

The Pilgrim Way Commentary on

The Song of Solomon

A Devotional Commentary



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Apology for This Work

This commentary on the Song of Solomon follows in a long line of other works by divines of the past as they have sought to study and expound great book that deals with the relationship between Christ and the Believer.

This work grew out of over 40 years of both preaching through the Song of Solomon in three pastorates in Maryland, Delaware and North Carolina as well as teaching through the book as an instructor at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland. I needed my own notes and outlines as I taught and preached from the Song, so this fuller commentary flows from those notes and outlines. Thus, the layout of this commentary is a practical one, written by a preacher to be preached from in the pulpit or to be taught in a Sunday School. It was not written from an isolated study of a theologian who had little contact with people or practical ministerial experience. There are many such commentaries on the market and they tend to be somewhat dry and not very practical in their application.

I was motivated to study the book due to the example and ministry of one of my seminary teachers, Dr. O. Talmadge Spence, Founder of Foundations Bible College and Theological Seminary in Dunn, North Carolina. Over the summer of 1992, I heard Dr. Spence preach on this Song three times a week for six weeks, which opened this neglected book to my understanding and motivated me to proceed with my own personal study of the Song. Dr. Spence was the first preacher I heard (really the only such contemporary preacher, with the exception of his son, Dr. H. T. Spence) who devoted any serious study and time to the Song of Solomon. It is still a book that many preachers don't spend much time on today. This is because the Song is one of the most spiritual books in the Bible that dwells on building the relationship between Christ and the Christian. It does not lend itself well to the hyper-evangelism of the modern fundamentalist or the excesses of the modern Charismatic. But it does speak toward the seeking heart who yearns for a genuine walk with God, something that is not much desired in these years of the 21st century.

This commentary cannot be easily classified into any single theological system and that is by design. I believe that no single theological system is an accurate presentation of Scriptural truth in and of itself. When Charles Spurgeon once wrote "There is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else", he displayed a most unfortunate theological hubris. Calvinism is a limited and uninspired theological system. There is some truth there, as there is in any theological system, but it ranks no better than other systems, such as Arminianism (which is nothing more than a modified version of Calvin's teachings), dispensationalism, covenant theology, Lutheranism, Romanism, Orthodox theology, pre-wrath rapture, take your pick. All these systems are flawed as they are all the products of human attempts to understand and systematize Biblical presentations. They can all make contributions to our overall understanding of the truth but none may claim to be the only correct such presentation, at the expense of all others. Knowing the human impossibility for absolute

neutrality and the human love for theological systems, I readily admit that I cannot be as dispassionate and uninfluenced by human teachings in these pages as I would like. No man can be. But I have made every attempt not to allow my own personal systems to influence my understanding of what the clear teachings of Scripture is.

I have freely consulted a wide variety of commentaries and sermons for insights and other views of various texts that I might have missed. As the old preacher once remarked “I milked a lot of cows but I churned my own butter.” Direct quotes are attributed to their proper source to prevent that unpardonable sin of literary theft. Simply because I quoted a writer should not be viewed as an endorsement of all that he wrote or of his theological system. I selected the quote because I found it interesting and useful, not because I am in any degree of agreement regarding the rest of his teachings.

This commentary is based on the text of our English Received Version, commonly referred to as the King James Bible. I believe that this is the preserved English translation available to us and that it is the superior translation in English. I can see no good reason to use or accept any of the modern versions, especially the current “flavor of the month” of the New Evangelicals and apostate fundamentalists, the corrupt and mis-named English Standard Version or the Legacy Standard Version (otherwise known as the John MacArthur Version). When it comes to these critical text versions, I reject them for a variety of reasons. One major reason is that they have not been proven on the field of battle. I have liver spots older than the English Standard Version, but I am expected to toss my King James Bible, which is over 400 years old, and take up this new translation, whose ink is barely dry? How many battles has the ESV won? How many missionaries have done great exploits with an ESV? What revivals have been birth and nurtured with a New American Standard Version? These are English translations that further the last days apostasy. We will stick with the translations and texts that our fathers have used and that God has blessed. We are also favorably inclined to the Geneva Bible, Tyndale Bible, Matthews Bible, and other “cousins” of our English text.

