Lord, ye His saints, for there is no want to them that fear Him. They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." The reason why this last quotation is applicable to our thinking lies in the fact of the lilies in the borders, all around the wheat. As Psa.147.14 has indicated, the lily is the emblem of peace, it is also significant of sacrifice as the Shoshannim lily red etc. Song 2.1. A brief suggestion may help to elucidate the peace offering (Lev.3.1 etc). It is always found in the plural and its application today for those who are truly striving to be found within the Bride in that day is to be observed in Phil. 4.7 - "And the peace of God" (again in the plural) of all kinds and from every angle, "that passeth understanding, shall keep, guard or defend, your hearts or minds". The idea of 'belly' here, through or in Jesus Christ.

(A) David who is himself included in this multitudinous Bride might well explain "My cup runneth over" (Psa.23.5).

(B) She is satisfied with favour, and full with the blessings of the Lord (Deut.33.23) indeed -

(C) She is filled with comfort "filled with the spirit", "filled with all joy and peace in believing", "full of goodness", "filled with all knowledge". Yea, "filled with all the fulness of God" (2 Cor.7.4, Eph.5.18, Rom.15.13-14, Eph.3.9). The symbology of the navel cut and well formed, along with the belly full of wheat safeguarded with lilies, may well be summarised in Phil.4.19-20. "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Jesus Christ." So we continue in this attitude of prayer. "Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever". Amen.

Song 7.3 "Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins"

We have met similar language before in Song 4.5. In this passage we have the additional information that she was feeding among the lilies until the day of the Wedding Feast. In other language, in the Gentile night, as we do at the present moment.

As the breasts sustain life and prefigure maturity and puberty, so the additional information, young roes (Song 7.3) shows youthful maturity - the youthfulness of immortality (Isa.40.31). They are breasts of consolation and compassion (with Tom). We are seen quoting from Prov.5.19, "Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe.

Let her breasts satisfy thee at all times and be thou ravished always with her love".

The Son always has taken this advice because :

- (1) This Bride is of His own making (Ephes. 2:11-22).
- (2) The Father's own workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephes. 2:10).
- (3) They shall make Him satisfied when the travail of His soul shall be ended (Isa. 53). At the time this narration is spoken, so far as the Bride is concerned in the Millennium itself, this satisfaction has been achieved by Christ.
- (4) We must also keep in mind the fact that the completed aspect in finality must include the children of the marriage, they of the Millennium itself, when the entry into the third heaven of 2 Cor. 12:1-4 will find absolute perfection with the Divine Family complete: Father, Son and Daughter. All this is born of the sufferings of the Son and the love of the Father.
- (5) He will indeed "be satisfied with her breasts, and ravished with her love" (Matt. 25:34-40). The tenderness of the consolation and compassion are found in her because they are the product of the twin graces of faith and works, which James saw personified in his elder brother (half-brother) during their early life in Nazareth (Jas. 2:14-26). He never forgot - neither should we, if we had been privileged as our brother James was to live in the same household, and to be taken care of by an elder brother such as Jesus.
- (6) Finally under this section; also arresting the imagination and admiration of the Daughters of Jerusalem; they saw in the twin breasts the likemindedness of the multitudinous saints who with one accord are assembled together in prayer and worship (Acts 1:14) and the communal love among them (Acts 2:41-47, 1 Thess. 2:8-12).
- (7) These were the observable facts splendidly obvious to such diligent enquiry as found in the Daughters of Jerusalem. "See how these Christians love each other", was a first century cry. Could it be said today? Many in the first century showed the greater love of John 15:9, 13, fulfilling the request of John 17:21 that the Divine family like~~ness~~ may be observable to the world as the living proof of the Christ mission - "that the world may know that Thou hast sent me".
- (8) The Daughters of Jerusalem had seen in her the consolations and compassions of her Lord, and assuredly "they would follow her into the King's palaces" (Psalm 45:14). Isaiah 66:11 - how true these analogies are! Unless these twin breasts likened to the young roes had been found within her, she would not have been found in His likeness (1 John 3:2), and the inestimable privilege of seeing Him as He really is would have been lost to her. May we find our lot in these consolations for our Lord at His coming!
- (9) It is as Tom pointed out, "beautifully observed in the fact that the Cherubim are symbolical of the twins and of the saints in the likeness of one mind". In Exodus 37:9 the faces of the Cherubim are toward each other, and may we add to this information that this is made possible through the mercy seat (Christ) to which they look.
- (10) We remember too Jachin and Boaz, the twin pillars of the Porch of Solomon, concerning which comment was made earlier.

Again we are reminded of the singular fact that there existed no unity of mind in affection between the known Bible natural twins (Gen. 25:21-34 and Gen. 38:27). Possibly Paul outlines spiritual twinlike union when he speaks of brethren and sisters at Philippi that truly yoked themselves with him (Phil. 4:3).

Song 7:4 "Thy neck is as a tower of ivory".

Here the figure is changed from that in Song 4:4, where the tower is said to be "like the tower of David builded for an armoury", whereon were hung the trophies and the armour of David's mighty men. Now the substance is changed from masonry to ivory - pure, gleaming white ivory. The presence of ivory leads us to think of the death of the elephant which must have preceded its possession; also because of its presence in the picture of the glorified Lord in Song 5:14 (see notes there concerning His body or belly) and we see all the different vicissitudes through which she had passed in her experience of redemption.

Gleaming white, polished ivory speaks of the pure whiteness and holiness of Divine nature, unchanging, unbending, perfect in strength and holiness. No more drudgery of serving self, or bowing the neck to slavery, nor yet exposing this part of the body to the hot Syrian sun. Once she had done, as she confessed to the Daughters of Jerusalem: "I am black, O ye Daughters of Jerusalem, for the sun has looked upon me" (see Song 1:6).

Stooping in the vineyards, her neck would be exposed to the burning rays, and be stained with deepest black, like the dark goatskins of the tents of Kedar. The Daughters of Jerusalem now beholding her can see nought but the snowy curtains of Solomon. Selecting, therefore, the once darkest feature of all, the chained and sunburnt neck, they exclaim, "Thy neck is like a tower of ivory" - lofty, noble and erect as a tower, white as polished ivory.

"Lord, purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean ; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm 50 :7-8, Stuart). It had now come to pass in reality. Thrupp, anxious always to substantiate the inspiration of the Scriptures, thinks that we have here another clue to the true date of the Song. Ivory was, however, imported and used by Solomon (1 Kings 10 :18, 22). At a later period, Ahab constructed an ivory palace (1 Kings 22 :39), in imitation probably of those in the southern kingdom. Also in the King's Ode (Psalm 45 :8) is an allusion to ivory palaces of Solomon's time ; and this, Thrupp thinks, may well have suggested the imaginary tower of ivory to which the poet here compares the neck of the Bride. We take it, then, that the neck erect, but not haughty, is the Scriptural emblem for freedom, victory and freedom in unison, begotten in her, as the origin of the ivory emphasises, through the sacrificial death of her Lord. Do we have here a delightful allusion to the ivory throne that Solomon made (2 Chron. 9 :7). Maybe so ; in fact, most likely ; but the Greater Solomon, in the exceeding riches of His grace, does more than this, for He raises His Bride to share His throne (Rev. 3 :21). No doubt we may learn from this figure something of the exalted position the Bride is destined to fill in glory.

"Thy neck is as a tower of ivory". Applying the symbology of Jeremiah 6 :27, used first of all of natural Israel, to herself "as a fellow-worker with God", she has been set by Him as a "tower and fortress" among His people - "that," the Word continues, "thou mayest know and try their way". She must be meek and yielding in all matters concerning herself, but as a "tower of ivory" unbending in faithfulness to her Lord. This the Daughters had seen and appreciated. In the neck of ivory we see the outcome of unswerving faithful obedience to the will of God. No doubt this description will give intense pleasure to both Bride and Bridegroom, because it is the expression of (a) her being found blameless in holiness (1 Thess. 3 :13) and (b) her being presented faultless by Christ before the throne of glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24, 25). "Unswerving" - not particularly in her own strength, because, apart from the Lord Jesus, all men have swerved aside from God through sin in different degrees. Jesus alone remained "face to face with God" (John 1 :1, Greek).

Naturally, as "leaky vessels" again of varying degrees, the Bride conquered only through the strength she received from Him, as Paul, a prominent member of this Bride community, confessed : "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4 :13). Consequently, only through His righteousness will she be found in "holiness" in this life, and "faultless" in presentation in the spiritual nature - "that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing", but that it should be "holy and without blemish", or, in the language of the Song, "Thou art all fair, my love ; there is no spot in thee" (Ephes. 5 :27, Song 4 :7). Paul also indicates the means of cleansing - "that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word" (Ephes. 5 :26).

Further thoughts to conclude this feature of the Ivory Neck of the Bride can be obtained in the notes on Song 1 :10, etc.

Song 7 :4-6 The next three features of the Bride are connected with various place-names and conditions ;

- (1) "Thine eyes like the fish-pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim"
- (2) "Thy nose as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus"
- (3) "Thine head like Carmel".

"Thine eyes like the fish-pools in Heshbon". "Heshbon" comes from "Hhashabh" = "to think", same as "appell heshbon", "the reason of a thing" (occurs thrice : Eccles. 7 :25 and 27, 9 :10). Heshbon, then, will have the conveyance of, the power of, reasoning ; understanding ; intelligence and purpose for devising, etc. We have all the wonder of immortality conveyed to us in cameo as we contemplate this delightful imagery. Gone is the condition spoken of in 1 Cor. 13 :12, "Now we see through a glass darkly" (or in a riddle, Grk.). This will have passed away with mortality. The following words in this verse will find their true expression within the Bride then, face to face.

"Now I know in part" (in mortality), "but then shall I know even as also I am known" - no doubt leading on to 1 John 3:2, already quoted a number of times in this exposition, for the very obvious reason that the time alluded to in 1 John 3:2 is the time of The Song in the ultimate: "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is". All stages in preparation for this glorious moment have been experienced by the Bridal community. Heshbon has been attained, "great intelligence, light and understanding are hers".

The eyes of the loved one shine in beauty - AND immortal depth. The brilliance of the very light of life is now hers, in the full realisation of spiritual consciousness, because her life has been "hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:1-4). This attainment has been reached because with the Psalmist she can say, "Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord" (Psa. 25:15).

Apparently the fish-pools in Heshbon were known for the clearness and placidity of their waters. Perhaps the symbology of Rev. 21:9-11, 18, 21 can be discerned in these eyes of the Spirit. The subject of these verses is none other than the Shulamite of The Song, the Lamb's Bride (verse 9). Her light was like unto a stone most precious, even as a jasper stone, clear as crystal (verse 11). The city was pure gold like unto clear glass (verse 18). The building of the wall was of jasper (verse 19). The street of the city was of pure gold, as it were transparent glass (verse 21). We know that according to the Lord Jesus Himself the light of the body is the eye. The indication is that the Bride has had 'a single eye' all through her career. That singleness has always kept the Lord before her, and what has arisen in Rev. 21 is the outcome of it. Further reserch from this angle would reap a rich harvest of spiritual wealth for anyone who would take the necessary trouble to enquire.

The eye of the Bride is further likened to these pools at Heshbon, alluding to the fact that the eyes of the Bride or believers are pools of believing knowledge possessed by them, of Christ and other spiritual objects. Durham comments: "And from this we may observe (1) that solid and distinct knowledge in spiritual things is very commendable; (2) that a believer hath another kind of insight in spiritual things than the most understanding natural man (who hath no experimental nor believing knowledge of spiritual things, but is blind; (3) he is sharpest sighted that discerns himself, and can rightly take up his own condition. "The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way", so believers' eyes, or knowledge, are compared to a fishpond that gives representations of a man's face to him". Rather quaintly but beautifully put, we believe, and this naturally leads us on to our further consideration of the last phase of this feature.

Not only are we to note the clarity and perfection of the pools, but also the myriads of fish that are to be found there. When the Bride looked into the pools and saw the reflection of her own features (so different now from James, it was then her natural self), she saw in the reflection a multiple assembly, myriads in one. If the fishes amounted to 153 it would be sufficient (John 21:8, 11). (See numerology section of "Blue in Scripture" by present writer). Found near the "gate of Bath-rabbim", meaning "Daughter of a Multitude" - double emphasis on the multitudinous aspect of the Bride, and the grand harvest of the disciples, who were made fishers of men (Matt. 4:18-22). The millennial sequence of this situation we commented upon under Song 1:14, particularly in the vineyards of En-ge-di, to which reference should be made. Thrupp's comment on this section would be that, "It is sufficiently clear that the gate of which the poet speaks must be the gate of approach to the pools, the portal through which the multitude of the Gentile world presses to drink to the full of the clear and unadulterated waters of Christian doctrine".

No doubt as Mary of Bethany, now immortalised within this Bridal community, reflects upon this feature, it will give her much delight and satisfaction, because there was found in her a considerable depth of spiritual perception that led her to discern the suitability of anointing the Lord at that particular moment in John 12:1-7. She might not have been able to explain why she did it, but the Lord could explain that she had kept her choice gift for the day of His preparation for burial! She perceived what was suitable to the moment. This is a most attractive feature of spiritual beauty. Yes, Mary is a good sample of those who "have eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath-rabbim".

To complete our thoughts on this feature, perhaps we may care to be reminded of the fact that Heshbon was the capital of the kings of Bashan, and the bestowal of this territory "on this side of Jordan" was an earnest of the full possession of the Lord on the other side. When we associate this feature with the "pools and gate" of the Song, we can perceive how baptism (suggested by pools) opens the gate to the "inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Pet. 1:5-6). "Today we labour on this side



Jordan, then in this moment of bliss when the actual scene of the Song takes place, we shall have reached "the other side" Jordan (Atwell).

How truly shallow are the deepest thoughts of all "who mind earthly things"; how short the longest line of their wisdom; how soon it reaches the muddy bottom, and either stirs up the mire or is entangled in the oozy weeds! But the thoughts of God are a great deep, and the shallowest mind of man that comes into union with that clear unfathomable depth becomes itself as clear as bright water pools; the beauty of which every man may discern, or rather behold, while its depth no man can fathom, for "he that is spiritual is discerned of no man". He is not discerned even by himself, in all the full caverns of the deep well of life that is now within him; for God, Who searcheth the heart, alone "knoweth what is the mind of the spirit" within the child of God, and so, with Stuart once again, "as the deep fishpools of Heshbon are thine eyes, O Prince's Daughter. Nor are those vacant depths, but full. As the pool is neither encumbered nor disturbed, but replenished with its living yet hidden shoals of fish, so are these deep eyes filled with a multitude of thoughts, living and precious, which delight and enrich the soul". So the eyes whereof we read in Song 6:5, "Turn away thine eyes", when He was sought by her, are now with Him, and "face answereth face" (Prov. 27:19). The mutual delight is very apparent in both. Tom's comment on the feature must close our consideration of it:

(1) He rightly informs us that "Heshbon eventually became a possession of the Levites, typifying the saints". What we have already advanced (re the name, the power of reasoning, and our allusion to 1 Cor. 2:2-16) highlights the occupation of the Levitical burden to "join" the people of God to their God, obviously the same application in "joining" the various elements of the Bridal community together.

(2) The Gate of Bath-Rabbim "was the place where judgment was given, showing the power of judgment and government - "the government shall be upon His shoulder" (Isa. 9:6) - but with Him He has the daughters of a multitude (i.e. Bath-rabbim), again showing the royalty of the multitudinous Bride". Truly "the Prince's Daughter with shoes".

Song 7:4 "Thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon that looketh toward Damascus".

Again upon consulting the Law of Moses, Lev. 21:18, we find that amongst different disfigurements a "flat nose" is a blemish. Quite the opposite is this eulogy of the Bride. Her nose is high and beautifully formed as a tower which looketh toward Lebanon. The beauty of her Lord is upon her, and the glory of Divine nature, as we saw in the ivory neck.

Two thoughts occur to the mind when thinking of Damascus. The last in time comes first. Acts 9:1-22. It was on the Damascus road from Jerusalem that Paul was apprehended by Christ and was struck blind for a season. The meaning of "Damascus" beautifully reveals the state of Paul's mind at the precise moment when Christ blinded him with the light of the Shechinah. We wonder whether it will be possible to smart in the immortal consciousness: because, if it be possible, we are sure that Paul would squirm, as no doubt he must have done during that period of three years in Arabia and Damascus, when he was given the gracious opportunity by the Lord Jesus to re-think and amend his approach to the Way that he had so grievously persecuted (Gal. 1:12-24). "Damascus", we find, has the meaning of "activity, alertness" in respect to trade or possessions; also "sack of blood, blood-sack", etc. It is known as the oldest city in the world in some archaeological circles. There can be no doubt that the principles outlined in the name itself are amongst the oldest in the world. The building and business of better and bigger barns (Luke 12) was condemned by Jesus in the parable of the rich fool. It is because of this greed and advance that the whole habitable at one time or another has become "the blood-sack" or a "sack of blood". Damascus is the city of self-expression and self-acquisition, or just plain Ego. In a spiritual sense we find Saul under compulsion of his uneasy conscience waging unceasing 'activity' against the Bridal community of those days in its first existence. Considerable 'alertness' was shown by him in hauling men and women before the authorities and to imprisonment, torture and death (Acts 8:3-4). It was in this state of mind that Paul, yet breathing and threatening slaughter, left Jerusalem (Acts 9:1-2). When anyone is in this depravity of mind, he must leave Jerusalem typically and morally, because "Jerusalem" means "the inheritance of the possession of peace". To prove that the inheritance belongs to us, we must indicate by our attitude and actions that we are heirs to this inheritance. This did Jesus right royally throughout His life. At the time of speaking, Saul had not. He was far away from it. His persecutions in the name of religion - how commonplace it sounds! How

much blood has been shed down the ages under camouflage of its name! Did not the first murder have its beginning in religion? Cain slew Abel, because Abel's offering was accepted and his own refused; that is, basically speaking, of course (Gen. 4:1-16). Paul had without doubt met his match and "Waterloo" in the Cilician synagogues when he, the foremost "young rabbi" of his day, had battled furiously against the Holy Spirit as found in Stephen (Acts 6:9-10). The result: "they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he (Stephen) spoke". The persecutions that followed from Saul under the guise of religion were but the frustration of an ego absolutely shattered by Stephen, Saul at that time being incapable of defining the workings of the Holy Spirit in Stephen. Yet as the days advanced, the presentiment that Stephen could have been right aggravated and activated him, and when, on the road to Damascus the Shechinah glory and the voice of Jesus came to him, he was ready to capitulate. "Who art thou, Lord?", he said, knowing full well that it was the Lord Jesus who was addressing him (Acts 9:4-6), and his immediate reaction - "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" - revealed the personal compulsion that had grown upon him even as he desperately tried to stifle the inner voice with dire threatening and persecution to the death of his future brethren and sisters. So Saul left Jerusalem. None can stay within the city of peace in such an agitated condition of mind, nor do we prove that we are heirs to it in these cases (Rom. 7 again for Paul's experience: only for fleeting moments do our aspirations reach such heights in this life). No! Paul, or Saul then, was bent on blood. So down he goes towards the Blood-Sack (Damascus). He fully expected to bring back a Sack of Blood, and in the end had to be rescued from this Blood-Sack, being let down from the walls in a sack or basket (same thing in the East), because he now upheld and glorified that which he had persecuted to prison and to death. "Man chooses, but God disposes" - how wonderfully right in the case of Saul, who became our Paul or the Apostle to the Gentiles. He will have great nostalgia in that Day. No wonder the Bride's nose looketh towards Damascus! Why is to be seen as we look at the second thought that comes to mind as we muse over this feature of the glorious proboscis.

Gen. 15:2 informs us of the fact that the chief steward of the house of Abraham was Eliezer come from Damascus. In the person of this faithful steward who was entrusted with finding a wife for the son Isaac (already commented upon), we find that faith can come even from such a place as Damascus, that "bag of blood". This suggestion, however, must be qualified, as in a natural sense this is a sheer impossibility. "Eliezer" means "God of Help" or "God is my Help", "God is succour". It is only by the grace of God that any person faithful can emerge out of this fortress of ancient Ego. The wonder of grace is further emphasised when we realise that had Abraham died childless, then Eliezer would have attained to the inheritance - Gen. 15:3 - "And Abram said, Behold, to me Thou hast given no seed, and lo! one born in my house is my heir". We are further intrigued to know that in typology Eliezer prefigures the Holy Spirit as found in the Word in our days. Just as he led the bride Rebekah to Isaac, the "seed of the Promise", so the Word of the Spirit has led us to the Greater Isaac. According to this principle, then, a good deal can emerge from the Bath of Blood, not Damascus only but the whole earth, for ever in one corner or another bathed in blood through greed and avarice.

Surely this can be observed in another portion of evidence supplied in Acts 9:11, the Lord directing Ananias to Saul: "And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the street called Straight and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus; for, behold, he prayeth". Note the connection between prayer and the House of Praise (Judah = Praise of Yah). "Ananias" means "The Lord hath heard" - in this case the pleadings of penitence from our brother Saul, and the answer was, Arise, go and get thyself baptised and wash away thy sins, calling on the Name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). This Saul was already doing, for the approach of the certain disciple meant that the Lord had heard and had graciously sent the answer by Ananias. It would appear, then, that the street called Straight holds great significance, for was it not here that Saul was made "straight" through the waters of baptism?

All the Bridal community have likewise been straightened through the waters of baptism (or circumcision before the advent of Christ) and through Christ's death, wherein we may find identification and unification with Him (Rom. 6). It is because in the darkness they cried in faith to the Lord. Having the "scales" of this life fallen from their eyes, they arise to a newness of life and vision.

The newness of this life which speaks of holiness (Rom. 6) is to be seen in the tower of Lebanon. The word "Lebanon" means "white, clean, pure, brilliant, snowy", the root

idea from which we derive "Lebanon", "frankincense", "whiteness", "purity", "moon", etc. This tower is one in the position of the heights of Lebanon, typically attained holiness - and this from the blood-bath of Damascus. As one writer says, he is sad to observe that all these lovely places of spiritual import have been naturally at war against Jerusalem, but they have been taken from their hands by Israel. How soon now before this Song attains its consummation? It is, then, from this high position of being Holiness to the Lord that the Daughters of Jerusalem view our Bride. They admire her stand in constant watch against the natural vices that activate this Bath of Blood - Damascus - but in contradiction they perceive that the true Pauls can be "straightened" in her streets; that is if they call upon the Lord, and return to Jerusalem, seeking no longer greed and evil, but rather an Inheritance in the Possession of Peace.

Again the nose indicates the direction of the face, looking, as we have seen, toward Damascus, the chief town of Syria. Israel, when presenting the firstfruits after entering the Land, was commanded to say, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father" (Deut. 26:5-9), bringing to mind their wonderful deliverance from Egypt and its bondage.

Helen Attwell also calls to mind that permissible translations of "Damascus", apart from "sack of blood", are "burning similitude of a kiss" and "a pot"; from which information we can construe the following: there will ever be for the Bride, the firstfruits unto God, a remembrance of her great deliverance into the Promised Land, and of Christ "our Passover sacrificed for us", Who shed His blood for the remission of our sins; and of the dark night when He was betrayed by the "kiss" of Judas, a vessel ("pot") of wrath meet for destruction; and of the thirty pieces of silver, the price of betrayal, with which the Potter's Field was bought. Likewise there will be a remembrance of Christ as the burnt offering provided by God. As in the Holy Place the Cherubim of beaten gold with outstretched wings looked down always on the mercy seat, so will the antitype correspond with the type. The saints (the Bride) in their exalted position, clothed in white raiment (Lebanon), will offer praise continually in the Temple of God, giving thanks and praise unto the Almighty; and they will not forget their redemption and deliverance from sin and death.

We have written earlier re the nose, and the significance of:

(1) The smell and scent, particularly having to do with Jesus (Isa. 11:3, A.V. margin). He was said to be quick of scent in the fear of the Lord.

(2) Caleb - the Gentile dog - who wholly followed the scent of Yahweh, with Joshua, of course, while the others defected in cowardice (Num. 14). Let it just be said that the nose has not been mentioned before because the scent is one of the senses of the new creation (the Bride), which only seems to be recognisable in this stage of maturity, and seems to be dulled by any act out of God's will (see Song 1:13-14). The scent implies that exceedingly delicate intuitive knowledge of God which can only be likened to the sense of smell. The nose is said to be like a tower because this quick sense can only be maintained as the Bride walks in God's will with steadfast obedience and abides in the rarified atmosphere of the most intimate fellowship with Him. We remember once again Psalm 45:8, "loving righteousness and hating wickedness". As she hears this eulogy in immortality, the Bridal community can say, "Amen" to these sentiments, never more to leave the rarified atmosphere of the Divine will in holiness and obedience. The "sack of blood", with all its schemings and ceaseless activities, has been rightly discerned and rejected by her.

Song 7:5 "Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple".

We have observed that the eyes and the nose, representing the perceptive faculties, are very prominent features of the beauty of the Prince's Daughter, and the result of the perceptive faculties being in exercise is that spiritual understanding is developed. Hence we have just quoted "Thine head upon thee is like Carmel". The meaning of "Carmel" is "exceedingly fruitful". Again this point has already been enlarged upon re Isaiah 35:1-2, s.w.a. "crimson" in Solomon's Veil, etc. (Song 1:6). We learned also of the "excellency of Carmel" (Isa. 35:2). Once more the Bridal community looked back in reminiscence. The various assemblies or ecclesias, throughout the various dispensations of time which had witnessed her progress, had been composed of people called out to "a set pattern of teaching" (Rom. 6:17, R.V.), people upon whose intelligence God had sealed His Truth in their foreheads, and who were given the Spirit (1 Cor. 13) - actually to the prophets of old and the gift of the Holy Spirit in the first century (2 Pet. 1:19-21). As the years advanced and the second

century loomed ahead this witness was withdrawn, its work of cementing the initial preaching of the Gospel having been done. The world had been turned upside down by its power (Mark 16:15-20, Acts 17:6). The Spirit in our days is found in the Word of Truth itself, which has replaced all other manifestations of the Spirit until the return of the Lord. The ecclesias in all ages have been led by men of high spiritual intelligence, and the Body of Christ has always in every age been marked by the presence of spiritual light, having become available through the brethren being fruitful in their understanding of the Word. All instruction and edification depends upon the understanding being fruitful (1 Cor. 14), so that "five words spoken with the understanding" in the ecclesia are more valuable in the assembly than ten thousand words without the understanding! And curiously enough, these words are set in the context of the ten thousand spoken in the power of the Spirit of God (verse 19). Undoubtedly the five words give "grace" to them all.

Great value attaches to the "head" being like "Carmel", for the real gain of every meeting lies in the ecclesia being edified. What is expressed in the ecclesia should be the fruit of Divine light garnered from the Word, having taken form in the understanding, and being expressed for the sole reason of the ecclesia's spiritual enlargement, so that all should be done to edification, not only what is ministered to the brethren and sisters but what is addressed in prayer also. The Lord is mercifully and constantly adding to the growth of the saints through the "fruitfulness" (Carmel) of understanding in different members of the body. Edification is always going on and every activity in the ecclesia is in order to promote it; either Sunday School, Youth Circle, Mutual, Bible Class, Breaking of Bread, Lecture, etc. These should all receive our attention, should we desire to be part of that "head like Carmel" in the future. It would not appear possible for the ecclesia to come together in a godly way without edification, but this depends on the fruitfulness of its members in understanding. Paul comments, "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, and often embarrass their elders by forthright speech; men should speak and act with understanding. In the ecclesias 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 of His spouse in her head being "like Carmel". Again, her head is compared to Carmel, the mount where Elijah ("God is the Lord") had power with God, and prevailed with man and his god, Baal (1 Kings 18).

The hair is like "the purple of a king" bound in the tresses thereof (A.V. margin) - the "royal priesthood", the Bride loosed from her sins in His blood and made "kings and priests unto God", for ever to minister within the veil with their great High Priest (Rev. 1:5-6); to be (for the people that remain after the judgments have swept the earth) "Godward" (Ex. 18:19). The hair, as explained before, the figure of strength (clearly indicated in the case of Samson), is now determined as of royal power, holding captive even the King Himself. Jacob, of the Bridal community of that Day, will vividly remember how, in his conflict with the angel, he tenaciously held on to him at the brook Jabbok, and would not let him go until he had given him a blessing - "By his strength he had power with God. Yea, he had power over the angel and prevailed; he wept and made supplication to him" (Hosea 12:3-4, Gen. 32:24-32). Compare also Abigail, who proved her name ("Joy of the Lord") to David:

(a) It was from this fruitful place (Carmel) that she brought substance both spiritual and natural to David;

(b) Fruits and wine for the natural man;

(c) Godly advice for the spiritual man (1 Sam. 25);

(d) The withholding of David from personal vengeance;

(e) The prophecy of the bundle of life found with the Lord;

(f) The request for remembrance (?) with David "when the Lord had dealt well with him". Reminiscence will be very sweet both for David and for Abigail in that day. The Lord had dealt well with David, and David had remembered his handmaid. What a spiritual bounty could be found within this "head like Carmel", both brethren and sisters. The Bride has now "power" on her head. With Tom we agree that a change of nature is suggested, in that a contrast to the natural state of affairs has taken place. The Bride in the natural state is a beggar, shoeless before God - like Abigail, Hannah, David and all the Israel of God, and her head is covered by hair, which always before in the Song has been "like a flock of goats", showing the sacrificial covering of her

redemption. Now it is like purple, and it holds the King with delight. The Bride, in the natural female aspect, covers her head when approaching God through Christ in prayer. Here in Song 7 we find the reverse: her feet are covered and her head is bare. Her hair is seen and admired by the King and by the Daughters of Jerusalem. Here, then, is Hammah's song come to pass - the beggars are set among princes (1 Sam 2:8), and the beggar Lazarus, who was fit only to be licked by dogs, is now in Abraham's bosom (or the Father's bosom) (Luke 16:20). The Bride's shoes are now her prized possession and so are described first, for in these she is able to stand at the side of her Lord - her footsteps can go along with His. It is because she has these shoes that He can look directly at her head, her eyes, her hair. For she too has all-seeing eyes, and both can behold the other.

We find upon closer investigation that the word for "hair" here is dissimilar to the one in Song 4:1. The word in Song 7 is not found elsewhere. It comes from a root that gives ground to expand its "smallness" or "tenderness"; therefore it is taken by some to signify a "pin" or some small decoration of the head, and it is compared with "purple" for preciousness, loveliness and other reasons formerly mentioned in speaking of that colour. From this angle concerning the hair, then, we conceive is understood even the meanest gestures and circumstances of a believer's walk, which, being ordered by grace, are beautiful, and serve much to the adorning of the Gospel. Durham indicates that "grace, vented in the meanest piece of a Christian carriage, is very beautiful; it puts a special beauty and lustre upon the meanest circumstances of the Christian's actions: or when a believer squares all his walk even in the least things, by the right rule, it makes him exceeding lovely". Whereas often a little folly or unwatchfulness in such proves like a dead fly, that makes the whole box of ointment stink (Eccles. 10:1-3).

Our Lord takes notice of the smallest things in a believer, even of the hair, yea, of the minutest detail. There is nothing in His people so mean but He takes notice of it, and there is nothing so little but grace should be exercised therein. In a word, all things in a believer should be suitable - eyes, hair, head, etc. It is very gratifying and yet awesome to note how carefully Jesus scrutinises His loved ones. We do well to remember the words to Hagar in Gen. 16:13, "Thou, God, seest me". Also to see what was obvious to the Daughters of Jerusalem, that the Lord is greatly influenced by this very minute adornment. "And the locks of thy head like purple, the King is fettered by thy ringlets". Perhaps we can liken it to the spiritual beauty which, according to God, ever accompanies spiritual understanding that is the ornament of subjection. This is the glory of the ecclesia, just as long hair is attractive to the eye and heart of Christ. The spirit of subjection in most of the Truth demands attention. There is nothing which the spiritual understanding can take up which does not call for subjection. Otherwise we should not be under the practical control of what we understand. Surely the sense of this is a great preservative from headiness and highmindedness. Does not the truly "royal" character of the Prince's Daughter come out in this? It is the "purple" which I take to be the authority of headship truly owned, and it is also a characteristic which can affect our relations with one another. It is the one characteristic in which all the Bridal community can truly join and be equal. We can all have part in this witness to the world. Many may not be able to speak, or teach, or give, but we can all in some way express that we are in subjection to Christ as Head.

The woman, we are told, is to have authority on her head, on account of the angels (1 Cor. 11:10). The angels are to see in the woman the glory of subjection to headship. And in like manner the ecclesia is subjected to the Christ (Ephes. 5:24). We remember that Jesus, when He was here, was in a place of subjection. One of the Bridal community in those days, the centurion in Luke 7, perceived this. He said, "For I also am a man placed under authority". He apparently understood that the Lord was in that position in relation to God, and Jesus wondered at his faith. Perfect subjection marked the Beloved Himself, and His spouse must correspond with Him in this matter. It is our glory to be marked by subjection, and such a spirit is most attractive to the Lord. "The King is held in the galleries", or "fettered by the ringlets" (Darby). Nothing, we believe, in the saints appeals more to the heart of Christ than their affectionate subjection to Him as Head. Because it contains within itself all other Christian virtues. It has power to hold Him "fettered" - a wonderful word

when we consider who the King is. Where there is affectionate subjection, the Lord gets His full portion of delight in His loved one, as expressed in the words of the following verse :

Song 7:6 "How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delight! "

She has yielded to Him all the delights that His love can desire. Both the King and the Daughters of Jerusalem join in united praise of this King's Daughter (we have commented on the sentiments expressed in this verse in earlier chapters), and it only remains to see why the Lord should so emphasise these factors again.

Song 7:7 "This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes".

She has come to stature, or maturity, a feature not mentioned before. Of a truth, if all the features we have found in the King's Daughter are to be found within the Bridal community in the ecclesias, we may be sure that "stature" will be there also. The Divine characteristics will be developed, and there will be among us today some of the evidence of the growing up towards the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephes. 4:13). We are to 'grow up into Him in all things, Who is the head, the Christ". Knowledge, or faith, or gift, are not stature. Stature is the result of formation in Divine things. We are as big as we love, and no more. We may measure our stature by 1 Cor. 13. Stature, tallness of stature, was always accounted an addition to beauty, and was an indication of majesty. We think of Saul, naturally described as "shoulders and upwards higher than any of the people", but, alas, his majesty was not of the Bridal community, because in God's wrath he was taken away from before Him. Think of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), short of stature naturally, and bereft of spiritual vision until that day when Jesus paid a visit to his home-town of Jericho; and how he hastened to correct both when news reached him that Jesus drew nigh. Hurriedly he removed the disability of "littleness of stature" and, climbing rapidly, assumed the "fulness of the stature of a tree". His curiosity and interest were intensified when Jesus, looking up, saw him and acknowledged him: "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for today I must abide at thy house". "And he made haste, and received him joyfully". Henceforth the spiritual vision received 'fulness of stature' in proportion. Luke 19:8, "And Zacchaeus stood" - although the master of the house, he assumed the role of a servant, virtually saying in action if not in word that he had changed his master (hitherto Rome) for Christ - "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation I restore him fourfold"; accounting those dues as theft (Ex. 22:1, etc.) allowable under the jurisdiction of Rome, who claimed only a certain amount, the rest representing Zacchaeus' ill-gotten gains, not allowable in Christ. The evidence of the extension of the publican's spiritual faculties and the foreknowledge of Jesus concerning Zacchaeus brought forth these words from Jesus: "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham, a future member of the Bridal community. "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost". Think of the joy of our brother Zacchaeus in the day when these words are said: "This thy stature is like unto a palm tree". He will rejoice, as he thinks back to that day when his stature and vision were extended to become comparable to that of a son of Abraham. Spiritually, we were all very much like Zacchaeus; in fact, we were very much worse, when Christ called to us, "Come unto me!" We were dead in trespasses and sins (Ephes. 2). May our stature and vision be extended through grace to that of the required fulness in Christ.

We have seen that the Bride is likened in stature to a palm tree. The picture of a very tall, straight and graceful tree comes into mind as we muse over it. Cruden says, "The palm tree is an upright fruit-bearing tree. It will not be pressed or bound downward, or grow crooked, though heavy weights be laid upon it. The more it is oppressed, the more it flourisheth, the higher it grows, the stronger and prouder it is in the top". And who could find a finer description of the palms of true spiritual growth and maturity? We find it most appropriate. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree", Psalm 92:12 says of those who are "planted in the house of the Lord".

Tamar of old, another distinct member of the Bridal community inevitably comes into mind as we read this, because her name means "palm tree". The notifications

are to be found at Song 4:3 in relation to the "lips of scarlet" and Judah's acknowledgment of the tokens, when he said, "She hath been more righteous (Tamar) than I". Great was his shock when he realised that Tamar was his wife.

The palm tree, as we know full well, is the symbol of victory (Lev. 23:40, John 12:13, Rev. 7:9). Tom, along with our thoughts, sees her being symbolically waved before the Lord. Back again will go the thoughts of the 500-plus witnesses of apostolic days (1 Cor. 15:1-6), and the hosannas will ring in their ears which were sung on that day, shortly before He suffered, when the Bridegroom entered Jerusalem -

- (a) not to reign on David's throne, as they thought ;
- (b) but to witness the evil doings abroad in the city and in their Temple, because the Father had long since departed it.
- (c) Where could God dwell in Herod's Temple, since there was no Ark of the Covenant where He dwelt between the Cherubim ?
- (d) In accordance with Micah 1:2-3, as representative of the Father, Christ entered the Temple on this occasion and testified (Mark 11:11 and context). "And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the Temple, and when He had looked round about upon all things, and (very significantly) now eventide was come, He went out unto Bethany with the twelve".
- (e) The palms, then, that the disciples and crowds waved before the Lord, enigmatically enough, hailed a victory forged through suffering and death (Heb. 2:6, 9-18).
- (f) Now in glory, in greater fulness and spiritual expansion, they feel within themselves the "victory", but once again they remind us that the victory could only be gained through the "blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14-17).
- (g) The Bride, with the stature of a palm tree, represents the victory of Christ ; also the triumph of His spoils from death (2 Cor. 2:14-17), just as the victorious general paraded his troops, and the shackled prisoners and the spoils taken, and as he was strewn with rose petals to hide the stench of the multitudes in the hot climate, from which incidents the imagery here is taken. So Christ presents His victory and spoils of war against sin and death openly to the admiring gaze of the Daughters of Jerusalem in speaking of the Bride as of the stature of a palm tree. She rejoices greatly, as we have seen from Rev. 7:9, in this victory of the Lamb. Then emphatically it will be said of the Bridal community - and we hope it will be true of us - "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

Consider also this tree of which it has been said that "it stands erect above all other trees, as man above the inferior creatures", which is probably another reason why this symbol is so often found in the Bible. This tree, which is a noble sign of Israel, the people of God, is also noted in the coins of the enemies of Israel when they would commemorate the conquest of Jerusalem - they struck the figure of the captive Daughter of Zion sitting under the shadow of a palm tree.

We remember the wife of Lapidoth, Deborah, the lofty prophetess of Ephraim, who "dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah" and there the assembled people waited on her judgment (Judges 4:4-5). The names in these two verses are full of spiritual meaning. There is also a natural feature connected with the palm tree which has a spiritual significance. Wherever the palm tree is encountered it is a sure sign of water. Wherever it raises its graceful head in the wilderness, water is certain to be found, and therefore there is no more welcome a sight to the thirsty traveller. We remember that it was said of Israel: "They came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees, and they encamped by the waters". It is thought by the earlier expositors of this book that in this palm tree in the desert the Daughters of Jerusalem saw the church's first baptism by the Spirit. They knew that there was water there. "The Spirit and the Bride said, "Come !" and thousands drank and lived". Rather beautifully put, we think. Of a truth it must be said that wherever the Bridal community holds forth under the symbol of the palm tree, water - the water of life - must be self-evident (Song 4:12-15). Are our cisterns leaky vessels or is that life-giving fluid apparent in our characters ?