This commentary will differ from the format in the other Pilgrim Way Commentary series. I am not inserting any parallel readings from the pre-King James translations or from any modern versions for comparison. Nor am I inserting the Hebrew text or much in the way of Hebrew word studies. This is more of a devotional commentary rather than a reference commentary as the other entries in the Pilgrim Way Commentary series are. Commenting on the Song is different from commenting on the other 65 books of Scripture due to the uniqueness of this book. It simply cannot be approached as any other book of the Bible.

The presupposition of this commentary is that what the Bible says is so and that we will not change the text to suit our theological fancy or because of our theological ignorance. The text says what it says and that is what we must accept, else we will be found unfaithful stewards of the Word of God, a judgment we fear.

This commentary certainly is not perfect, nor is it the final presentation of my understanding and application of the Song of Solomon. A commentary over 40 years in the making can never truly said to be finished. As new insights are granted by the Holy Spirit and as my understanding of the epistle deepens, additional material will be added and sections will have to be re-written. One is never truly “finished” with any theological book. As one deepens and grows in his relationship with the Lord, so does his theological understandings and that should be reflected in one’s writings.

This book was also written as a theological legacy to my four children and three grandchildren. They will need to be mighty for God in their generation for their days will certainly be darker than the generation their father grew up in. This book is an expression not only of the heart of a preacher in the early 21st century but also of a Christian father for his children, so they may more fully understand what their father believed and preached during his ministry.

I have written a number of Bible commentaries and other materials, but I believe this commentary on the Song may be the most important commentary I will ever right. It is a spiritual book, and this is a commentary based more on spiritual and devotional material than theological material. It is the book of personal revival and communion with God. It shows us how to follow after God and to deepen in our walk with Him. What topic, apart from salvation itself, could be more important? The spiritual burden of the book is what makes it so important. May I urge you, Dear Reader, to devote yourself to a study of and meditation of this book? The benefits will be eternal. I pray this unpretentious commentary can help you in that regard.

It is my sincere prayer that this unpretentious contribution to the body of Christian commentary literature will be a blessing to the remnant of God’s saints in the earth as we approach the secret coming of our Lord.

Introduction to Song of Solomon

Authorship

It is obvious that Solomon authored this song 1:1. Solomon wrote 1005 songs (1 Kings 4:32) and this one was the greatest of all. It was the only one that the Holy Spirit chose to preserve.

Time of writing

We cannot pin down an exact date of authorship. We can determine that of the three books Solomon wrote, Song was composed while a young man, Proverbs in middle age and Ecclesiastes in his old age. If this is so, how young was Solomon? We think not too young or too old, maybe in his 30s or even early 40s.

Theme

While several theories have been set forth as to the theme of Song, the only honorable one is that it is an allegory depicting the courtship and relationship between Christ and the individual Christian. Solomon, in his youth, had met a Shulamite girl whom he fell in

love with and courted. Their relationship is used as a type of the relationship between Christ and the believer. We can study our own personal relationship with Christ in our Christian life by studying the ups and downs of the relationship between Solomon and this unnamed Shulamite girl.

Characters in the Song

There are 20 distinctive people or groups of people in the Song that we will list. Each one may be a type for someone else but we will be careful not to stretch any typology past reasonable limits. The following list comes from page 27 of O. Talmadge Spence's commentary on Song of Solomon (Spence lists 18 but I will list 20):