But to return to a brief consideration of this principle in Judges 4:4-5, what do we find ? (a) Deborah = "a bee", one that is eloquent and diligent ; one that can sting very unpleasantly as Deborah stung Barak and Israel together against the enemy. Perhaps we may further say that the state of the drone was not found in her (nor should we so characterise ourselves). She was the wife of (b) Lapidoth = "torches". "Having eyes of fire" (Dan. 10:6). See also from the same root, "a lamp" (Judges

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7:16). In Nahum 2:4, Rabbi Solomon translates: "a woman of splendours", i.e. an illustrious woman. Here we have closely associated with the waters of life the searching, prying, burning eyes of the Spirit, which can pierce the bones and marrow, the discerning intelligence of spiritual endowment. (c) Her dwelling-place between Ramah and Bethel. Ramah = "lofty place" or high place. In an evil sense, specially consecrated to idols (1 Sam. 22:6, Ezek. 16:24). In a good sense (d) the future dwelling-place of Samuel, the man of God, from his early childhood and dedication before conception (1 Sam. 1) - a place clearly dedicated to a Deity - specially here in regard to the lofty conception of a dwelling-place of Yahweh in the prophet Samuel, who was "lent unto the Lord". (e) Bethel = "the house of God". Deborah dwelt between the "lofty place" and "the house of God". Could we get a loftier conception of the Bride as the palm tree amidst the water of life? The fire-consuming spiritual eyes dwelling in the place between dedication in the Lofty Place and the House of God itself. But two more definitions remain: (f) Ephraim, Mount Ephraim, etc. In this name we get the result of enquiry to Deborah at this place under the palm tree. Ephraim = "two-fold increase", "very fruitful", found in the portion of the first-born (Gen. 48:15-22) - Jew and Gentile in the fold. Paul speaks of the fulness of the Gentiles coming in. A little investigation will prove that our portion, i.e. the Gentile portion in the Promises to Abraham, is found here. This very fruitful increase will come to pass on diligent and earnest entreaty and enquiry at the Place of the Palm Tree. (g) Finally, the grand result obtained. Israel - according to her name - had "power with God" and vanquished. The last few weeks have seen what power with God means in Israel (Psalm 83. And Obadiah, particularly verses 17 to 20, and again, in the incipient sense, verse 21. The true saviours are yet awaited, as we demonstrated earlier in Psalm 133, etc. All these prophecies still await their grand fulfilment, but what we have been privileged to witness in Israel is an earnest of what is to follow). (h) The Bridal community in every age must of necessity frame up to the digest of Judges 4:4 --

Is our community today a place of living water? Do our elders possess the 20th century equivalent of eyes of fire, torches to shine out amidst the darkness of Gentile night? Do our aspirations ascend to the lofty place and dwell at the house of God? Would you say that Isaiah had this verse in mind in Isa. 57:15? - "For thus saith the High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, Whose Name is Holy. I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit". Is it not significant that the emblem of the palm tree is found both in Solomon's Temple and in that of Ezekiel's prophecy (1 Kings 6:29-32, Ezek. 40:34, 37)? It would appear so.

To bring the analysis down to the personal aspect: Can we afford this spiritual refreshment to those who would seek it in our day? If we belong to the Bridal community as found in this aspect of the palm tree, then we must do so in some way or other. To do so, we must be as "upright as the palm tree", really upright. No slave of the world, no servant of men, no stranger to God can claim to be. He may be upright to his fellow men, but he is not upright in the presence of his Maker, saying with Elijah, "the Lord God of Israel, before whom I stand", standing erect and justified in His sight. This stature as the palm tree drew the attention of the Daughters of Jerusalem when they saw the Bride of Jesus like the palm in the midst of worthless bushes. Again they realised that "the beauty of her God was upon her" and so made her stand. "This thy stature is like the palm tree" - the most beautiful, fruitful and useful tree in Israel, and, as we have seen, the emblem of the Land of Promise.

- (1) Among all His flowers, the Lord has one - His lily.
- (2) Among all the cities, He has but one - Zion.
- (3) Among all the trees which the Lord hath planted, He has one - His palm tree.
- (4) Among all His birds, He has one - His dove.

The children of God, who will make up the Bridal community, are found growing in many soils: (a) some in valleys, as His lilies; (b) some in the wilderness, as His palms; (c) some on mountain tops, as His cedars. Isa. 41:19-20, "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, the pine and the box tree together; that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it".

Song 7:8 "I said, I will go up". It would appear that Christ is the narrator here. In fact, He has always been going up (Prov. 8:31).



The words "go up" imply purpose, promise, delight, performance. He goeth up (1) to gather fruit, (2) to prune the branches, (3) to take possession. Coates adds, "It is His purchase and the Father's gift. (4) His delight as seen in the mirror of God's purposes (5) And His rest for ever (Zeph. 3:17).

"I will go up". We have already seen under the heading of the Palm Tree that Christ went up according to covenant engagements in the fulness of time. We have considered how much it cost Him to lay hold of the palm branches and make them the emblems of the victory He had achieved for those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. In the Feast of Tabernacles it was appointed of old that God's people were to take branches and make booths in which to dwell, in anticipation of the rest prepared for the people of God (Lev. 23:29-30). In Song 7:7 we find in particular the results these visits have to His palm tree. He originally found us "dead in trespasses and sins", barren and empty, lost and undone. But now - "thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine". In Song 1:14 we met the word "clusters" with regard to the "kaphar" or "copher", and we saw that this had to do with the atoning work of Jesus, which covered the Bride in various ways. Here in Song 7:7-8 we find the produce in the vineyard, no doubt harking back to En-gedi (see notes), where the clusters of grapes were likened to the breasts of the Bride, and it is the fruit arising out of the effect of the Atonement. First these breasts are to be observed in her as the features of joy and consolation (Isa. 66:10-11), eagerly sought by Christ, and later becoming the means of harvesting the precious fish of the Millennium, known as the "children of the marriage" (see notes on Song 1:14, etc.). It is Christ, of course, and His unseen presence, that makes the ecclesias, the Bridal community, fruitful, ~~When~~ He is present to bless, fruitfulness in spiritual things is found among us - "From me is thy fruit found". John 15 in all its glory: "I am the vine; ye are the branches". Now has come the time of harvest. She has "abided", been pruned, and has borne a goodly harvest. Christ, as Husband and Husbandman, is the first to sample its quality.

Song 7:8 "I will take hold of the boughs. I said I will climb up into the palm tree, I will take hold of the branches".

It is noticeable that the Lord takes hold of the branches to gather the thickly clustered fruits (dates). Quite a lesson is held out to us in this wise. Many to His sorrow have taken hold of the Lord's palm trees (maybe unconsciously) and hung upon them. Put to the test, they know little about the solitary walk with the Wellbeloved through the Valley of the Shadow, sometimes even unto death, before being led into the calm of life with Christ in God. But alas for the "climbers" in the day when the Lord will shake all things, that "those things that cannot be shaken may remain". All such climbers will find themselves in slippery places (Heb. 12:27), and fall from the boughs and be cast into the fire.

We have observed how the clusters of the vine represent the harvest caused through abiding in the True Vine. Now turning to the last clause in this verse 8, we have the following: "And the smell of thy nose like apples". The smell (or fragrance) of thy nose (or breath, R.V.) like apples or citrus fruit, because the spiritual breathings are sweet and fragrant to the Lord. The Bride had sat down with great delight under His shadow and His fruit was sweet to her taste, and now particularly as seen in Moses, that great servant of the Lord, who no doubt will greatly rejoice within the Bridal community at this narration. The savours of His fragrance she had gathered, even as Moses, whose face shone when he came down from the mount where he had been communing with God. As He, the Bridegroom, had been "the breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord" and quickening spirit in the days of His flesh, she too had received from Him the breath of life, so that the "breath of our nostrils" (old translation) becomes fragrant in the midst of corruption. All around us the enemy dwells with "throats like open sepulchres". What a contrast to the citron of life born in her of Christ!

Song 7:9 "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".

This twelfth and last and culminating feature in the description of the perfected and glorified Bride includes all the other aspects. The word for "roof" is really "palate", the tasting element - already commented upon with regard to Jesus in Song 5:16, where the word is "mouth" (see notes on that verse). It means, very

briefly for our purpose, that again like her Lord all her tastes are perfectly attuned to the Divine, no more the desires and lusts of the flesh, but all "self-inciting" to the Father's will. She now can truly say that she too "loves righteousness and hates iniquity" (Psalm 45 :7). Christ finds the keenest pleasure in her perceptive qualities, and the way she tastes the sweetness of Divine things is "like the best wine" to Him.

Again we are forced to the opinion that it is all of Him. John 2 :10, Did not He Himself provide the good or best wine at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee? Was not the very occasion of the Wedding Feast of the Song in prospect here, the antitype of Cana's feast? Indeed, "the best wine for my beloved" - so He speaks in Song 7 :9.

Tom sees this verse, and for very good reason, as the climax of The Song. He reckons that the words in the early chapter, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth", have been met with in the end of verse 8 and the beginning of verse 9. Here, he claims, "righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psalm 85 :10). Song 1:2 says that "Thy love is better than wine".

Song 7:2 shows that the answer, and embrace, and this best wine which comes by perfection of unity, in immortal love, is what will cause the lips of those that are asleep to speak. When the Bride will have received immortality, there will be no more dead, or those asleep, who will be allowed to speak. All the resurrected dead or ones asleep are now part of the Bride in Song 7. But please note Heb. 11 :4 - the excellent sacrifice of Abel's and its wonderful witness, "He being dead yet speaketh". We have in Heb. 11 the whole speaking even to us today, the testimony of prophet and martyr concerning Christ (1 Pet. 1:6-13, 2 Pet. 1:12-21). They are to be alive for evermore.

The new wine of the Kingdom, when it is drunk at the Nuptial Feast, will be an indication of the truth of the verse: "Very sweetly did the wine go down to us, and in that day may it cause us to speak". And of what will the Bride speak? The Song has made this quite plain. It has indeed been the burden of our exposition. The courtship and its various happenings, her testimony to the Daughters of Jerusalem, the eulogy of her Lord, and so on, these are the things which she will be caused to speak. The ultimate happenings between the Man and herself, the Maid.

Could we have an exhortation to those who are "spiritually asleep" at the inception of the age to come? Alluding to both spiritual and natural Israel, both in their own class "dwell in the shadow of death". It is prophesied of both, it would appear, that they shall come up to the House of the Lord, where shall be "a feast of fat things, a feast of wine well refined, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined" (Isa. 25 :6); "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isa. 30 :21). We do well to shake ourselves in these days of apathy and drifting, so that "that day should not overtake us as a thief" (1 Thess. 5 :1-9).

Again shifting our vision to the Millennium, now the Bridegroom and Bride are one in all things. Could we envisage others asleep at this time? It would appear that they too would drink, in a sense, the wine of the roof of her mouth (palate), being taught by her directly at this time:

- (a) the Daughters of Jerusalem themselves (which has been apparent throughout our studies ;
- (b) Jeremiah 31 :31-36 ;
- (c) the advancement of the "everlasting Gospel" in the Millennium will carry it to all the people and every man (Rev. 14 :6).

It would, then, appear that these people (as Tom puts it), having lived through the golden age of this immortal union of Christ and the Bride, will, through the blessing of the age, share this immortality at the end of the Millennium. The best wine which goeth down sweetly could be the words of peace which fall from the Bride's mouth in this new age; and the "my beloved" of verse 9 suggests those of the second resurrection, who also take part in God's plan of redemption, and will be taught by the Bride. In a prophetic sense, all since Eve who make up this Bridal community to the last who are called at the end of the Millennium, are in prospect before us.

Song 7 : 10 - 13 and 8 : 4 are spoken entirely by the Bride and describe now her joy in the company of her Beloved. She can only say:

Song 7 : 10 "I am my Beloved's and His desire is towards me".

In this affectionate reiteration of what she had before expressed (2 :16 and 6 :3), the Bride reveals the whole depth of her love, and this is immortal affection. Who amongst us can, in this day of small things and of our flesh, express this depth of Divine love comparable to that of her Lord for she is now like Him and

is as He is (1 John 3:2). May we in that day be happy to experience within ourselves this superlative affection!

"It is her greatest joy to belong to Him, who on the mountain of myrrh has redeemed her unto Himself, and it is understandable even to our finite minds that, in that beauty of holiness, the perfections of which the beloved has been singing, she indeed will be desirable to Him, now fully attuned in heart and mind unto the Divine, she having set her mind upon Him" (Attwell).

"I am my Beloved's" - (a) I am the Father's gift to Him, as Eve was to Adam. (b) I am the choice of His heart, bought with His blood, called out to Himself out of darkness into His marvellous light. He conquered me with His grace. He constrained me with His love. (c) I am my Beloved's for His sole possession, pleasure, enjoyment and service, to do with me as He will and when He will. (d) I am my Beloved's. Not only "shall be" but I am. (e) I am my Beloved's. No one else has any claim on me, and He is mine - yes, therefore He is mine.

Consider the pleadings of the church in Old Testament times: Psalms 119:94, 19:13, 27:9, 31:16, 86:16, Dan. 9:17, Psalm 118:9. Many more come to mind, such as: "I said, Thou art my God"; "My soul shall be joyful in my God"; "My God will hear me"; "The Lord my God shall enlighten my darkness". The increase and rapture of faith made perfect in our text is yet far in advance. Her faith here reaches the highest degree of Christian joy and peace, only attainable in the knowledge that also His delight is in her. Christ is all in all now, and nothing of her own feelings and attainments is permitted to be associated with His apprehended love. To quote Psalm 45 once again, "So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty" - because the beauty is of His own making, the Divine characteristics of the Yahweh Name, which He Himself had manifested to her. Had He not proved this to her all along in their association together? - (1) Had He not revealed Himself to her? (2) Had He not taught her? (3) protected her? (4) provided for her? (5) Healed her? (6) Forgiven her? (7) Restored her? (8) Made her? (9) Happy and holy? (10) Had He not presented her faultless before the Throne of His Glory with exceeding joy? (Rom. 8:28-39, Jude 24). Now had not the plea of Christ Himself to the Father come true? - "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am" (John 17:24). It had come true for all eternity (Rev. 2:26-27, 3:5, 3:10, 12, 20-21).

"His desire is towards me": In the midst of all this happiness and glory the eleven who continued with Him in His temptations will recall that when the shadow loomed ominously near, He had said (Luke 22:15), "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (or as it is in the margin rendering, "I have heartily desired"). They know, as we do, that He followed on, and had given the strongest proof of His intentions. He had given His life for the Bride on the cross; "Greater love hath no man than this". John, the beloved disciple, realising the full import of these incidents, related the precious substance to the Bridal community of all ages: "Perfect love casteth out fear" - urging that we should follow in this way or trend. That the Bride has done this receives the strongest proof possible, because at this very moment she is drinking the new wine of the Kingdom at His table and her own. "He shall see the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied". Do we not find the consummation of the Promise to Eve (Gen. 3:16) in this phrase, "His desire is towards me"? Were not the ancient words "And thy desire shall be toward thy husband, and he shall rule over thee"? Because of her full obedience, then, we see the desire is mutual, again highlighting the spiritual application of Gen. 2:18, "It is not good for man to dwell alone". Not only had her Lord loved her affectionately, but in such a manner that He could not be without her; His desire was towards her. What more could she ask but this? Nothing!

Song 7:11-13 "Come, my Beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves. 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."

Have we in these beautiful words the original idea of the honeymoon? It would appear so: we have all the ingredients in these verses for such a happy season. And if this be so, could it be called a working or busman's honeymoon? The responsibilities were not thrown on one side for the time being - as they usually are today. Also we notice that

the conditions were quite different under the Law of Moses, where all other commitments had to be laid aside for twelve months in order that this state of marital bliss should suffer no interference during that period (Deut. 24:5). Do the refrains in Song 2:7, 3:5, 8:4, "I charge you, O Daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until He please" have any bearing upon this honeymoon suggestion? Perhaps they do and can be understood from the Bride's angle of unwanted interruption of bliss. The Christian view of an ideal honeymoon, nay the idea of the Divine pair, is that, whilst enjoying to the full the newly cemented union, the working out of the Father's plan of redemption must not be neglected. So this teaching in the Song transcends both old and new forms of earthly honeymoons, and gives us the true blending of Divine relationship, in which (a) the Father's will, (b) the Son's, the Wellbeloved Himself, and (c) the Daughter's (i.e. the Bride's) converge in a threefold cord that cannot be broken.

Be this as it may, we notice a further advancement in the Bride's attitude when speaking of Christ. In this and other chapters she had spoken of Him to herself and to others as her "Beloved". Now she addresses Himself as her Beloved. Again we notice that His own words and thoughts find their echo in her heart. "Come, my Beloved" is now the responsive echo of His own "Come" in Song 4:8, "Come with me from Lebanon".

We also find another beautiful echo of the mind of her Beloved in 6:11, "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". We ventured in expounding this verse that perhaps both of them went down, at least historically in Acts 1- the Bride herself, and the Spirit of God, which Christ sent to accompany her and to strengthen the position of the Truth in those days; the nuts being in particular the Twelve themselves.

The possibility of a similar explanation arises at this juncture, but with this difference, that they are now on their honeymoon. The wedding has been or is about to be consummated (7:12). It is no longer called a garden of nuts, because the Bride finds this designation encompassed within herself. She represents the harvest of the previous dispensation and in particular the old fruits laid up for her Lord (verse 13) - also the new, in that she has fulfilled her Lord's desires in Matt. 25 (see notes on 4:11, "the smell of thy garments"). The sproutings of the fruit of their Marriage, the children of the Millennium, would be in clear prospect in 7:12-13, or so it would appear, and from this language we learn that the test of preaching the "everlasting Gospel" will be prosecuted with characteristic vigour by the Bridal Pair during their reign. Personal attention will be the order of the day - a combination of Shepherd King and Shulamite Prince's Daughter, so to speak?

Song 7:12 "Come, my Beloved, let us go forth into the field". Just imagine the thoughts of Ruth at this time. Not now to "glean", but to gather in all the harvest (Ruth 2). During the days of her flesh, she had gone forth to follow Him "without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:12-13). She had "no continuing city", but "sought one to come" - the New Jerusalem, precisely herself in glory (Rev. 21:1-4). "The former things have passed away". No more following behind Him, but a continuing with Him, and that by His side as Consort! The request at this time to her Lord is to "go forth", to leave the city Jerusalem, their united "inheritance and possession of peace" to "go forth into the fields". We remarked earlier that the Wellbeloved is only once found in the city in The Song - and only for the express purpose of removing His loved one out of it, out of the world of man (Song 5:2-6). Again we have the thoughts united in her request. In obedience to Him she had left "the city", "the broad streets" of commerce and finance, the public ordinances, the busy active scenes of daily life, and the society of her natural friends of kith and kin. We have an important doctrinal point very sharply in focus here, the fact that the thoughts of the Bride do not change over completely in spiritual nature. They are the same principles that she had endeavoured to follow all her pilgrimage in Christ up to the moment of being called away by Him. Only in spiritual nature can she, of course, adequately fulfil that calling. What we are trying to convey is the principle that we cannot expect in the Truth to be near carnal in this life and Christ to change our thoughts overnight into spiritual perfection. We must have unity in both ages. More than a blameless following in holiness cannot be expected in this life. Sincerity in thought and action is required, but, because we are unable to attain perfection, there will naturally be spot or blemish, though "blameless" (see Hall, "Thessalonians", 1 Thess. 3:12-13), Christ alone can present us faultless, "without spot or wrinkle"

in that day. So we find the Bride saying, "Let us go forth into the field" - no doubt the complement of the exhortation of her Lord, Who said, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile" (Mark 6:31). And what follows is what we described for want of a better term as a working honeymoon - better, perhaps, a husbandman's honeymoon (Song 7:12). Christ did not mean in Mark 6:31 "go and live in the desert; separate yourselves altogether from your fellow creatures and live in seclusion". The monasterial idea is never in mind, nor living in isolation for its own sake. No doubt temporary resting awhile is good, and, in the days of increased tension in which we are living, a necessity. We long for the day of Isa. 40:28, when the nature of the Creator will be found in the Bride: "The Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint".

Undoubtedly the honeymoon and the tour of the care of the vineyards will be carried out in this strength. We have a beautiful instance of precisely similar feeling in our Lord when on earth (for the same spirit dwelt in Him and actuated Him then as now dwells in and actuates the Bride): it led Him to withdraw from the bustle of city life and to lodge temporarily in the quiet village. We read that, after His public entrance into Jerusalem and His ministrations in the Temple, "he left them and went out of the city unto Bethany" (Mark 11:11), "and He lodged there" (Matt. 21:17) in quiet peaceful retirement, to hold communion with the family He loved (John 11:1-5). The Bride now once again wants just this condition to obtain in complete unity with her Lord even at the Marriage Feast. Her thoughts are set out in Song 7:11-13.

"Let us go forth into the field, let us lodge in the villages". We have indicated a few paragraphs back the significance of the field, together with "the smell of thy garments" - alluding to the portion of the firstborn, meaning, in our context, "the church of the firstborn which are written in heaven" (Heb. 12:23, also John 4:34-38). This portion of the firstborn was two-fold: 2 Kings 2:9, "a double portion" (R.V. marg. "that is, the portion of the firstborn. See Deut. 21:17). It is seen in Ephraim, declared firstborn of Israel through the default of Reuben (Gen. 49:3-4, 48:11-18, etc.). In John 11:51-54, Jesus, ironically enough, after raising Lazarus from the dead, is rejected by the Sanhedrin and elects to go into the "portion of the firstborn" - Ephraim.

Ephraim - two-fold increase. The blessing is divided into two: for instance, there are (A) Ephraim and Judah, the two sticks of Israel (Ezek. 37:16-28).

(B) Jew and Gentile (John 10:16, Micah 4:2, etc. Acts 15:13-17, etc.).

(C) Two aspects, in that the Gentiles accept Christ first. Psalm 45:9, the Bride

(1) is of Gentile origin here, not Jewish (see notes on this verse in our Introduction). Mark 11:2 reveals quite conclusively that Christ entered Jerusalem on the redeemed colt of the ass upon which man had never sat - based upon Gen. 48:11-18.