1. Solomon- The Peaceable God, The Elect One
2. The Shulamite- The Peaceable Bride, The Choice One
3. The Daughters of Jerusalem- The Nominal, Carnal Ones (1:5; 2:2,7; 3:5,10,11; 5:8,16; 6:9; 8:4)
4. The flocks- The Closer Ones (1:8)
5. The kids of the flocks- The Infant Ones (1:8)
6. The street watchmen- The Preaching Ones (3:3,4; 5:7)
7. The virgins- The Pure Ones (1:3; 6:8)
8. The Shulamite's Mother- The Institutional Ones (1:6; 3:4,11; 8:1,2,5)
9. Brother- The Kindly Ones (8:1)
10. 60 Valiant Men- The Warrior Ones (3:7,8)
11. Keepers of the walls- The Ecclesiastical Ones (5:7)
12. 60 Queens- The Gracious Ones (6:8,9)
13. 80 Concubines- The Serving Ones (6:8,9)
14. A little sister- The Immature Ones (8:8)
15. Keepers of the vineyard
16. The upright- The Righteous Ones (1:4)
17. The sons
18. The companions- The Backsliding Ones (1:7; 8:13)
19. The shepherds- The Pastoring Ones
20. Friends- the Associated Ones (5:1)

Vocabulary

The Song has a large number of hapax legomena (words that only occur once in the Hebrew Bible), which can make word studies and interpretations challenging.

Other remarks

The Jews saw this Song as a picture of a very mature love-relationship between Solomon and the Shulamite. As such, Jewish men were usually not allowed to read it until they were 30 years old.

Some weak-minded men see questionable sexual references in Solomon which they object to. They feel the Song borders on pornographic. How blasphemous. Only a pornographic mind would see pornography here. We have the secret intimacies of love without immorality. There are no obscenities in the Song. These are the same kind of men who complain about the Song who go home, turn on cable television and watch R-

rated movies and who then listen to the filthy lyrics of rock and country music and read *People* magazine. Unto the pure all things are pure but to the defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure (Titus 1:15, **Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled**). We will delight in all the references to honorable and true love that we see in this book.

“Other books of Solomon lie more obvious and open to common understanding; but, as none entered into the holy of holies but the high priest.”¹

The greatest men in church history have labored long in Song of Solomon. Men like McChesney, Rutherford, Durham, Gill, Spence and the like were well versed in it. It no doubt aided them in their deep spiritual maturity and love toward God. I feel it impossible to develop a strong relationship with Christ unless much time is spent in the Song. This becomes even more important as the last days apostasy deepens. You must know how to live for God in these last days and the only way you can do that is to develop a strong personal walk with Christ and have strong communion with Him. The Song is the singular book of the Bible that is dedicated to that goal.

Most of the doctrinal applications will probably be directed towards Jews in the tribulation period, not toward church age Christians. Even if the application is not toward the Christian, the application can always be made toward the Christian.

The sequence of the narrative can be complex, trying to follow who is speaking at what time. Spence (page 8 of his commentary) gives the following breakdown of who is speaking and when:

The Shualmite speaks in 69 verses:

1:1-7,12-14,16,17	4:16	7:10-13
2:1,3-13,16,17	5:2-8,10-16	8:1-4,8-14
3:1-5,7-11	6:2,3,11,12	

Solomon speaks in 42 verses

1:8-11,15	5:1	7:1b-9
2:2,14,15	6:4-9	8:5b-7,13

The Daughters of Jerusalem speak in 6 verses

3:6	6:1,13ac	8:5a
5:9	7:1a	

Robert Boyd, in the *World's Bible Handbook* (page 260) lists the schools of interpretation of the Song:

1. Allegorical. It is figurative and allegorical, expressing in a variety of lively metaphors the union between Israel and Jehovah as well as Christ and the Church. This is the position we have adopted.

¹ Richard Sibbes, *Union With Christ*.

2. Literal. The Song presents actual history and nothing more.
3. Dramatic. It is the story of a simple country maiden who is taken from her home and her shepherd-lover of the hills to be one of the numerous wives of King Solomon.
4. Literary. It is nothing more than a collection of love songs.
5. Liturgical. It is borrowed pagan liturgy linked to fertility and sex cults.

"The Song of Solomon is meant for the inner circle of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. This sacred Canticle is almost the central book of the Bible; it seems to stand like the tree of life in the midst of the garden of Eden, in the very center of the Paradise of God. You must know Christ, and love Christ, or else many of the expressions in this Book will seem to you but as an idle tale."²

Song of Solomon can be a tough book to study and comment on as it requires a spiritual heart to really understand it and apply it. Some of the worst commentaries on the Song have been by men who treat it more in a theological manner than in a devotional one. Their commentaries may be technically correct, but they are spiritually dry. Only a true divine can make any contributions to our understanding and applying the Song.