(2) Jewish inception into Christ in the coming Kingdom after their acceptance of Jesus as Messiah, with resultant repentance and cleansing (Zech. 12:10-14, 13:1, Ezek. 47).

The first aspect of the blessing has now come to pass in the position of the Bride glorified and ready to be presented to the Jewish nation (Isa. 35:1-4). The second aspect is in the mind of the Bride at the present moment. In Song 7:2 her eagerness is demonstrated by the words, "Let us get up early to the vineyards". There is an urgency in her thoughts - once again in harmony with the Father and the Son, demonstrated in the days of her flesh (i.e. the Bridal community) - (1) Gen. 22:2, Abraham "rose up early in the morning" to do God's bidding in offering up Isaac. (2) Jeremiah's prophecy yields eleven references to the urgency of God in calling Israel in Judah to repentance (Jer. 7:13, 25, 11:7, 25:3-5, 26:5, 29:19, 32:33, 35:14-15, 44:4). Again the spirit in the Divine family is self-evident. (3) Jesus Himself, in the parable of the husbandman (Matt. 20), "went out very early in the morning" to hire labourers for the vineyard. Mark 16:2, "And very early in the morning" Jesus rose from the sleep of death. In Psalm 65:1 the psalmist declares, "Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee". Accordingly, then, the request, "Let us go early to the vineyards" means the time when labourers are hired to work in the vineyard. The labourers were few in John 4. No doubt they will be many in that Day, the Daughters of Witness themselves in the van with such help. The Millennial fields will yield much fruit unto the Lord. We see the basis of the urgency of the Bride in this knowledge and desire to promote and hasten the time when God should be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

Song 7:12 "Let us see . . . whether the tender grape appear, whether the pomegranate be in flower". Again the period indicated is Spring time. We have advanced that the Return would probably be around this time (Song 2: 8-13). Here, then, we find continuity in the scheme of redemption: (a) Israel became a covenanted nation at Passover under the Law (Ex. 12). (b) Christ brought the Law to an end, or fulfilled it, in His death at Passover (Matt. 27). (c) The Wellbeloved returns for His prepared Bride at Passover (?), where we arrive at the present moment concurrent with this Coming and Marriage. We have the desire to attend to the affairs of the vineyard, etc., as we found at the first coming in Song 6:11-12 (see notes there). In other words, the Bride is eager to note the effect of the Everlasting Gospel in the Millennium. (d) In Acts 1 and 2 the earnest of the Gospel could be seen in the repentance and subsequent baptism of the Jews (Acts 2:36-41); so the earnest is discernible in Israel in continuity, in repentance (Zech. 12:9-14), followed by baptism (Zech. 13:1).

It is interesting to note, as we have observed before, that there are no nuts at this time; no left-overs from the previous harvest. They are all made perfect and integrated in Christ within the Bridal community. Do we not perceive a reversion in glory, of course, to the occupation of the first Adam and Eve? Well may they be found in this community. Once again it will be a tending and not a toilsome activity. "The weeds and thorns" (natural variety) will have passed away from the Millennial scene, or largely so (Psalm 72:16, etc.). Back again to the days before the Fall naturally. The weeds and thorns of sin spiritually discerned will also be drastically cut. Adam and Eve will realise their antitypical fulfilment of Gen. 2 within the Bridal community of the Second Adam. We pray the day is not far distant when the spiritual gardeners of this generation may have the delight of watching the delightful progress of the flourishing of the tender vines and pomegranates, no longer open to the vicious attacks of the fox-like Herod (Song 2:15).

Perhaps a word for campaigning in our day is not out of place here. The Bride looks for fruitfulness in the vineyards, not in the barren wilderness. It would appear that "fruit" meet for the Lord's use these days comes mainly from the Sunday School and Youth Circle, and that possibly a further look into the ways by which this work could be more effectively progressed would find a useful place. No doubt a final appreciation would reveal in the strictest sense that fruit cannot be expected from the newly converted only in a very limited way. Fruit is only to be found in the trees that have been "digged about" (Luke 13:8) and in branches that have been "pruned and purged" (John 15:2). How vain for anyone to be seeking the "tender grape" when it has no assurance of being a branch of the vine!

Fruit means the end of inexperience and growth in many ways. It will have been appreciated that the Bride is eager at this time only to observe the opening of the flower and tender grape, the obvious but incipient production of their love for one another. She was eager to observe the progress of their love in others; for instance, the Daughters of Jerusalem, the evidence of the final harvest to be gathered, and the consummation of herself as the Bridal community. She is inviting her Lord to accompany her to witness the change His grace has produced, not only in herself but, through her instrumentality, in others.

Song 7:12 "There will I give Thee my loves". The Bride's warmest love to Christ is best manifested in earnest and self-denying labour in making Him known to others, and she is most acceptable to Christ when employed in revealing her close identity with His own; when caring for others, particularly those whom He has purchased with His blood - "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40). Consequently, our love is best and most acceptably given to the Lord when going forth with Him in His "bowels of mercies" and in His footsteps. "There will I give Thee my loves". In the place of the labour of His heart the "field" is the Millennium. She who was compared, with regard to her Lord, as "a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed", is now shown to be "a fountain of gardens" and "streams from Lebanon" (Song 4:15). She desires Him to accompany her, to see the vineyard yet to be as fruitful as Carmel, distinguished by her care, fenced by her power, planted and watered, and now visited in company with Him Who has "strengthened her in these things". "Let us go and see after them, and there in the midst of the trophies of Thine own grace will I give Thee my loves" (or, alternative rendering, "my beautiful flowers", i.e. new plants for Thy garden, gathered for Thy Name, and

the labours of faith, hope, joy, peace and thanksgiving for the bud and blossom of the future harvest of consummation. Such is the sweet communion between Christ and His Bride in that happy day. There will be endless sessions of communing one with the other. The Bridal community can look forward to many happy days of rejoicing, thanksgiving and praise to the Father, the Giver of all. She is the complete edition of the woman of worth in Proverbs 31; she is, indeed, that woman, who does her husband good and not evil all the days of her life. Her interests are merged in His. She is herself a collective entirety of His personal interests, entirely bound up with the prosperity found in Him, whether in her natural state or, as at the present, her future glory. She shares with her Lord a common interest. Her love shines out in His.

Durham, in his quaint but lovely language, puts this invitation to come into the garden or vineyards in this manner: "As a person cannot vent love so in company as when he is alone in solitariness with his bosom friend: thus Joseph about to manifest his love to his brethren (Gen. 45:1) commanded all to go out that so he might with greater freedom let forth his affections on them, and as Jonathan sent away his boy when he was to embrace David in the fields (1 Sam. 20:40, etc.); so here the secret manifestations of Christ by His spirit to His people are seen as that which gives them liberty to set forth their hearts on Him, especially in their unknown access to Him" (possibly has Song 2:14 in mind - A.H.) "to which no man is witness, are by this word 'there' signified". How true this is! and in the past many of this Bridal community resorted to their closet to converse with Him in secret (Matt. 6:6); but then He was absent, now she is at His side.

Song 7:13-14 Here we find the motive with which our Bride has pressed her suit: "The mandrakes give a smell". Again we notice a similarity in motive to Christ's in pressing her to hearken to His call (Song 2:12), "The flowers appear on the earth". We have hinted already that the graces of the Spirit growing up (as in a garden) in the believer's walk are like flowers in the Spring, by which their pleasantness and savour invite men to the fields. Thus the sense of the motive comes to this: All things, saith the Bride, are in a good condition and there is a thriving amongst my graces, which are for pleasantness as flowers. Therefore, Come! We can imagine this avowing of her graces is not from any vain boasting but in humble sincerity and acknowledgment of what she found herself to be, through His grace alone.

The Hebrew name of the mandrake (R.V. love apple) is held to signify "love plant" and is mentioned elsewhere only in Gen. 30:14-16. Helen Attwell informs us that there are two varieties, one appearing in the Spring, the other in the Autumn at the close of the hot season when the ground is burnt up. Both species are met with in the Holy Land. The plant is still thought to promote fecundity. There appears to be no doubt which variety is in mind in Song 7:13. The connection, along with the only other mention, Gen. 30:14-16, obviously indicates the Spring mandrake. "And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest (May or Pentecost) and found mandrakes in the field and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said unto Leah, 'Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes'," the result being that Leah "hired" Jacob to lie with her that night and the fifth son of Jacob was conceived of Leah. Later she conceived again, bearing Zebulun.

The dispensational thought behind the smell of the mandrake is taken to its third power, and therefore perfection:

(1) Gen. 30:14-16. Mandrakes were found in the days of wheat harvest. The end of grain harvest, barley harvest and the offering of the firstfruits had gone; now wheat harvest, the end of the grain season had arrived (see "Calendar of Redemption" by Hall) and the smell of fecundity in mandrakes lay heavy in the field, the promise of yet future seed to be begotten. The grace of God was apparent (beyond our conception though it be, to 20th century eyes). The fifth son of Leah brings this out. His name was Issachar, meaning "who brings hire", compensation. Gen. 49:14-15, a strong ass, bowing his shoulder to bear. Deut. 33:18-19 reveals that Issachar is connected with his future brother Zebulun in the blessings of Moses. Zebulun's name means "causing to dwell, habitation". Leah said, Gen. 30:20, "God hath endowed me with a good dowry" at this time.

(2) At Pentecost in Acts 1. As the result of love apples being found at the time

of wheat harvest, there were two other sons born, Issachar and Zebulon; because after Pentecost as the result of the Spirit gifts there were two communities born, Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians, that is, as communities with an absent Master. They were the creation of the grace of God (=No. 5), resulting from the death of the Greater Issachar, even Jesus Himself, Who for the sins of His people, became a hire, and his price was assessed by Judas (30 pieces of silver, the value of a slave - how fitting!). The weight of the sins He had to bear forced Him down on His knees, but, crouching down, he saw that resting place that was good, saying to the penitent thief, "Today I say unto thee, Thou shalt be with me in the garden of paradise"; incidentally, that of which we are thinking in Song 7:13. "And so He bowed His shoulder to bear" - paraphrasing Gen. 49:14-15). The earnest of this "dwelling" or habitation was seen in the Twelve, many of whom were men of Zebulon, who had followed Him in all His temptations. Now, again reverting to Acts 2, we find Peter, a man of Zebulon, opening the way to the "rest that remaineth" - the habitation of the Deity in the Bridegroom and His Bride in the Millennium. (c) "The mandrake smell in the field of wheat (Song 7:13) is the aspect of perfection, for it is the third field of wheat, the Bride herself in glory, representing the harvest, or field white to harvest, as Jesus said in John 4. Pentecost indeed, but the mandrake smell indicated the harvest of the fruit still to be gathered, new and old, which she had laid up for the Wellbeloved. Two communities of people, Jew and Gentile, as indicated in Acts 1 and 2, but now "joined" (= Levi) into one fold (John 10, Micah 2), not now with their Lord absent as heretofore, but reigning splendidly before His ancients (Luke 1:30-35). Again found in Issachar, the child of grace and who has brought compensation and made an end of hire. Zebulon, Leah's sixth son, also can be prophetically observed in the sure dwellings of the Millennium (Micah 4, Ezek. 48), but the 6 of man's world in which the first two aspects of this mandrake sequence have taken place, will have given place to the 7th day of rest and the 8th blessing of New Creation. It is in the midst of that day and age, as we have brought forward, that the new fruits will be sought and nourished in the vineyards and gardens, whilst the old fruits of the past generations are already stored up for their mutual pleasure. Linking again our thoughts with Tom, we close this chapter. It was Leah's firstborn son who found the mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother. With these mandrakes Leah bought back her husband. As the result of this were born two other sons, Issachar and Zebulon. -

Christ the Firstborn was a gift and gave gifts, and through, or by, the firstborn the mandrakes of reconciliation were found, with the result that the Bride symbolically is an Issachar and Zebulon, now and of the age to come. (Precisely our own thoughts, though approached from an entirely different angle). She had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do (1 Chron. 12:32). Their blessing from God comes through Moses (Deut. 33:19), "They shall call the people unto the mountain who shall offer praise of righteousness". "The spirit and the bride say, Come! and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

We have observed another beautiful three-fold cord in Song 7:12-13, -

- (a) The Bride says (Song 7:12), "There will I give Thee my loves or flowers (R.V.);
- (b) "Mandrakes" has also the translation of "flowers";
- (c) The mandrake sequence in Gen. 30 took place in wheat harvest in the month of May, and Solomon's Temple had its foundations laid in this month (1 Kings 6:1, 37), the month Zif, which means "splendour", the "flower month", so called from "zir" = "brightness", "splendour", "beauty" (Gen. 2:20). We remarked upon this point earlier. Solomon commenced to build in the "flower month" and the foundation of the Christ life was made in Nazareth, "the flower town" (Nazareth, Vulgate). The union with mandrakes and the strong hint of fecundity in the future seed of the Marriage, complete the sequence; with, of course, the very obvious interest of the Bride, and, without doubt, of the Bridegroom, of course. We find this brought to a most beautiful conclusion in Song 8:12 (more later).

Song 7:13 "At our gates". Again another usage of the word of union in The Song as "our bed", "our house", of Song 1. Tom comments very aptly: "The twelve gates of pearl of Rev. 21:21 are not "mine" but "ours" ". Our thought is that the entrance into the New Jerusalem can only come as "pearl" emphasised through sacrifice (Luke 9:21-26).



Song 7:13 "All manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for Thee".

(a) From time to time we have commented upon these words and in the first place compared them to Matt. 13:52 as evidence of The Song in the New Testament as used by Jesus Himself.

(b) We further found it contained within the teaching of Song 4:11-16. Turn to this for teaching taken from Deut. 33, Isa. 58, Matt. 25, etc. - a most wondrous compendium of fruits laid up "Old and New" and they verse the binding thought in this stream of spiritual substance: "Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me" (Matt. 25:34-46).

How much fruit of compassion have we laid up in store for our Master? How have we used our talents in His service? The common courtesies of life take on a far larger import if used for, and unto, our Lord Jesus. He placed this amazing truth within the capacity of all who truly follow His footsteps. Think of the fruit laid up for her Lord by the little captive maid of Israel in Naaman's household (1 Kings 5)- her deep concern and compassion for her master and her faith that the Gentiles, as seen in Naaman, would be recovered for (Heb. "asaph" - gathered into) Israel. She will have a truly wondrous store on the Bride's behalf in that day. Many other notable worthies come before our minds, but space forbids mention.

But once again the double fruits laid up are complementary. There is much laid up for the Bride herself, and in one sense by herself (1 Tim. 6) -

- (1) Psalm 31:19. "O, how great is the goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee!"
- (2) 2 Tim. 4:8. Paul's hope was, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness".
- (3) 1 Cor. 2:9-10. "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." These things are "laid up", reserved in heaven, for her; to be known only in His presence where there is fulness of joy". "No man hath seen, nor can see" "light which no man can approach unto", joys which flesh and blood cannot inherit.
- (4) Psalm 16:11. "Fulness of joy, pleasures for evermore".
- (5) Psalm 36:8. "Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures".

Christ and His Bride will feast on the fruit of their mutual providing, and all of the grace of the Father. So there are all manner of fruits there (Hos. 14:8) from God, new and old. The tree of life, which was "of old" in the garden of Eden, will also be in the paradise restored (Gen. 2:9, Rev. 22:2), and also (with Tom once more) new fruits of which we know not, laid up for us through Jesus, so that He might be glorified in His Bride, and so that she might behold His glory (John 17:24). "Come quickly, O Lord Jesus!"

## THE SONG OF SONGS      Chapter 8

Song 8:1-4 remain for consideration in our present canticle, ending with the familiar plea by the Bride, "Stir not up, nor awake my love, until He please".

Christ again takes His beloved back to the time when she was musing over her relationship to Him.

Song 8:1-2 "O that Thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother!.. I would lead Thee, and bring Thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me."

We are taken right away back to the yearning of the Old Testament church (Heb. 11) concerning the promises of the sending of the Son, Emmanuel, God-with-us (Isa. 7:4, 9:6). All down the ages from Eve this searching and yearning can be observed; finding, no doubt, in the Christian church of today a similar longing for His return, as The Song has marvellously revealed. The patriarchs and prophets could be observed seeking diligently into those Scriptures revealed to them, "what, or what manner of time, the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet. 1:11-12). To us indeed have these things been revealed. The Bride is wonderfully privileged as to these things in our day. But can we say that the Bridal community of today is as diligent in searching into these same Scriptures for similar results?

Our Bride had enjoyed wondrous visions in her contemplations and musing of what had been revealed to her both by the prophets and the Scriptures. She had seen and appreciated the intense love of her coming Lord. It is Paul again who expressed the joy of true realisation in Heb. 2:14, "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same . . ." He came from above in the fashion of a man in our flesh and its attendant weaknesses, so that by His sacrifice He might purchase a Bride (howbeit of myriad components and persons) for Himself, so that He might fashion it like unto His own body in resurrectional power, after the power of an endless life. When the Bride said these words in glory and forever with the Lord, both aspects had been completed. It is from this vantage point, having had all things recalled to her memory, that she envisaged the longing that had fired her in those days of her flesh. This is why we find a lack of the sense of nearness and intimacy in the language of the spouse, and intense desire for the Beloved, and to be on terms of intimate affection with Him.

We may point out that the fact that she wishes He were near of kin to her indicates some sense of disparity, and this we find is particularly in her consciousness, as something which might be observed in others. "They would not despise me". It apparently did not occur to her that He might despise her. Rather the sense that others might despise her is upon her spirit like a cloud. This is not an uncommon exercise in regard to the liberty which we would like to enjoy. Personal experience has proved, no doubt, to all of us (in divers ways and means) that when our walk and spirit have not been what we feel they ought to have been, there is often a feeling in others that we are not entitled to be in near intimacy with Christ, and occasionally ecclesial disciplinary action has to take place. This is a humbling experience, but there is a blessing in it, if the situation and exercise are fully faced. If I have manifested something that was unworthy of Christ, I can free myself from it by acknowledgment and repentance. The suggestion, however, from the Scripture before us is that a consciousness that others might despise us may become a restraint on our liberty in affection with our Lord; or, in other words, we "have not kept our own vineyards", where fruit should be found for the Greater Solomon.

In Song 1:6-7, the precise reason for the lack of fruit arose from the despicable envy and affliction caused through "my mother's children". This situation has been overcome in Song 8:11-12, "she has kept her vineyard and much fruit is available for her Lord". Not only so: as we saw in Song 7:13, the mandrake smell of fecundity was a certain harbinger of increased harvest. The contrast has provided a meter of performance on her behalf. She has certainly moved on since those days of Song 1. She has developed in her calling through the grace which has upheld her, and, as we have seen, her Lord has really come in on the line of grace to take up all that existed on our side and has removed it by His death.

The Shulamite is not at rest here, primarily. She intuitively knows that His silence indicates that she is out of step, and is a call to her to wait, so that she may be shown the cause. She has already known the danger of losing touch, and the agony and struggle that arose out of it, and heard the sharp retort from her Shepherd, "If thou know not", and now the homeless sense of being out of her hiding place is unbearable (Song 1:7-8, 3:1-3, 5:1-7). Historically, the sentiments she expresses could fall into any of these times of distress and anxiety through which she had to pass in the valley of the shadow. If we are found within the Bride of the Son, then these have been our own experiences from time to time: but we have this glorious hope and conviction that, "seeing not", we are absolutely convinced that He did come in our flesh, and allied Himself to us as our Brother.

Many searching thoughts emerge upon a careful contemplation of this verse, Song 8:1. Again we found our thoughts closely akin to those of Tom, which are as follow:

The Bride is conscious of the difference, for the Bridegroom is not like her Brother (that is, from the point of origin). He is from above (John 8:23) and has the knowledge of the Holy One. The Bride knows that it is He Who hath ascended up into heaven. She knows her inferiority. Well she realises in Song 8:1 that the Bridegroom is the Son of the Highest and that His name is Emmanuel = God with us. Tom sees the spirit of the Bride fully manifest in David in 1 Sam. 18:2-3, where he confesses that he is "a poor man", or again in 1 Chron. 29:14-15, "But who am I, and what is my people? - for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee", etc., "for we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as were our fathers; our days on the earth

are as a shadow and there is none abiding". From this angle the Bridegroom is not like her Brother, and the gulf is wide, but because the grace of God has opened to us the way of adoption into the Divine family, then we have the splendid assurance of Gal. 3:26, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus". All this came to pass in fulness of time when the Father sent His Son to be as a Brother, the Firstborn of this New Creation, and the Bride now in glory and at rest in Him has experienced the greatest honour — "Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren".

Song 8:1 "... 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" or analysed. R.V. "none would despise me". Durham, once again in his quaint style, is very apt: "It hath been ever thought unseemly for virgins too familiarly to converse with men that are strangers, even though they were suited for by them; this hath been the cause of reproach to many." (Dinah a case in point - Gen. 34:1-14. Probably Judges 21:1-23, when "every man caught his virgin"? One often wonders over the possible repercussions after this sudden kind of wooing. However, back to Durham). "But as for brethren and sisters to be familiar hath not been subject to mistakes; they who are in that relation may use more freedom, than without offence can be used by others". The case in point here being "Abraham fearing to call Sarah his wife, gave her out to be his sister, that their conversing together might be the less suspected". We think of Isaac and Rebekah later, who fell into the same folly and whose secret was divulged when they were found to be "too familiar" with each other. Isaac was "sporting with Rebekah" (Gen. 26:1-11). The idea behind it being, "O, if Thou wert to me so condescending as a brother is to one born in the same womb with him", that she might with more boldness freely bestow her affections upon her Lord. Again we are shown the true spiritual affection that holds sway between Bridegroom and Bride, not the affection of lust or natural inclinations, but one which is truly spiritual in conception. For instance, such sensible breaking forth of affection between Joseph and Benjamin (Gen. 43:34). Think again of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, how they must have felt when they were rebuked by an outsider and a stranger to the Covenants for their behaviour, when it would appear that the honourable position was taken up by both Pharaoh and Abimelech, and they, Abraham and Isaac, stood rebuked.

Surely it is in these circumstances, when we are in dire need of succour, and to be openly expressed as it is in Song 3:1-3 and 5:1-7 by the Bride herself; when our professions of belief are thrown into our face (and rightly so); when we are reproached for our convictions (and not for Christ's sake - how often do we confuse the two for our satisfaction?); that we cry to our Lord in distress and anguish, "O, if Thou wilt condescend to me, and be familiar with me as a brother!" He is, of course, the "friend that sticketh closer than a brother". He knows our frame, what is in man, because He was conceived in the womb of Mary and spent 33½ years in our flesh. He indeed was "as our brother who sucked at the breasts of our mother". But there can be no pretence in the relationship; we may not hide behind either natural relationship or feminine attire.

Our most intimate relationship is expressed in the kiss, and even when found "without", or in the world, it must be duly confessed openly and in truth.

- (1) The Gospels outline that the Bride witnessed her faith to Him at Jordan, the river of Judgment and Death and also of Resurrection (John 1:35, Joshua 3 and 4).
- (2) She found Him weary at Jacob's well (John 4:16).
- (3) The Pharisee's house witnessed that she kissed His feet (Luke 7:38). Incidentally, she was not despised by Jesus, but given the most honourable mention: "She loved much" (Luke 7:47).
- (4) They also reveal that dastardly deed when Judas, in the grip of greed, said, "Hail, Master!" and "kissed Him repeatedly" (Grk.) (Matt. 26:45-49). The lesson is, of course, from a personal angle self-explanatory. Christ is always found outside the city of men and all its ways.

He is on the whole despised, certainly rejected in most ways of life. It is here on this plane of rejection, dereliction and ridicule that we have to witness our love, profession and unity with Him, when we should "find Him without".

Song 8:1 "Were you only my brother, nursed at the breasts of my mother" - Moffat.

But, as we have pointed out, there is more to it than that. He is more, and to show our love and affection for Him "without" will most certainly bring reproach

and contempt, and like the woman, our sister, in the Pharisee's house, we may be despised as she was by the Pharisee, but she was highly commended by Jesus with the age-abiding memorial, "She loved much". So be it.

Song 8:2 "I would lead Thee, and bring Thee unto my mother's house who would instruct Thee" or "me". Both variations are true in application. No doubt Mary, the virgin mother herself will have deep nostalgia in that Day as, encompassed within that Bride, she speaks these words. She was

Jesus' mother; she had suckled Him at her breasts; here was the mother's house where she had instructed Him (Luke 2:48-52, etc.). No doubt Mary will also remember vividly the words of Simeon in the Temple, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against (yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed". A sign that shall be spoken against! A sword piercing her own soul! Yes, Mary will remember vividly her amazement at Jesus' obvious set against religious authority, culminating in that terrible cross - the piercing took fully 33½ years to accomplish. That pierced side was the final thrust in her own soul! Again, what a wonderful thing it was to be the mother of her Lord, from the Divine and Mary's personal angle; but let us not forget the despising Mary would undergo as, according to current thought, she had born a child not belonging to Joseph, out of wedlock, and she never lived that down in Jewish eyes, and the stigma still stands, as the Talmud declares. When they (the Jews) said to Jesus (John 8:41), "We be not born of fornication", the allusion was manifest; it referred to the current belief regarding His own birth. May we not then picture supremely Mary, the mother of Jesus, in these opening verses of Song 8:1-2? —

(a) Again the Magnificat sung by Mary is anticipatory of her future life, in Luke 1:45-55. The whole text of these words lies in the future greatness of her Son and in His accomplishing the fulfilment of the promises to the fathers of Israel; that is evident.

(b) The personal aspect regarding Mary herself is seen in the Old Testament quotation in Luke 1:48, "For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden." Psalm 138:6) says "He hath respect unto the lowly". The latter half of this psalm can be well and truly marked out as "To the virgin". We have her sentiments in verse 7, "Though I walk in the midst of trouble (and she did all her days) Thou wilt revive me". "Thou shalt stretch forth Thy hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Thy right hand shall save me". It must have brought comfort amidst grave doubts and anxieties as Mary saw her child on the cross. Her faith will be rewarded as the "Son of the Right Hand" (Psalm 110:1-7) saves her out of death at His coming. She will sing in that day, "The Lord will perfect for ever that which concerneth me. Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever. Forsake not the works of Thine own hands", because Mary most intimately had experienced the work of the Holy Spirit. May we be there to rejoice with her and praise the lovingkindness and truth of the Name of Yahweh!

There can have been no avid absorption of the instructions of a mother than in the case of the Lord Jesus, and Mary must have noticed His rapid and mature progress as she taught Him at her knee. Yet, in Luke 2:43-49, when finding Jesus carrying on His studies and enquiries among the masters in Israel, Mary does not fully realise the implication. However, this is human nature, and Mary can look back on her charge with pleasure.

(c) The allegorical mother, of course, is "Jerusalem that is from above" (Gal. 4:26). "With her is the wisdom of life". Prov. 22:17-21, "Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsel and knowledge, that I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth". Incidentally, note the flavour of these words and the prologue in Luke 1:1-3. They are almost similar, and take the hint of the womanly figure of wisdom (Mary, who brought up Jesus). The connection with Jerusalem as Mother adds further to the intrigue connected with Solomon, Shulamite, Jerusalem as Bride, etc. - all helps to seal the Truth in this Song of Love between the True Solomon, David as Shepherd and Solomon as King, and the Inheritance of the Possession of Peace found in the name, "Jerusalem".

We have mentioned earlier how the Bridgroom allowed Himself to be led into Mount Zion, the City of the Living God. Jerusalem, as Jesus Himself said, "is the city of the great King" (Matt. 5:35). The House of God was, and is to be, in this city. We have seen that the boy Jesus was subject to His parents. Mark 11 reveals the same set of mind in regard to His disciples, when they led Him into Jerusalem, riding upon

the foal of an ass (the Gentiles' beast). Truly the mother-wisdom taught them to declare prophetically, "Hosanna in the highest" (Matt. 21:9). She, the Bride, was not then afraid to "kiss the Son", or witness in testimony to His mother Jerusalem.

Again thinking with Tom, we see rather rather beautifully that the disciples in having to tarry at Jerusalem until "endued with power from on high" were being guided by the Holy Spirit, which was "to teach them all things" (John 14:26). So

- (a) We have a clear indication that in this city of Jerusalem the mother taught or instructed the Bride.
- (b) Unto Jerusalem the Bride brought the Name of Jesus (Acts 2:1).
- (c) In the Temple, symbol of the House, they spoke the words of life (Acts 4:11-12).
- (d) Acts 5:20-29. Surely in this incident they brought Jesus not only into the House but also upon the consciences of His murderers.
- (e) The day is not far distant when Jerusalem that now is will also be taught a similar lesson, when once again the Bride brings the Bridegroom to the Marriage and the Coronation in her mother's house and "all her children shall be taught of the Lord in truth" (Isa. 32:1-7, 52:6-10). It was indeed the bridal curtains that held the Ark with all it symbolised.
- (f) In clear type, the Bride brought the Bridegroom, as the priests bore the Ark across Jordan (Joshua 3:13) and finally into the House of God (Psalm 24, Psalm 133).
- (g) The Bride's prayer will bring the Beloved from heaven into her mother's house (Psalm 142:7). The Lamb's Wife, the Celestial City, will compass Him about, and John remarks in Rev. 21:3-22, "Behold, God Himself shall be with them, and be their God", and Jerusalem will acquire a New Name, "The Lord our Righteousness" (Jer. 34:16).

Song 8:2 (b) "I would cause Him to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate". It is very instructive to note that the pomegranate is the fruit of the Tabernacle, the only fruit that is on the High Priest's garments.

Therefore it is truly symbolical of the mind of the Spirit. It is the spiritual fruit and a multitudinous fruit, or the praises from this multitudinous Bride that will greet her Lord and Master, and which in turn Christ will render unto the Father Who made all these things possible - indeed, the spiritual equivalent of Heb. 2:12, "I will declare Thy Name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church (or Bride) will I sing praise unto Thee". The Lord Jesus Christ as the Cantor, with the saints resplendent in the Bride giving forth endless praise with immortal voices to the Father. The ambition of all music lovers down the ages. Again the Pomegranate Bride, hanging from the priest's garments, would learn and breathe the prayer and praise when the priests would offer incense. As a Samuel brought up in the Tabernacle, and as a Mary at the feet of Jesus, saturated with the spirit of praise, thus the Bride will render in the Marriage. Thus the pomegranate juice is the Marriage "Alleluia" (Rev. 19:6-7).

Song 8:3 "His left hand should be under my head, and His right hand should embrace me".

The supporting pierced left hand, securely holding her head, she has known and loved. The right hand of power, equally pierced, had defended her from all danger. Rather nicely put by John in Rev. 5:14, "As a lamb slain .. on the throne of the lion of the tribe of Judah". Here we have this significant feature of Christ put in a nutshell - very tough and implacable to the unbeliever, but fully known and understood by the Bride. All through His dealings with her, she has been fully conscious of this defence and support, except whenever she has consciously decided not to heed, or to forget and relapse from her vigil - like Abraham in Egypt and Israel, as we have mentioned earlier.

These hands of Christ were as gold rings set with the beryl - healing hands, and as strong as eternity itself - hands like the golden taches by which the Tabernacle became one, and like the golden rings that held the two together (Ex. 26:6, 26-29).

It is as it were the golden beryl hands entwining the Bride. She in turn becomes the Cherubim of God's glory, whose wheels and work are like the colour of the beryl, green, that withers not, with its celestial hues of healing blue. One wonders (once more with Tom) whether this is the "fulness" that is written of in Col. 2:19 - "Christ is the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together". The joints and bands do seem to be the arms that entwine the Bride in marriage in the Song of Love. However, see our thoughts on the other passages similar to our refrain (Song 2:6, etc.).

**Song 8:4** "I charge you, O Daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until He please".

Again see notes on Song 2:7, 3:5. All we need to add is that the Bride seems to anticipate interruption, that He would be disturbed.

- (1) From the days of Eden it has been so, when the Divine rest was broken through sin (Gen. 2:3, 3:1-24).
- (2) Jesus made the comment when accused of working on the Sabbath that His Father did the same, and still worked to remove sin that had disturbed the Divine rest (John 5:17).
- (3) The rest that God should have shared with Israel in the Wilderness, and in the Lord Himself, was again disturbed through unbelief and sin (Heb. 4:7, 5:2).
- (4) Heb. 5:9-11. Paul here postulates that there remaineth a rest to the people of God: "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His". The "rest that remaineth" is here pictured in Song 8:3, in the security of the hands of Christ. Although the Daughters of Jerusalem are asked not to disturb Christ, at one and the same time it is the Bride's rest also that is bound up in her Lord's ; so it is really a plea for herself also, as Heb. 5:11 clearly indicates.
- (5) This "rest of God" is the Millennium, into which our Bridal Pair have now entered in point of time - approximately 1,000 years of rest, undisturbed and at peace . But again Christ will be disturbed, for when the governmental leadership of the saints (or the Bride) will be withdrawn for a season, as it would appear, then the standard of society will once again default, after feigning obedience, and will rebel against the Most High (Rev. 20:1-3, 7-10). The saints will be found in the Beloved City, or City of the Beloved - Jerusalem, which for 1,000 years has proved her name, "The Inheritance of the Possession of Peace".

It is interesting to note that Gog and Magog are mentioned particularly in Rev. 20:8. They will be particularly active against Jerusalem at the end of our own times (Ezek. 38). Also that the one nation most likely to rebel during the Millennium will be Egypt (Zech. 14:16-19).

The final disturbance of the Divine rest is, we believe, God's warning to us that human nature in itself does not change, and, had He not seen fit to "bind sin for a season", it never would have been altered during the Millennium. Yet (with Tom) the final embrace undisturbed will come with the "great white throne" (Rev. 20:11) and in consummation God will be "all in all". "Wake not my Lord until He pleases".

But in the present day, when our particular entry into this Bridal community is in focus (Isa. 62:1-12) with regard to Yahweh's intention in Isa. 62:1 - "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake will I not rest, until the righteous thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" - our attitude should be that of Isa. 62:6-7, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night. Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest till He establish and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth". May we follow that advice in anticipation of the rest, when the pillow shall be the security, love and defence of our Lord and Husband - the Wellbeloved as seen in the pierced hands that support and embrace.

**Song 8:5-14** The last idyll of the Song (a) Love's triumph - verses 5 - 12  
(b) the conclusion - verses 13 - 14

**Song 8:5** "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?"

The query is obviously asked by the Daughters of Jerusalem, from their vantage point in Jerusalem itself. The word for "leaning" is a solitary occurrence in the Hebrew. Neither its root nor any derivative occurs elsewhere in the Bible. But the meaning is established by the Greek and Syrian translations, and of Jerome in the Latin, and by corresponding meanings of the root in Arabic. Ginsburg also adduces the Talmudic word for "an arm" on which one leans. The word has been variously translated as (a) clinging to her Beloved; (b) delighting in the Beloved; (c) strengthening herself in the Beloved, and (d) casting herself on the Beloved. There can be no doubt that all these translations have had their fulfilment in the Bride's experience with her Lord down the ages seeing the formation of the Bridal community, and will be remembered along with the query of the watching Daughters of Jerusalem.

The believers' life is here represented; once again in a three-fold aspect :

- (1) Laborious but upward "coming up" ;
- (2) Pleasant and delightful "leaning on the Beloved" in company with Him , and protected by Him ;
- (3) Safe for ever, and hanging all our weaknesses upon His strength.

"Who is this ?" A sinful community (or a sinful child of earth) redeemed by the precious blood of Christ ! But now born of God ! A King's daughter, the Temple of the Holy Spirit espoused to the Son of God, her clothing of wrought gold ; her language prayer and praise ; her form beautiful in the sight of God ; her eyes enlightened ; her lips anointed for the confession of the Truth ; her hairs numbered ; her feet beautiful ; her price beyond rubies.

A monument of Grace and Love, Salvation and Triumph. This is she that comes up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved. —

- (a) Is it not very fitting that the climax of this unique Song should begin in such a fashion?
- (b) The Bridegroom and His Shulamite Bride are seen to be united with her rightly seeking His strength and protection.

- (c) Had she not journeyed under His priestly support all her days in the wilderness ? For in the wilderness are we not subject to the laws of God, but in the gardens we are in the region of the Divine pleasures.

- (d) Has He not walked among her "candlesticks" throughout her formation ?

- (e) Does not the eating of the Lord's supper today pre-suppose that He will come to us, and bring the Father with Him in fellowship ?

- (f) The evidence that sees them together "coming up" from the wilderness is only an outward evidence of the fellowship and protection that have taken place invisibly to the natural mind, but clearly perceptible to spiritual intelligence under the Old Covenant. The Bride is seen as the Tabernacle travelling through the Wilderness, or out of the Wilderness (Song 3 : 6).

- (g) Now, in the consummation of The Song, she is with the Antitype, the Wellbeloved Himself. Type has given way to Antitype, and Shadow to Substance. He had been with her all the long journey :

- (1) "I have compared thee, O my love, to a compant of Pharaoh's horses" brought up out of Egypt (Song 1 : 9).
- (2) "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness ?" (Song 8 : 5). He knew her when it was her temporary home - in tents. "I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought" (Hos. 13 : 5). (For just how much He did, see "What's in a Name ? No. 1. Numbers 33" by the present writer).
- (3) Also she was known in the open field (Ezek. 16 : 5. This chapter in Ezekiel has afforded us a wealth of information for our Song, as we have seen).
- (4) Always was she kept in remembrance of Him . "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness" (Jer. 2 : 2).
- (5) Every step of her "coming up" from it He knows. "He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness" (Deut. 2 : 7). He knows when we are drawing near the borders of the wilderness and when we are nearly through it. The day is nearly here when the Bridal community of our day comes up out of the wilderness. Her trials, sufferings and conflicts are nearly over. The inward presence of our Lord that has gone with us and kept us from all evil will have given way to the outward manifestation of, and actual presence of, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Will the Daughters of Jerusalem see us among the community ? Shall we be seen leaning upon the Beloved ? Not unless we have done so in this life. How much dependence do we place on Jesus now ? We can only keep in step with Him if we lean upon Him every moment in utter dependence and helplessness. Sometimes we may find this submissive attitude towards our Lord very elusive. Is it not possible that in the activity of service, presented on every hand by the claims of "open doors" or by the gathering in of precious fruits, we might fail to keep sacred or set apart our hours of waiting on and personal meditation of our Lord . "Come ye apart and rest awhile" is a real need for every diligent servant of the Lord. Yet in the full assurance of our union with Him, and in the abundance of His life working through us, we may have thought that He would supply our need, and renew our strength in the midst of busy service. This He never fails to do when the "claims" are real needs . But, how sad to say !, when apparent "claims"

"rather vessel" instead of from

There are times when troublous questions arise within us - and who in the Bridal community has been free from their very grip? - questions from our hearts that should learn to "trust" and not always to "trace" the dealings of God, until He pleases to reveal His purposes - "calls" from us when we have sought guidance after making our plans. All these trials come to those who faithfully seek to be the "servants of all". We have somehow to learn the lesson that at times the pressure of the needs of others, fancied or real, must never intrude on those sacred hours of meditation and waiting on the Lord. Active service especially demands these times alone with God. The Wellbeloved Himself needed them. Luke 5:15-16 records, "Great multitudes came together to hear and to be healed. But He withdrew Himself into the deserts and prayed". In the face of all the real needs, He withdrew! For the child of God this is not a waste of time. It is economy, for our service is fruitless without the full power of the life as it is in Jesus, which must be renewed at His feet day by day.

If one may be forgiven a personal note on this score, it has taken the present writer a great number of years to learn this lesson, particularly when one's daily calling lies within the healing profession. He has now learned directly that there is a sense of pressure. It is all-important that we should get alone with God. The "claims" upon us may make this seem impossible, but He can make the way clear if we know our need and are willing to retire from the vineyards as soon as we hear His call, leaving, at His bidding, His work to Him Who is alone responsible, recognising that He is in control. The Bride, down the long history of her formation, learned to realise that putting her whole reliance and dependence on Him is "the end of the Lord" and the purpose of His varied dealings in "the valley" or on "the mountains".

"Leaning upon her Beloved" - this is the outcome of the life of union. What life more simple or more blessed? In this privileged position, seen coming up out of the wilderness, she revealed her dependence all through on her Lord and Master. The man of the spirit (Tom remarks) knows that she is the multitudinous Bride not now worried with mortality. The Shulamite has returned, begotten from the grave, and is leaning on Emmanuel. The multitudinous Shulamite, the bride of the dawn from the womb of the morning. She leans upon Him whose going forth is prepared as the morning; going forth into that marriage of that world without end (Hosea 6:3).

Song 8:5 "I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee".

The apple tree (citron tree) we have already established in Song 2:3 to be Jesus Himself. This is quite clearly symbolical of the tree of life. The difficulty arising is between who is speaking, Bride or Bridegroom. Much paper has been used, particularly in support of the Bridegroom in this verse. However, we are informed upon careful scrutiny that the Hebrew suffixes here are of the masculine gender (thee). So it would strongly support the case of the Bride or others, and not the Bridegroom, as the speaker of these words.

Again, briefly speaking, it would appear that the words are those of the Bride of the Old Testament, being long "in labour" and "pain" until the seed of the woman promised to Eve was born - which was at last accomplished to the joy of those who waited for the consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25). Thus can she say that she raised Him up and "thy mother brought thee forth". Bringing it more particularly to a head, we have a remarkable allusion in Luke 1:35 to the overshadowing of Mary, the mother of Jesus, by the Holy Spirit itself; which brings us probably to the ultimate idea behind these words. Dispensationally, the apple tree and the "I" in Song 8:5 were there before the Bride's birth, although historically this was not so, as we have just outlined; but the apple tree and the "I" were there in the sense of John 8:58, where Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am".

What was required for her to live was already there before her, as the ashes of the red heifer (Num. 19:9) or the trees in Eden: so were the "apple tree" and the "I". In fact, according to Luke 1:35, the "I" is the Eternal Spirit itself - just as the rock smitten in the wilderness was Christ. Again this was the Eternal Spirit, which was in the beginning with God and before all things (Gen. 1:1. See chart on this verse - "The Beginnings of Redemption", A. Hall). How wonderfully was the "I" of Song 8:5 manifested in Jesus, "without measure", etc. Also 1 Tim. 3:16, "God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, received up into glory". The application, then, of the apple tree, the tree of life, and Christ is another "three-fold



cord that cannot be broken". In Him was life, which has proved satisfactory in all the various dispensations of the experiences of the Bride, yesterday, today, and tomorrow (Heb. 13:8). Our Bride can truthfully say, "I sat down under His shadow with great delight" (Song 2:3).

It will have been duly observed, we hope, that, although the Hebrew suffixes "thee" are in the masculine, yet both Bridegroom and Bride are involved by implication. Such is the intertwining structure of Divine inspiration, as determined in the Divine family, the Father, the Son and the Daughter, impossible to man or to the thinking of the natural mind. An old commentator, Mrs. Stevens by name, sums up admirably: "Contrast her state by nature and grace, brought up from under the curse, under the first apple tree in Eden, and placed under the blessing of the second apple tree in the garden of covenant love". Could not the words, "under the apple tree", in Song 8:5 also apply to the restoring grace of Christ? In Song 2:3-5 the picture is that of possible swooning and fainting through excess of spiritual joy; but her Beloved raised her up, and stayed and supported her. So again under the scorching heat of the noon-day sun, He filled her with resurrection power, while He was unto her "as a shadow from the heat", and when parched with thirst, His fruit was sweet and reviving to her taste. "The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations". It was not a withering gourd, but a tree of life, full of sap, full of resurrection power, reviving and refreshing, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Finally under this heading, can we hazard the rather moot point that it is striking that the explanation of how the spouse came into being is left until the last chapter of The Song?

"I awoke thee under the apple tree" (Song 8:5). Our mother brought us forth under the apple tree, and the Beloved awoke us there. The apple tree undoubtedly is Christ, and, as brought forth by our mother and awakened by Christ, we find ourselves under His shadow - another gentle reminder that all our relations with God and God's relations with us are governed by grace in Christ. There is no question at all of what came in by Adam, but what has come in by Christ. We were only Divinely awakened in Him; it is because we have been "brought forth" and "awakened" that we realise the blessedness of Christ, and press for yet closer relationship with Him, and if at all possible greater assurance of His love, although we are quite sure about it all the time. This stress of mind and fervour of attitude is the subject of the next verse, and, we shall see, finds a ready application and response in her last words (8:14).

Song 8:6 "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".

It will be obvious that this is possibly the most earnest and intense entreaty in the whole book. We may note that the petitions are in a progressive and ascending scale from the beginning of the book. There are nine altogether and our quotation is the eighth - (1) "Draw me" (Song 1:4); (2) "Tell me" (1:7); (3) "Stay me" (2:5); (4) "Turn me" (2:17); (5) "Let my Beloved come" (4:16); (6) "Let us go forth" (7:11); (8) "Set me as a seal" (8:6); (9) "Make haste, my Beloved" (8:14).

"Set me as a seal" - many instructive thoughts may be extracted from the Word under this heading. What do they signify?

(a) Ex. 28. Doubtless the primary reference is to the High Priesthood of Jesus under the Aaronic type. The names of the twelve tribes of Israel were on the breastplate (on his heart) and to be engraven "like a signet". Also on the onyx stones (the ancients thought they were actually sapphires) to be borne on the two shoulders (or arms). "For a memorial". "Set me as a seal on Thy heart, as a seal upon Thine arm". It has been the comforting thought of the Bride these last 2,000 years to realise full well that she hath "a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God," and that the Bride is in everlasting memorial before Him. How deeply touching it is to know that we are thus sealed upon Jesus. Again, we find a counterpart to the Wellbeloved's instruction to His spouse to "wear a bundle of myrrh all night betwixt her breasts" (Song 1:13), so that His sacrifice should constantly remind her of Him. She was equally anxious for His care and attention. How often has the Bridal community prayed in this strain throughout her long history, and all who make up this glorious woman in that day will look back with the discernment of immortal eyes to those days in her flesh when such prayers had been

uttered, with the utmost intensity to her Lord and Master. Actually John the Beloved will recall that he himself was known as the disciple who leaned on Jesus' bosom (John 13:23-25), longing to be always near his Lord. Multitudes of Johns after the spirit have eagerly sought that same nearness. Now glorified together, the realisation has been beyond their most vivid explanation.

(b) Neh. 9:38, Rom. 4:11. A seal is used for ratifying and confirming. So our Bride betakes herself to the "strong consolation" provided in the promise and oath of the Beloved that the covenant engagement into which she has now entered eternally shall never be broken, and that she will never depart from Him (Jer. 32:40, Hos. 3:3). The sure mercies of David and of Abraham are absolute truth to her, and the mercies (Heb. "chesed") cannot be broken.

(c) The seal is also a token of "peculiar honour" and affection. See Jer. 22:24 and Haggai 2:22 under this heading.

(d) A seal leaves an impression, and we are to be thus conformed to the image of God's Son and moulded like wax or clay according to the device of the potter (also see 1 Thess. 1:6-10 in Hall's "Thessalonians" under this sequence).

(e) This sealing process is the peculiar office of the Holy Spirit. "Whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephes. 1:13-14; 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:22; Rev. 7:3-17). The Bride remembered the sealing of the intelligence in her mind (Rev. 7:9-17), the great tribulation she had borne as a Bridal community standing out starkly in memory, and the ridicule of the last days before the Lord's coming; and she will rejoice the more in thanksgiving for that sealing by God. "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne had fed her, and had led her to living fountains of waters, and God had wiped away her tears" (Song 1:7-8; 4:14). She in turn had been (as she glanced around the august assembly of the Bride) a fountain of waters of rest to many others (Psalm 23:2).

The prayer of the Bride may include all these thoughts in her intense desire, "Set me as a seal". Durham again in the quaintest of language puts it in general -

(1) Including great nearness to Christ, even to have a special room and seat in His heart. (2) It imparts a settledness in that condition that she may be set there, as the Lord says of Jerusalem (2 Kings 21:4), "There have I put or set My Name"; and as it is in Psalm 132:14, "There will I dwell". It is necessary in her days of formation in the flesh to be assured of a permanent place in the affections of the Beloved. Surely there could be nothing more destructive of all true Christian affection than any degree of uncertainty as to our place in the love of Christ. She was conscious that the seal which would secure her permanently must be on His heart.

All through our studies in this "jewel box of the spirit", we have seen that the relations between Him and His loved one (or ones) began on His side; they must subsist and be maintained in the faithfulness of His love. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you". And nothing can separate us from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:35-39). The spirit of Christ was the Divine seal upon her even as far back as Gen. 24, where Rebekah truly revealed the Christian attitude of the "second mile" of the Sermon on the Mount standard (Matt. 5:41) - "I will give thy camels drink" (Gen. 24:12-14, 18-21, 40-46). Also the captive maid in Naaman's house (2 Kings 5:1-3); but here she would not be content without knowing that she is set as a seal upon the heart and arm of the Beloved.

The further implications of this prayerful entreaty are strikingly brought out in the remaining words of Song 8:6-7, "For love is strong as death; jealousy as cruel as the grave. The coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame." Jesus had testified to this truth, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends". "And I lay down my life for my sheep". Paul, speaking of the Lord, said, "Who loved me and gave Himself for me". The sealing of the Spirit was revealed in the Bride's own attitude, particularly in the first centuries of the Christian faith. The Bride's love is but the reflection of His own proving "as strong as death". "For Thy sake we are killed all the day long" (Rom. 8:36, Acts 21, 13). John, speaking for Jesus, recorded in Revelation that "they loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev. 2:11). "For", says Paul once again, "the love of Christ (heart and arm) constraineth us" (2 Cor. 5:14-15). "Love is as strong as death". "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ (heart and arm); shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him that

loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:35-39).

Song 8:6 "Jealousy is cruel as the grave". "The Lord thy God is a jealous God" was the announcement to Israel after the flesh, and is just as real to Israel after the spirit. He will bear no rival, He will have the whole heart, and, forasmuch as "all His actions impart their stamp in us" (Manton), the believer is likewise of necessity filled with a holy and intense desire (could we call it a "holy jealousy" ?) towards Christ - for instance the sons of Zebedee, James and John, during His ministry. So the Bride, as seen in the believer, would have Christ all to herself, and strive to rid her heart of other objects that would rival Him. The poet Doddridge caught the idea:

"Do I not love Thee, O my Lord?  
Behold my heart and see,  
And cast each cursed idol down  
That dares to rival Thee."

The jealousy expresses that intensity of appropriation which is the privilege of every individual found within the many of the Bride. He is all to every one, and none loses by His entire appropriation by another. (There is no domination or participation). In our earnest seeking we are apt to overlook this plain fact. Peter and the sons of Zebedee took over three years to realise just this (see "The Significance of Blue in Scripture" - Hall).

The call, then, is to be jealous of the love of Christ, and fear not to be as cruel as the grave in our demands upon or for it. Prov. 30:15-16, "The grave is never satisfied; it says not, It is enough". We must crave the love of Christ. Newton realised that "only the fountain head above can satisfy the thirst of love". As the grave, that is satisfied with nothing less than a complete surrender of the whole body, with all its affections, all its desires, all its thoughts - death that holds with its unrelinquishing hand that which succumbs to it - so is the love of Christ for His own, and so should be our love for Him.

As the grave will not give up its dead, so neither will Jesus give up His own. The compliment is mutual, He claims a whole-hearted devotion such as He has given us, and is satisfied with nothing less. Such is the strength of Divine love that conquered the grave, and when these words were spoken by the Bride she had undergone the most wonderful experience of having been delivered out of death. Physical dissolution is powerless to prevent Divine victory. "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:54-57).

The last clause in Song 8:6, "The coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame", points to the spiritual energy behind Divine love (Septuagint, "agape") wonderfully outlined in 1 Cor. 13. The Hebrew in Song 8:6 means "the coals thereof are the flames of the fire of Yah" - the only time the Name of Yahweh is found in The Song, and, true to Divine inspiration, located in the correct place, the powerhouse of the Spirit, the love of Yahweh Himself; for God is Love, and this alone is the reason for The Song, and the whole purpose contained within the sweep of its influence is "Whosoever will" and "as many as the Lord our God shall call".

This Divine love centred in Christ is likened to "coals of fire" which have a most vehement or devastating flame. "Coals of fire" - elsewhere "live coals". Isaiah 6:6, "Then flew one of the Seraphim unto me, having a live coal", taken from the altar, kindled by the Lord Himself. The fire is His, and the coals are His, so the emphasis - most emphatically is upon Christian love and devotion. Isaiah himself, in that day when he is found within the Bride, will indulge in nostalgia when these words are uttered, as he will reflect on that far away day when the vision first came to him, the year that king Uzziah died; when, as John puts it, he saw "the Lord high and lifted up in His glory" (John 12:36-43). The coal of living fire was taken off the burnt altar and placed on his lips to purify them. The love and devotion of Christ Himself! Consequently it is the love of the Spirit, Christ's own love providing all for the members incorporate in His mystical body (Rom. 15:30). "The flames of the fire of the Lord" - where are they to be found today? So often are they like to "smoking flax" rather than to fiery flames burning so brightly that all might see their light and feel their heat. Think again of the Emmaus walk (Luke 24) - our brother Cleopas and mysterious partner (surely his wife) will feel again the inward fire of Scriptural truth and the Divine love centred in Christ:

"Did not our hearts glow within us, when He was talking to us on the road, opening up the Scriptures for us" (Luke 24:32, Moffatt).

The original Hebrew word in the phrase "the flames of the fire of the Lord" is compounded of three words - fire, flame, Yah - and it is remarkable that it is the only time the name of God occurs throughout the book. Patrick's idea that there may be an allusion to Lev. 6:12-13, the fire which was ever burning upon the altar, seems very much to the point here. We have already pointed out the significance discernible in Isa. 6:1-6. That coal which purified the prophet's lips was taken from off the altar of burnt offering: we can see that the basic thought may well be associated with Lev. 6:12-13, from which the following thoughts may be considered: (a) that fire was an ever consuming fire; (b) that fire entirely consumed the sacrifice; (c) the Hebrew for "burnt offering" was "olah" or "alah", that is, an ascension of the whole sacrifice being consumed and going up in a flame to the Lord, acceptable to God as a sweet smelling savour (already alluded to with regard to Gen. 8:21 in our earlier chapters under "Fragrance", etc.). How truly was Jesus thus consumed by this "vehement flame of love". This the Bride had learned by experience, the principle of love is eternal, and she now was part of that love herself.

Song 8:7 "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it".

If love is a flame of Yah, it is a fire that no waters can quench -

- (1) though the waters in all their waves and billows go over our heads;
- (2) though floods of persecution assail us;
- (3) though the waters roar and be troubled; yea,
- (4) though we pass through the waters, yet sheltered in Christ, the true Ark, we shall rise higher and higher upon the waters, for "nothing shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord".
- (5) Rather shall it be as in the days of Elijah, that, although the waters be poured upon the sacrifice again and again, till even the trench round about the altar is filled, still the "fire of the Lord shall lick up the water in the trench" (1 Kings 18:33-38), for "many waters cannot quench love". So Elijah within that Bridal community will remember with vivid nostalgia as these words are spoken.
- (6) Yet he too will recall once again the fact that though flames of fire, and thunder and tempest are in the power of the Most High, as seen before him in the Lamb upon the throne, the Lord morally and spiritually could only be found in the little small voice of gentle stillness (1 Kings 19:11-12).

What a privilege (a) to behold, as in a cleft of the rock, the going of the "back parts" of the glory of the Lord (Ex. 33:18-23); (b) to see on the Mount of Transfiguration the glory face to face in Christ Jesus (Matt. 17:1-8); but (c) most of all to be found in Christ at His coming, and the transcending aspect of being among the Bridal community at that time! (d) no longer to be known as the "prophet of fire and judgment", and, when the question is asked, "Is it peace, Elijah?", the answer will be, "I am Shulamite, the peace laden" ! Again as one of the old poets put it:

"Whole seas of trouble cannot quench  
Love's everlasting fire,  
Though hell oppose whom I have chosen,  
I cannot but admire" (Mason).

Song 8:7 (b) "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly condemned (or despised)".

Stuart says, "This is a truth like the preceding, applicable to the Bridegroom and the Bride; true of Divine love towards us, true of Divine love in us, for love in these verses is employed exactly as it is by the apostle Paul in the end of Romans, where the love of Christ means both His love to us and our love to Him".

As the words are first uttered by the Bride, let us take them as of the substance offered to her and her refusal of it for love. If Christ would give all the substance of His house, instead of His love, it would be utterly condemned by her. So Paul asserted in Phil. 3:8, that, to win Christ, he reckoned all things loss and counted them but dung - almost in Solomon's words, he held them in utter contempt. These all things were the outward substance of the Bridegroom's house. The treasures, or the riches, or knowledge, or honour, or pleasure with which the world is stored - for the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof - the solid earth and all its furnishings. All these things are given into the hands of Christ, and are His to bestow or withhold, and through the

mouth of Paul, the Bride holds them in utter contempt, casts them away when advanced against the excellency of Christ, or the love of God found in Him, and the Bridegroom will rejoice that she, like Himself, resisted the temptation to personal gain and aggrandisement. "If I were to give thee all the kingdoms of the world . . ." (Matt. 4:10). But, like Him, she resisted the temptation, realising that all her hopes, and joys, and fears were bound up in His love. For even in earthly connections, she argues, nothing a man could give would be accepted, if He withheld His love. Shall they, then, who have yielded their affections to the Lord be satisfied with less? God forbid! God is love, and love is of God, and "we love Him because He first loved us".

Some ancient poet wrote :

"As some rare perfume in a vase of clay  
Pervades it with a fragrance not its own,  
So when love dwelleth in a mortal soul  
All heaven's own sweetness is around it thrown."

Could we summarise with Rainford :

- (a) Love is a sovereign principle, whether it be human or Divine. It is in itself its own reason, and is often bestowed unalterably on most unworthy subjects.
- (b) Love cannot be compelled in anyone, it is free or not at all.
- (c) Love cannot be purchased at any price, it is incorruptible.
- (d) Love cannot be persuaded, or bribed, or entreated into existence.
- (e) Love must be freely bestowed, and of its own accord.
- (f) Love creates and throws an atmosphere of its own around its object, and makes it lovely for itself.
- (g) Love in any heart can be begotten and produced only by love.
- (h) Love is the only acceptable return and response.
- (i) See, then, the inestimable treasure God has bestowed, and the wealth of return in His estimation that we, the poorest of us, can make Him - "Give Me thine heart".
- (j) The surest way of giving Him our heart is to show it, as in the Bride's refusing anything and everything save the love of Christ that has redeemed us to Himself.
- (k) The way to show God that we have given Him our hearts is in 1 Cor. 13, the "more excellent way" of life in Christ.
- (l) For a comparison between this description in 1 Cor. 13 and the love of God in Christ shows plainly that the same spirit dictated them, i.e. both descriptions ; but in fact
- (m) Love cannot be defined ; it is in itself a definition - "God is Love".

We listen to Christ's words, "Continue ye in my love" (John 15:9) and welcome the flashes of fire proceeding from that love, not those of terror and earthquake that terrified Israel at Sinai (Ex. 20:18-21). Not that we may stand "afar off" as they did (Heb. 12:18-24), but we "are come to mount Zion (Jerusalem), unto the city of the Living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels ; to the general assembly of the church of the Firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all and to the spirits of just men made perfect". The Bride had already attained unto this perfection, and now rejoiced in Divine nature, Divine love. She had seen this work fulfilled in herself, and rejoiced with joy unceasing, in that she had "utterly contemned everything" for the security of that love of her Lord, "Who hath loved her and given His all for her".

At last we have come to the end of our lovely Song, and find that the seven last verses that remain (Song 8:8-14) give us the widest sweep of retrospect and recapitulation found in our Idylls :

Song 8:8 "We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts : what shall be done for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for ?"

The query as to who uttered these words, and as to the origin and identity of the little sister, have caused much controversy. They have ranged from :  
(a) Ephraim, or the lost(?) Ten Tribes, having had their captivity before the birth of Christ, so that they knew nothing of the exercises through which Judah, or the Two Tribes, passed with reference to the birth, death, resurrection and return of Christ. Nevertheless they will come into the enjoyments of the blessed results of His second coming in glory (A. Miller). This specious argument relies on what we believe to be the spurious doctrine of the Lost Ten Tribes and that none of them ever returned to Israel. We might ask what Anna was doing in the Temple in Luke 2:36. She was, we are

we are informed, of the tribe of Asher (long lost?). What about a portion of the tribe of Simeon who never went into captivity (1 Chron. 4:42-43)? In any case Ephraim was not their little sister. In fact, through default of Reuben and being the son of Joseph, Ephraim became the firstborn of Jacob (Gen. 48:14). What about the case of Benjamin and Paul, and the tribe of Levi which still officiated as priests in the day of Christ (Luke 1, etc.)? It is our belief that the Jewish or Israeli population today is composed of all Twelve Tribes. When the genealogies were lost at the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, then, as Jews today admit, it is well nigh impossible to separate them into their original tribes. Ephraim along with the rest of the tribes of Israel will partake in the benefits of the return - but, we believe, only inasmuch as they become in truth "Daughters of Jerusalem". Their entry into the Bridal community, if found faithful, will, we believe, come into real effect at the conclusion of the Thousand Years, as they themselves are the Children of the Marriage between Christ and His Bride.

(b) The "little sister" identity has also been determined as applying to the Gentile Church, who at the first coming of Christ had not the breasts of consolation as they were found in Israel, i.e. the Law and Testimony. This would appear rather strained when we realise that it was the Jew that rejected Christ at the first coming, and that it was the Gentile who drew on the breasts of consolation as found in Jerusalem from above, who is the mother of us all (Gal. 4:26). Seeing that Christ rode upon the Gentile colt of an ass (one that had been redeemed), covered with the garments (the teaching of the Apostles), and the beast being obedient to the Lord (Mark 11:1-11), the facts appear to be precisely opposite in practice. One point which is helpful under this consideration is the fact that when The Song was written, the Hebrew church was the only recognised Bride of Christ. We find that she had other sisters, the elder and the younger (Ezek. 16:44-56). But the Bride herself in A.D. 70 is still in the process of formation in our days.

(c) Coates is sure that the "little sister" can be none other than Israel herself, being as yet diminutive in stature and undeveloped in affection for the Messiah; and prompts a further thought that we should not have far to go to find believers whose state corresponds more with that of the "little sister" than it does with the spouse.

(d) Tom thought that the "little sister" is Israel wandering without a priest, without a king, unfruitful (Matt. 21:28), and that when she rejected Jesus she "plucked off her own breasts" (Ezek. 23:25). For two thousand years the Jews have been in her maiden name, Miss Palestine. Yet she has not been for another man (Hos. 3:3). Since 1948 we see the token of her coming marriage as she surnames herself "Israel". Maybe tomorrow, Tom thinks, her Queen sister will plead for her again. It was Queen Esther who once spoke for her "little sister" (Esther 7:3) and the immortalised Queen will plead for her again.

Now these ideas of Jew and Gentile are very interesting if the "little sister" is not to be identified within the Bride herself. But are we so justified in adopting these views? In our personal opinion, the view of Coates appears nearest to the truth when he looks for her within the Bride. There is no apparent justification for thinking the Bride is the speaker here. In our view, the relations of the Bride see her way back when she was but a child, as yet not attained to puberty and unfit for mature association in marriage. The Bridal community goes back in retrospect to the days when her older relations were musing over her future: what would she be like? How would she develop? How often have we speculated over our young ones? Even back to Adam and Eve can we go. "How will she grow up?" was a natural surmising on their part; and they will scan their lifetime when these words are heard (that is, if they are to be found within the Bridal community (at least Abel and Seth will be - Heb. 11).) Eve wrongly thought that in Cain she had the Yahweh-man in answer to the prophecy in Gen. 4:1. Alas! Cain was to found the monumental line of sin and shame that brought murder and its associated evils into the world.

Song 8:8 "What shall be done for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?"

What shall be done for this little sister. First of all, they had made her toll in their family's vineyard, and she was surely disciplined by reason of the sun that had looked upon her (Song 1:6). They made her serve with rigour, as in Egypt. This was to be the primary action regarding the "little sister". How would she

develop under this discipline? Song 1:5 reveals the glad information that she understood that the outward aspect had another, and far richer, spiritual counterpart internally: "As the curtains of Solomon", that in her the Lamb would see the travail of His soul and be satisfied (Isa. 53). This thought grew in magnitude, and her preparation for the day when she would be spoken for would grow apace within her - called when she, as a "little sister", had no breasts, without form or comeliness; and the twin roes were not hers, neither in faith nor love; in fact, Paul bluntly says, but very much to the point, "Ye were dead in trespasses and sins, rotting corpses. But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we (or she) were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (of God alone); for by grace are ye saved" (Ephes. 2:1-10). Faith came by hearing, and, being without a preacher, she had not heard or comprehended, and the riches of His grace she had not known. But, as the Lord had called to Himself Israel after the flesh out of Egypt to give her the Law and the Testimony, looking unto the coming Messiah, so now God looked down on her with eyes of love, and she "turns from the love of idols to love the true and Living God"- and so were fashioned the twin roes of faith and love.

What could be done for the "little sister" was genuinely heard in the Acts, and matters were put in hand to discipline and guide once again this yet immature, though fast maturing, Bride of the Lamb (Acts 15:14-29). Down the ages this advice has guided many into the Bridal community, and all the time her twin breasts were forming and growing in fulness, at the moment of time. Puberty is well advanced and the wonderfully formed and exquisitely featured Bride is ready for marriage with the Lamb. As she looked back to our age, from the vantage point of immortality, could she see us in the matured condition, with the twin breasts of our roes fully developed in spiritual life? Her relatives had these thoughts as they dwelt upon her future.

Song 8:9 "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".

"If she be a wall" shows that the Bridal community should be regarded as having features of separation, and making a stand against the evil that surrounds her. "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness", stated one very eminent member of the Bridal community, John the Beloved (1 John 5:19). The Bridegroom Himself prayed that she should be kept from the evil in the world (John 17:15). The Song itself has portrayed this separation quite distinctly (Song 4:12). This wall of separation, then, is self-evident. While some believers are able to stand like a wall against the evils of this present world (and such features mark all who are subjects in the work of God), they may be just walls, without breasts, or, in our current thought, just opposition towards evil without spiritual affections formed. To be a "wall" from this point of view is very good and absolutely necessary. It marks in a very distinct way, as Coates indicates, the Holy City of Rev. 21. But though the Holy City has a "great and high wall", she has other features also. She is the Lamb's Wife, which indicates that she is formed in the affections suitable to that relationship.

Different interpretations have been given for the "door". Some have taken "wall" and "door" as figurative expressions for "I'm impregnable" and "open to seduction", and explain thus, that if the sister should resist all assaults upon her virtue, she should be rewarded with decorations; whereas if she yielded she should be punished by being barricaded or locked up.

Thrupp's contention is that the words, "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", cannot be held or treated legitimately as alternatives which exclude each other. The very presence of them in Scripture at all implies that both alike must in some way be eventually fulfilled. The same thing is evident, he concludes, from their position at the close of The Song, when the dramatic interest is at an end. No dramatist, he thought, "would be at pains in this concluding scene to trouble his audience with an elaborate balancing of hypothetical eventualities" - which appears to be common sense, to the writer.

Perhaps the Lord's own procedure will help here. Again and again it is repeated in the Gospels (Matt. 25:29). "If she be a wall", a well-founded building, firm and steadfast in the faith and love of Christ, if she stands on the foundation well-walled and strong, we will build on her - not an ordinary house of stone or wood, but a palace of silver, rich, pure, resplendent and glorious; a habitation fitting the King, and from the spiritual angle filled with all the fulness of God (Isa. 44:11-14 and 1 Cor. 3:9, Eph. 2:19).

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"We will build upon her".

"If she be a door", yielding to the right key and locked to outsiders, easily moved to the right touch (different from Song 5 : 1-6), "we will inclose her with boards of cedar" - evergreen wood of Solomon's Temple. The idea belongs to the concern of the relatives for the little sister, and their aspirations for her when she should be spoken for. Their interest concerns her endowments, to provide all that is needful for her in full proportions; every part of her framework (to use the symbology of The Song) shall be of the costliest. As for her wall of enclosure, we will fence her around with silver; for her doors, cedar alone and no inferior wood. Thus, tender and unfurnished, as she then appeared, she would not be wanting, but they would see to it that their "little sister" should be arrayed as a bride in her bridal day and that "fit for a King". Although they had made her serve with rigour, they well appreciated and provided well for her "latter end".

Her reply in Song 8 : 10 describes the unalloyed happiness which she has at last reached, having made herself ready and having partaken of the Wedding Feast, being now at her Lord's side and rejoicing in His love.

Song 8 : 10 "I am a wall, and my breasts like towers". She takes up on her own

behalf the imagery of the preceding verse. She is no longer the "little sister" (however we may view that phrase). That aspect has disappeared from view. Not only is she built firmly on the sure foundation to be laid in Zion, but has breasts like the towers thereof: "Walk round about Zion and tell the towers thereof. Consider her palaces" - sure testimony to these things. As breasts are the seat of tenderness and consolation for others, they are not for the mother but for the children (Isa. 66 : 10-11). So her consolations and affections were now formed for the nurture of the children of the marriage (i. e. the converts during the Millennial Age). We find her safely secured against all assault from without, and strong in the possession of those graces which attested her meetness for communion with her Lord, and her ability to nurture up children for Him. If this is so, then the prayer of David is answered "that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace".

"I am a wall, and my breasts like towers" - Surely here, remarks Tom, is "the glorified Bride of Christ. Who can be a wall but the saints of spirit nature?" The building in our day has attained a considerable height. It has reached to the towers. It is near to completion. The foundation, which is Christ, has been laid, and lively stones are being daily added to the church. But although the "wall" has still to be built, as in Nehemiah's days in the midst of enemies, so that the builders need to be girt about with the sword of the Spirit, yet the good work that is to be done shall be performed. Hence this retrospective view in Song 8 ; 9.

Thrupp concerning the words, "We will build her up", says, "The image of building is one of frequent occurrence in Hebrew", and cites as examples, Jer. 1 : 10, 18 : 9, 24 : 6, Psalm 28 : 5, 89 : 4, Gen. 2 : 22. It underlies even the etymology of the language, the words for "Son" and "Build" being etymologically connected because the family is viewed as being built up of children. Such then being the image which the poet has here chosen to employ, the walls and the doors come into view as two of the most obvious features of every edifice. The idea behind these thoughts of the relatives revives the ancient blessing in Ruth 4 : 11-14, "The Lord (Yahweh = I will be) make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel, and do thou worthily in Ephratah and be famous in Bethlehem". See Gen. 48 for the importance of this verse and of the idea of the multitudinous seed of combined Israel and Gentiles (the fulness of Israel). If their little sister (who later was to become the Messiah's Bride) proved faithful, then this ancient blessing would be found in her, as the Daughter of Bath-Rabbim (or A Multitude). "I am a wall, and my breasts like towers".

Therefore the palace of silver with the boards of cedar can only describe the House of God, as we have seen - the household of God with the solid inner and outer casing of silver, making the temple stones absolutely immovable, firm and steadfast in their up-standing. There was a good deal more silver than gold in the Temple construction, showing the priceless value of redemption through Christ, in keeping with the stability (as her stability) solid and immovable. 7,000 talents, with 14-lb. to the talent, were used to overlay the walls of the Temple alone (1 Chron. 29 : 4). 1 million 7000 talents in all is the computation in the Temple itself. We remember that this wall or "turret"



(Darby version) of silver is not a foundation, like the silver sockets under the boards of the Tabernacle, but is seen in an elevated and conspicuous position. The end product of the process is observed in the teaching of the silver sockets, and found in this palace of "turret" of silver (Ex. 30:11-16, 38:25-28). The Bride has prevailed in the strength of Christ found within the redemption, found purified silver, and this is not her proud boast but rather her sincere acknowledgment of the way of redemption which has brought her safely to this condition of spiritual perfection: a temple meet for the Lord to dwell in, "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, in whom the whole building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the spirit" (Ephes. 2:20-22).

Is it not remarkable that this palace of silver could only be built upon her wall, because, in the first place, Christ took away the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile (Ephes. 2:13-14) of which she is composed? Thrupp very aptly says of her, "I am now through Divine goodness in the enjoyment of everything needful; safely secured against all assault from without and in possession of those graces which attest my meetness for communion with my Lord, and my ability to nurture my children (to be) for Him". As her Lord Christ was a "Door" (John 10:9-16), so is she - but, as already suggested, only for His access into her palace.

Christ is now her Lord, Husband and King. As far as she herself is concerned, the aspect of Shepherd has given way to royal union in Marriage. But the shepherd sequence regarding Jesus is still not completed, hence Ezek. 34 in general and, in particular, Ezek. 34:23-31 and Psalm 100:3 have still to be fully realised in a Millennial context. Whilst this is perfectly true, that the means of access into her palace and garden fountain, etc. (Song 4:12) is reserved only for the Wellbeloved, yet, as Israel of the flesh should have been, she is intended to be a "door" by which men and women could enter into the Kingdom of God.

Israel failed her charge briefly on the grounds found in (a) Hosea 4:1, "There was no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land"; (b) Hosea 4:6, Israel was rejected for lack of knowledge, having forgotten the law of her God - God's indictment was, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge"; (c) Not only so; the overflowing evil was committed when they refused to speak or evangelise the Gentiles - 1 Thess. 2:16, Paul's strong words wrung from him in sorrow, yet obvious truth: "forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles - that they might be saved - to fill up their sin always (i.e. run over their sin), for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost".

The Lord Jesus Christ became the true Door, as we have observed, and by Him alone access was possible in the fullest way to God and to the Divine blessing. That the Bride had already followed His example in pointing the way to Him as "the door" has already been commented upon in Song 6:1. Her description of and obvious devotion to Him convinced the Daughters of Jerusalem of His transcendent beauty and splendid worth, opening an effectual "door" to their spiritual enquiries and desires (2 Cor. 2:12): "Whither is my Beloved turned aside, that we might seek Him with thee?" (Song 6:1). Just as Jesus revealed the Father to His disciples (John 14:9) and as such became, as it were, a "door" for their entrance into the Divine family, so too, in a much lesser though still glorious way, did the Father dwell in the Bride (speaking of the days of her flesh, of course). Now He dwells in her in nature, as well as by manifestation from the standpoint of The Song. The Bride had the privileged opportunity of following her Lord in the way of God's manifestation (1 John 1:5), "Whoso keepeth His word, in him is the love of God perfected; hereby we know that we are in Him", in keeping with John 14:15-29. And the witness to the world is attested in John 13:34-35: to paraphrase for our purpose, "By this shall all men know that ye have entered the door (become My disciples), if ye have love one to another".

The ancient world gave its testimony, whether said in anger or sympathy, yet in truth: "How these Christians love one another!" This witness of love was born out of courage, loyalty and devotion, in true "agape" style, always flowing outward to others, without thought of personal comfort or safety - well illustrated in Epaphroditus in Phil. 2:25-30: "hazarding" or not regarding "his life to supply the want" of the Philippian service to Paul, etc. "They loved not their lives to the death". James, the Lord's brother, exposed the shame of false sentimentality and partiality amongst brethren (Jas. 2:7-16). Thus love wrought in sincerity, and not only proclaimed the Name and purpose of the Lord, but also opened an "effectual door" to

future believers who would be ready disciples in the "better way" - literally a "door of hope" beckoning all down the centuries of time. Such an entrance is memorialised for all time in Rev. 21 regarding the New Jerusalem - another figure for the Bride herself: verse 9, "Come hither, I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's wife". So far as our purpose is concerned, the "entrance" into this state of glory is through Twelve Gates, each being of one pearl, the gem of affliction and suffering (Matt. 13:44-46). Founded upon Christ and the prophets, she is both the Wall and the Door of the New Jerusalem. She is now well-favoured and Divinely fashioned and come to perfection with breasts like towers (Ezek. 16:7). There is still a "door" of access available for the Millennial development, as we have already mentioned: the everlasting Gospel being the means of conversion until the consummation at the end when the Divine family will be gathered in one, the Father, the Son and the Daughter, God being all and in all.

The "inclosing with boards of cedar" presents to us the beauty of immortal adornment found within this King's Daughter - cedar of Lebanon (see Song 4:11, smell, etc.)

(a) From the smell of the garments (character) of Christ, she has attained to the nature of the cedar, or rather the character she had professed during the days of her flesh has now been fitted with relative nature - immortality or eternal life - first of quality; then of relationship to this life found with the Father and exhibited in the Son (John 17:3, 14:6) until, in our Song sequence, the attainment to eternal life in nature.

(b) "The door" is expressive of the splendour and beauty of incorruptibility in endurance, appearance and fragrance: and from Lebanon (for nowhere else could these magnificent cedars that adorned Solomon's Temple be obtained) we get the idea of eternal whiteness, gleaming snow, prayer and praise (the root word for "Lebanon" is the basis of "frankincense", "moon", etc.).

(c) Because, in the days of her probation, the Bride throughout her long centuries of formation, strove with might and main to follow after righteousness and holiness as found in Jesus, so now, in this palace of silver and door of cedar, we see the most glorious end of the Lord. She is entirely inclosed and built upon Divine virtues and principles, and she is accordingly to her Lord and Christ what He is to her, the "altogether lovely and fair one". Well may these words be expressed by the Shulamite, fulfilling both her name and position at this time.

Song 8:10 "Then was I in His eyes as one that found favour" (or, Heb. R.V. "peace").

She is conscious that He is entirely complacent in her; there is no adverse element whatsoever:

(1) She is found in the place of peace (2) With the price of peace (3) In the city of peace (4) In the position of peace (i.e. eternal peace with the Father and the Son (5) and of course at peace with herself (Rom. 7, with all its memories of Rephidim and personal Amaleks behind her) (6) She has the true nature of peace, from which she shall never again be separated.

To find favour in His eyes is to be kindly and affectionately dealt with, and to have that manifested by some suitable evidence:

(a) Esther found favour in the eyes of the king and he held out to her the golden sceptre (Est. 5:2) - his position as king applying only in our viewpoint, and not as a character.

(b) The thing that Moses sought - as evidence that the people had found favour in God's eyes (Ex. 33:16-17) - was that His presence might go with them: "Whereby should it be known", saith he, "that we have found grace (or favour) in Thy sight?" Is it not in that Thou goest with us?"

(c) The indwelling of the Father and the Son. Such favour is beyond compare (John 14:20-23).

(d) The manifest effect of the preaching of Christ near and afar off, as we ourselves can testify.

May we advance as an exercise in "having found favour in His eyes" that we consult very carefully the Ephesian Letter, commencing "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Ephes. 1:6), having a very apparent allusion to our text in Song 8:10. To be "accepted in the Beloved" means to be an object of God's favour. The Grk. "charitoo" comes from "charis" = to grace, endue with favour and honour, to highly favour. Very significantly from what we advanced regarding Mary, the mother of Jesus, "charitoo" is found elsewhere in the New Testament only in Luke 1:28, where

the angel says to Mary, "Thou art highly favoured" or "much graced", as the words might be rendered. These words, when they are spoken in the Song context by the Bridal community, will open the valves of nostalgia once again in Mary, and accordingly, with her Son, she will have seen the travail of her soul and have been satisfied.

Ephesians, antitypically speaking, is particularly the Book of Joshua (=Jesus) in the Old Testament, and also the antitype of "The Song of Solomon", the Book of Christ with His Maid (the Bride). Trace the word "charis" or "grace and favour" in Ephesians, and, if it is read in the light of God's gracious act in making us "accepted in the Beloved", the word is like a beautiful necklace which adorns the wearer:

- (a) The salutation of grace blesses us (Ephes. 1:2)
- (b) The glory of grace adorns us 1:6
- (c) The riches of grace endow us 1:7
- (d) and (e) The power of grace saves us 2:5-8
- (f) The exceeding riches of grace elevate us 2:7
- (g) The dispensation of grace enlightens us 3:2
- (h) The gift of grace qualifies us 3:7
- (i) The call of grace sends us 3:8
- (j) The Christ of grace places us 4:7
- (k) The holiness of grace separates us 4:49
- (l) The benediction of grace companions us 6:24

- twelve mentions of grace in all - the number of New Jerusalem, the Israel of God, etc.

To be accepted of the Lord means to be "well pleasing" to Him. "Euairestos" is a compound word. "Eu" means that which is "well" and is translated "well done" in Matt. 25:21-23, "good" in Mark 14:7 and "well" in Ephes. 6:3. "Airestos" signifies that which is "fit", "agreeable", "pleasing" and is rendered "pleasing" in 1 John 3:22. It is found in Phil. 4:18, Col. 3:20, Heb. 13:21, Rom. 12:1-2. These two words outline to all that the Father makes us accepted with favour in Christ, or we have found favour in His eyes: secondly, that we agonise to attain to that enviable position as our appreciation of this signal honour duly placed upon us. The whole Song has made these principles perfectly clear to us. Over all the happenings in this Book we see the Hand of God, particularly in the Palace of Silver and Door of Cedar. The Hand of our God was upon the Shulamite for good.

Another suggestion from Ephesians pertinent to our context in Song 8:10 - searching out the law of comprehension in this Epistle, and in the "little words" of the Bible, as seen in their magnitude in their claim of revelation. The magnificence and manifoldness of God's grace and love are seen in the use of the word "all" in Ephesians. 27 times we find it demonstrated. When you have finished and inwardly digested "all things of the spirit" found there, as they are seen in Christ Jesus, then perhaps the meaning of our text "I was as one that found favour in His eyes" will be far deeper.

We mentioned that the Hebrew also means "peace". This Ephesian Epistle particularly leads in this direction - "endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace". This we find is to be in the "unity of faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect (or mature) man, according to the measure of the stature of Christ; which is the fulness (Ephes. 4:1-16), This has now come to pass in the Bride's experience.

Song 8:11-12 "Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon".

There is no such place as Baal-hamon, or, if there were, Scripture is silent about it. A few rather uninspired guesses have been made which need not detain us, as the actual site does not appear to be important. The name gives the information we require. Baal = Lord, and Hamon = Multitude; or Lord of a Multitude. This name becomes pregnant with meaning when we realise that Hamon has to do with Gen. 17:4-5, R.V., where Abraham is prophesied of as to become a "father of a multitude" - virtually "Baal-hamon" (see Lexicons). The basis of these remarks is the Promises to Abraham and David, of course. We'll might their ears tingle, as these words are spoken in that glad day, found variously in Scripture, particularly in Isaiah 5. Covering God's redemptive purposes with Israel both "old" and "new", Isaiah 5:1 is sufficient introduction and proof of this statement: "Now will I sing

to my Wellbeloved" (identification with the Song itself) - "my Wellbeloved" Himself, the Greater Solomon, as we have advanced throughout our study.

Isa. 5:1, "touching his vineyard" - we need only compare Matt. 21:33-43 that we have at least a three-fold basis of interpretation here. The Lord's vineyard begins in Psalm 80, with Yahweh shepherding His people out of Egypt and the preparations that were made for its cultivation; but, alas, the hedges were broken down, the beasts of the field were allowed to waste and trample it (Song 2:15). Psalm 80:14 represents the plea by Israel to God to turn again (R.V.) and visit them. So the "dayspring from on high" was sent unto them (Luke 1:78). The "Man of Thy right hand" (Psa. 80:15-17) planted and restored it, as in Isa. 5:1 and Matt. 21:37-39, but, alas, when He came for His rightful dues they slew Him, well knowing that He was the heir. Not only was the vine barren of fruit, but it brought forth sour or wild grapes, reverting back to type (adversely, one would think, to the processes of evolution!), although from the Divine point of view this vine was set on a very fruitful hill (R.V. Heb. a horn, a son of oil). So in Isaiah 5:5 once again the fence or wall - and "it will be laid waste and trodden down" (Song 2:15), and this time it shall not be pruned nor hoed.

The pleading of Jesus under this wise is seen in Luke 13:6. Even after Jesus had so worked there was still no fruit. Consequently, Jerusalem after the flesh was destroyed. It is noticeable that Jesus followed this Parable of the Vineyard in Matt. 21:23-43 by a series of woes in Matt. 23:13-29, which forms part of the conclusion of this discourse of Jesus, first of all delivered to or against the chief priests and Pharisees (Matt. 21:45). We find that the whole discourse was given in answer to their query, "By whose authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" The first half was directed at the chief priests and rulers (verse 23); the second half at the multitude and His disciples (verse 1). All were included within the teaching of this vineyard which was to be destroyed because of wickedness and oppression (Isa. 5:7), and this vineyard should have been the "plant of God's desire" (R.V.).

Compare for interest the woes that follow in Isa. 5:8, 11, 18, 20-22. For over 1900 years the vineyard has been trodden down, but recent signs in the land - the freeing of Jerusalem, etc. in June 1967 - show that the night of Gentile darkness is far spent, and the reviving of the morning of The Song is near.

So the story of the Lord's vineyard could go on, all based on the Master of the Multitude, "Baal-hamon", and the Promises to Abraham and David, but brevity must be our part, and for those who would pursue it, further reference may be made to Psa. 8p, Isa. 5, Isa. 27, Jer. 2, Matt. 21, Mark 12, Luke 13, etc. Our record in Song 8:11 gives us the later development and the personal application of each one to it.

"He let out the vineyard unto keepers: everyone for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver" (silverlings or shekels).

It speaks of a time when the Lord returned from a far country to receive what was due to him from his stewards, whom he had left in authority over the vineyard. Again, the third time, there is a demand for covenanted payment of just dues introduced into the thought about a vineyard. We have brought out the subject of responsible service. On the surface it does not appear to have a prominent place in this Book, but in every chapter, underlying all the imagery, we have detected this thought: such as that of reproducing the image of her Lord in the Bride's thoughts and actions; the bastion as of a wall against evil and false teaching; the watering of other gardens, and so forth - as Coates implies, "It is not altogether omitted, because true affection for the Lord will always bear it in mind. This vineyard, composed of a multitude of individuals, has a relationship, to Jesus - they are His responsible servants, or His keepers.

So the thought is not quite parallel to the spouse in Song 1:6. We shall, however, find it in Song 8:12. This is a vineyard "let out to keep", for which every one has to bring 1,000 pieces of silver. We can take the definition of Isa. 5:1 that it is "a very fruitful hill"; in other words, the rental is well within the power of those undertaking the responsibilities, and knowing full well the "mercies of the Lord", sufficient will remain for their own needs. But, of course, we are not planted in the Lord's garden to be cumberers of the ground. Adam and Eve will recall vividly their pleasant portion in Eden before the Fall, when they were placed there to dress Paradise

and to keep it (Gen. 2:5, 15). In one sense, Jesus alone is the keeper or dresser of the vineyard: "I, the Lord, do keep it ; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it I will keep it night and day" (Isa. 27:3). And it is well that it is safely lodged in His keeping "who neither slumbers nor sleeps", but keeps it night and day. For had it been given out of His hands into ours, we had lost it as soon as Adam and Eve lost Paradise. But Jesus and His Bride are one (John 17:11, 21-23), and in this sense we are constituted "keepers". He commits His goods into our hands as servants or stewards, giving "to every man his work" (Mark 13:34) according to their several abilities, and adding the solemn injunction, "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13).

There is in the Truth today an allotted service for each one, and a prescribed return for each one to make to the Master of the vineyard. We may take it that 1,000 pieces of silver represent a full return according to Christ, the Greater Solomon's expectation and His due. The picture primarily presented here is not one where it is left for each one to bring according to his diligence and ability, as in the parables of the talents and the pounds (Matt. 25 and Luke 19). Here is the full and prescribed return which will be brought when Christ is truly owned as Master. If you and I take up our allotted space in His vineyard, and serve Him there sincerely, just as we are responsible to serve Him, we shall get a full portion thereof and He will get a thousand silverlings from us. This portion is found in many ways of faithful service:

- (1) One may be called to preach and expound the Scriptures.
- (2) Equally so, another work will be found in pastoral work in the care of the sick and lonely.
- (3) Another may be of sterling work in arranging matters.
- (4) The recording secretary, too, has his part to play.
- (5) The door-keeper has a very high and honoured part in this service.
- (6) Likewise the organist, in directing the praises in worship and song.
- (7) The sister, too, takes her place in being her husband's right hand in these matters, and in leading the younger sisters in the path of rectitude during these difficult days; also the young minds at home and in the Sunday school in the Word of our salvation.

What else can we say? Every conceivable thing, if done to the honour and the glory of the Father and the Son, can yield its full 1,000 silverlings.

Song 8:12 reveals that both Master and servant will receive their payment.

"Those that keep the fruit thereof, two hundred". Two hundred, or the fifth part of the required amount - the portion of grace or peace - as we learned from Song 8:10 (see notes there - the portion of grace or favour). "Therefore am I become in His eyes as one that is finding the favour of peace". By a compressed phraseology, the Bride declared that she had found favour in the eyes of her Lord (a phrase of continual occurrence, Gen. 6:8, etc.), and that also through this favour she has emerged triumphant from all her pilgrimage and conflict, and has become in truth the Shulamite or Peace-laden (Song 6:13). This is representative of the 200 silverlings. She becomes laden with favour (5 is the number of grace - see Hall, "The Significance of Blue in Scripture", section "Numerology"). Both the masters and the keepers will have a full portion. The great thing that the Bridal community had to learn all down the ages of time that witnessed her formation was that the Master should be allowed to have His place and His way with her; and to remember that she was the keeper of His vineyard. Whether individually, or collectively as an ecclesia, at home or in business, we are always responsible to serve Him; and in doing so, gather much fruit, and are able for the most part to bring what is due to Him: This, of course, is a continuous process. Once the Lord of the vineyard let it out to husbandmen who would not yield Him the fruit thereof, as the parables teach. He thereafter "let out His vineyard unto other husbandmen" (of whom we ourselves form part) who "should render unto Him fruits in their seasons" (Matt. 21:33) --

- (1) He is looking for these fruits in each one of us.
- (2) He looks for the tender grapes and green figs of Spring in those who have just begun to know Him (the babes in Christ).
- (3) For the spices and pleasant fruits of Summer (the young men who are strong and at their zenith of power in the Lord).
- (4) Likewise for the nuts in Autumn (the sober counsel and maturity of those "not so young in the Lord". —

in another sense, all the fruits from those of mature age in Scriptural things in Christ Jesus.

"Every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver." Could we say that the fruit we have gathered from "the truth as it is in Christ Jesus" would be worth this sum? There is abundance of fruit to be had in Christ. We are expected to gather abundantly, and at the same time the Lord expects this to yield Him a rich and very abundant produce. To whom He has given five talents, from him He expects "other five"; and to whom He has given "two", from him He expects "two talents more". Whatever God has entrusted us with, be it wealth, or talents, or knowledge, or influence, it is not ours to use as we please - it must be traded with, it is given us to "profit withal" (1 Cor. 12:7). The advice of Jesus must ever lead us: "Render unto God the things that be God's". Shall we not trade with our talents diligently? - increase them a hundredfold and then go and cast them at Jesus' feet, and not keep back any of the price of the land as did Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10). As keepers of the Lord's vineyard, it is the duty of each one of us to encourage the several members of the Bridal community with whom we have to do to yield their fruits unto the Lord. "I desire fruit that may abound to your account", so said Paul in his day. May we follow his example!

Song 8:12 "My vineyard, which is mine, is before me. Thou, O Solomon (Prince of Peace) must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred."

This is a fitting conclusion to The Song, and is the juncture to which every step in the Lord had led her. Now she has kept her vineyard, regardless of natural ties; against the little foxes, and so on. In doing so, she has attained maturity in Christ. In plain fact, the Bride of the Lamb hath made herself ready for the consummation of marriage, which has occupied our attention throughout this book, and this thought, coming as it does at the actual marriage of the King and His Bride, brings us almost up to time. But we remember they are looking back from the vantage point of perfection. It is still nostalgia, but only in point of time - just! We have almost caught up with it.

Her vineyard she has kept, and now, of her own free will or affection, she dedicates to Christ the full demand. Her affections are now equal to His claims. If He claims a thousand from His vineyard, He shall have not one less from her.

Here we get a sequel to the demands of love which we considered in Song 8:6-7. Here we see the Divine balance applied, Love equal to Responsibility, a truly happy state of things. Affection and love dedicate to Him a full return, so that He can receive it, not only as His recognised due, but as being gladly and freely accorded to Him by the love of His spouse. "Righteousness and truth have kissed each other" - and the result? At peace. Shulamite indeed!

She recognised that no one ever did anything in faithfulness to the Lord, who would not receive full recompense. In a spiritual sense, the recompense is given now; in a public sense, it will be given at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and even recompense will be awarded on the principle of grace. Everyone who receives a reward will be conscious that he receives far more than he deserves.

Song 8:11, "Those that keep the fruit thereof, two hundred" - there is nothing about the keepers getting anything but the fruit. There is a question of an assigned responsibility and a prescribed return. But, as we advanced in verse 12, it is what the spouse dedicated in love. Being enlarged herself, she can enter into the largeness of Divine thoughts even as to recompense. 1 Cor. 4:5, "And then shall each have his praise from God", just about sums it up. It will go beyond what is due, and it is the pleasure of the Father and the Son that it should do so. "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour" (1 Cor. 3:8) and beyond. "If any man's work abide, he shall receive a reward" (1 Cor. 3:14) and beyond. Of husbandmen, "he that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits" (2 Tim. 2:6) and much more. What a wonderful part the portion of grace - the two hundred silverlings - is! Probably we may appreciate it more when we realise that in the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant the ratio of the one debt to the other is as 1,250,000 to 1. The 1,250,000 majority applies to the portion of grace held out to us in the Song, denoting that the grace and mercy of God are enormously, nay infinitely, large and beyond our comprehension. Undoubtedly, the fruit in our context is the fruit of the Spirit

(Gal. 5 : 22), springing solely out of the vital union of the fruit-bearing branches with the true vine of John 15.

(a) The vineyard of Baal-hamon possessed by the Greater Solomon really encompasses that of the Bride. Without His spirit there could be no fruit.

(b) The Shulamite's vineyard encompasses each individual vineyard or portion, as found in the various ecclesias throughout the world.

(c) And again, each ecclesia encompasses the various individual portions as they are let out to you and me.

(d) None of this could have come to pass had it not been for the Father Himself, "Who worketh all things according to His own will", as seen by Him before the foundation of the world.

(e) The Bridal community in this closing stage of The Song knows this full well, as she volunteers the words of Song 8 : 12.

(f) Because she had "passed from death to life" she has been accepted of the Beloved at the Judgment Seat.

(g) The portion of grace has been bestowed upon her and she is the Consort of the Prince of Peace, with the happy prospect of a multitude of children from the Marriage, more even than Rachel and Leah, until -

(h) Gathered in one - the Father, the Son, and the Daughter of the Multitude - the purpose shall be consummated at the termination of their reign of peace, when God shall be "All and in all" (1 Cor. 15 : 24-28).

Finally, only the Epilogue remains : we notice that it forms a fitting conclusion to this truly apocalyptic book of The Song, expressing the same sentiments as, or sentiments of a similar nature to those in Revelation 22 -

(1) Song 8 : 14 "Make haste, my Beloved, and be Thou like to a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of spices".

(2) Rev. 22 : 20 "He which testifieth these things saith, "Surely I come quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

(3) The fervent prayer all down the ages from Eve's day to us - "I have gotten the Yahweh man" - was the Bride's happy boast.

(4) He came to Israel upon the mountain of myrrh as a sacrifice.

(5) He was chased as a roe upon the mountains of Israel and hunted to death by the bulls of Bashan, but -

(6) as the hind of the morning He arose out of death, and

(7) ascended the "mountains of spices" as High Priest over His people.

That prayer has come to pass !

It has been suggested in a recent article that the last two verses of The Song are fatal to our type of exposition. Do they sound a death knell to our thoughts ? Perhaps, if the verses were always to be in chronological order, but this is not so, as we have seen from the very nature of the book. However this may be, the choice is before the reader - the decision is your own. We are advised that this epilogue is simply as stated and forms no part of the drama itself. What we do have is the nostalgia again, taking hold of the Bridal Pair. The Bride in glory lives again the time when she trod in flesh, sorrow, and often near despair. All she had aspired to had come to pass and more also. She had longed for His coming, knowing that the result would be to change this sin-blighted scene of thorns and briars, so that every-thing would be fragrant under His feet. The earth will be for the pleasure of the Creator, and it was also His pleasure to give His Kingdom to her. Rich odours will be wafted from the mountains of spices. This precious book leaves for us who are still awaiting the great day a final impression that the Lord is coming, and the Divine intent of the book is that our hearts should be prepared to bid Him "haste !" He has said, "Yea, I come quickly". May this book have enthused our hearts to say, "Amen, come, Lord Jesus !"

Song 8 : 13 sounds the final request : "Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice : cause me to hear it."

As we have said, The Song is terminated by an epilogue of two verses. Of these the one (verse 13) is uttered by the Bridegroom and the other (verse 14) by the Bride. These words in verse 13 are the last words of Jesus in loving appeal to His

Bride. We gather that it is the personal relationship between the spouse and the Beloved that is in immediate context. She now dwells in the gardens (of spices?). The wilderness now passed, her "lines have fallen out unto her in pleasant places". She is in the place of privilege and pleasure. "The companions hearken to thy voice" — He would hear it also. That is important, as being His final word to the object of His love.

We may have a pleasant dwelling given to us by the Beloved, and we may say much about, and often discuss, the sovereign grace of God that has brought us into such affinity with the Beloved. And this is right and proper.

(a) "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it" (Mal. 3:16).

(b) But how much do we say directly and personally to Him?

(c) He is not only our Beloved, but also our High Priest, and —

(d) The vehicle through which our supplications and praises are passed to the Father: we speak to the Father through Him alone.

(e) But again, how much do we say that is said to Him personally? — so that He can hear it as something that was meant for Him alone.

(f) Apart from mediation and high priesthood, it is a final word to remind His spouse that her chief concern should be to speak to Him in accents of personal love and devotion.

(g) Stephen did (Acts 7:59 R.V.). Paul did (Acts 9:6).

(h) Our Beloved would have us speak to Him.

(i) Cause Him to hear our voice: not only avail ourselves of His mediatorship, but also, when we want to confide in Him, let us talk to Him and walk with Him.

(j) We are sure to need this word, and that great benefit can be denied us, if we neglect so great an opportunity. Personal intercourse with Him is perhaps more lacking than anything else.

(k) He would like to hear an expression of love from us that is purely for Himself. This is the message of the whole book, and the point that we have laboured from the commencement, that of the personal touch, and intimacies between the Bridal pair.

All the intimate details are brought before us, to make us long for the time when this Song is sung at the Wedding Feast of the Lamb and His Bride, and from the present viewpoint of the Song in immortality the personal relationship has been sealed for ever in eternity. But we await that time with intense anticipation. Shall we not make the most of the time available to us in making personal intimate contact with our Beloved, at least in our thoughts, and sanctify these moments as anticipating the eternal union? — when the long ages which saw the Beloved absent from His spouse are gone, and seem but as yesterday, as a watch in the night. In that day may we form part of the Bridal community and cause our voices to be heard by Him and the Father — "Worthy is the Lamb", etc. (Rev. 5:9-14), as we join in the concert.

It is interesting to note that the words "Thou that dwellest in the gardens" are in the feminine gender, Durham making the point that it is as if one should say, "Thou, woman", or "Thou, Bride", or "Thou, wife". Or, taking it as in the original, it may be rendered "O inhabitress of the gardens", which can apply to none other but her. The title can be rendered, we are assured by the same writer, "Thou that dwellest in the gardens" or "by gardens", found in the plural number, such as Song 6:2, which we understand today to mean ecclesias or meetings. To "dwell in" or inhabit these gardens shows that the garden Bride again is a Bridal community, as we have endeavoured to outline earlier, and for our age today's guidance to "dwell in" imports three things:

(1) A frequenting of these meetings. (2) A continuance in them ordinarily as if they were her residence. (3) A delight in them and in the exercise of His service and worship there. So that a point of sterling value arises from this verse, which could be paraphrased to read, "Thou, My Bride, who lovest the assemblies of My people, and My public ordinances" — in keeping with Psalm 27:4, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in His temple". This is the answer of Jesus to those amongst us who would say that Jesus never commanded us to attend lectures or Bible classes, etc. He would have us always to dwell in the ecclesias or gardens of spices, and not only so, but He would not have us to be sleeping partners or "silent disciples", but He would have us to "cause Him to hear our voice"; as we have seen, personally and ecclesially.

A final word on "Thy companions" in Song 8:13. Psalm 45:14 would have us to



believe that these are "the virgins her companions that follow her. The Hebrew for Song 8:13 is in the masculine gender, but this need not detain us, because "the virgins" are made up of both sexes (Rev. 14:1-4).

(1) The masculine element is found in Song 3:7-8 - the sixty mighties of David in 2 Sam. 23 and 1 Chron. 11, who surrounded the throne, and who bear the litter of carrying chair of Solomon sent to fetch the Shulamite to the wedding.

(2) Had the sixty mighties listened to her praises of the King, and been convinced of His perfections?

(3) as Rebekah herself had been by Eliezer of old? as they travelled through the wilderness?

(4) as they followed on - and, as Psalm 45:15 puts it, "With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the King's palace".

Song 6:1 gives the effect of her preaching to her companions. No doubt the heart of the Bride will be made glad as she looks back, knowing that her preaching after all was not in vain, both ecclesial and personal. Her companions had heard and followed her into the King's palace. There only remains to be gathered of the companions the Daughters of Jerusalem in the Millennium. Then, indeed, she will in truth be "a palace of silver" with doors of cedar covered with the gold of Divine nature - fit indeed for a habitation of Deity after the Spirit. "The inheritance of the possession of peace" in truth, without a discordant note.

Song 8:14 "Make haste, my Beloved". The word "haste" means also "flee away" and is in answer to Song 2:10 and 4:8 -

"Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away". Our last words are the Bride's response to this invitation. There is nothing beyond this to live for or hope for in this vale of tears. And the prayer, whether in the Old or New Testament times, is music to the Beloved. "Make haste and flee away", for we "have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. 1:23). We have left the Bride in perfection and the bliss of Divine nature, but these latter-day elements of the Bridal community still await the call to come away, and as the Gentile night deepens, and the world grows more godless, we realise that the "darkness must come before the dawn", and so lift up our praises and sustain our hearts in the words of an unknown poet:

"O pray - intensely pray,  
Build up Jerusalem, and God will hear  
Petitions He has prompted: God will hear,  
And from her desolations cause to rise  
A wall conspicuous - her growing strength,  
Her shining palaces will teach the world  
That God is faithful and His promise sure.

One echoing response and all is still,  
One loving answer from the sacred harp  
Of waiting Zion to that kind command:  
Make haste, come quickly, O beloved Lord,  
Like the young roe that moveth rapidly,  
That tarrieth not for man - like agile hart  
That springs to sight, as with a single bound  
On the spice mountains be Thy glory seen.  
MAKE HASTE, COME QUICKLY, O BELOVED LORD."

(Metrical Meditations on the Sacred Book of Canticles)