The twentieth century (and now twenty-first) has brought the Christian world into the snare of "big-business church administration," mass evangelistic crusades, an emphasis upon numbers, as well as a displeasure for what some think of as a wasteful luxury to have a personal walk with Christ while millions die in sin."³ We do not wonder that the Song is so unpopular in this age. Besides the general decline in spirituality in the modern church, pastors today are more interested in church growth, "soul winning", attendance, and political engagement rather than developing their people spiritually for God. The Song will not lend itself to church growth or evangelism. It will evangelize Christians to the Christian life and some sinners may be drawn to Christ through the "Shulamite Evangelism" that is laid out in the Song. It can be a difficult book to study and preach through for the preacher with no walk with God. You can tell how "spiritual" a pastor is by how much time he spends in the Song.

Suggested Outlines

O. Talmadge Spence in his commentary:

1. The Vineyard: Works Without Consecration 1:1-17
 1. The Soliloquy 1:1-4
 2. The Work 1:5-11
 3. The Fragrance 1:12-17
2. The Banquet House: Rejoicing Without Consistency 2:1-17
 1. The Place of Love 2:1-7
 2. The Hills of Memory 2:8-13
 3. The Staircase to Revival 2:14-17

² Charles Spurgeon, "Love's Vigilance Rewarded in *The Most Holy Place*, page 244.

³ O. Talmadge Spence, *Song of Solomon*, page 1.

3. The Wilderness: Trials Without Watchfulness 3:1-11
 1. The Dark Street 3:1-5
 2. The Kingly Carriage 3:6-11
4. The Mountains: Magnificence Without Militancy 4:1-5:1
 1. The Shulamite Portrait 4:1-7
 2. The Mountain Dens 4:8-11
 3. The Garden Heart 4:9-5:1
5. The Garden House: Retirement Without Refirement 5:2-16
 1. The Slumber Room 5:2-8
 2. The Solomon Portrait 5:9-16
6. The Valley Garden: Longings Without Fulfillments 6:1-13
 1. The Lower Beauty 6:1-10
 2. The Upper Drawing 6:11-13
7. The Heavenly Chamber: View From the Battlements 7:1-13
 1. The Gospel Concerning Heaven 7:1-9
 2. The Gospel Delight in Heaven 7:10-13
8. The Millennial Chamber: View From the City 8:1-14
 1. A New Relationship 8:1-7
 2. A New Adventure 8:8-14

Spence summarizes the plot of the Song of Solomon on pages 3 and 4 of his commentary:

"The story commences with the appearance of the Shulamite living in the rural area north of Jerusalem some sixty miles at Baalhamon in the Lebanon region. There are joining farms with vineyards as well as pomegranate orchards, and to the southeast and beyond Jerusalem, many gardens, springs, fountains, fig orchards, as well as certain other orchard areas. There are hills and mountains north, east, and south to the vineyards.

The Shulamite has a very natural loveliness, but is shunned by her family as something of an "ugly duckling" or "Cinderella." However, she is a very conscientious heart and is often taken advantage of her good nature; she is called upon to keep the vineyards as well as work them.

The owner of the vineyard appears in the garb of a young Shepherd giving every appearance as both a handsome and personable, friendly and gracious, individual. The father of the Shulamite is nowhere mentioned in the Song and is probably deceased; the mother seems to be present in the early narrative but possibly dies before the end of the story. The family is large and there are at least sixteen different groups of people centrally associated with the Shulamite home. All of them come to know more about the Shepherd-Owner through the Shulamite, and from her family, the Daughters of Jerusalem, are well-known throughout the region, very influential, and have been introduced into the royal identification with the palace of the King at Jerusalem, although they are not as familiar with the royal family as they might have one to believe.

After some days of talking with the tall, handsome Shepherd concerning the matters of the vineyard, the Shulamite becomes aware of the fact that he is definitely manifesting an increased love for her through their conversations. He is more frequent

to visit her, and their conversations have enlarged to genuine thoughts of love. However, he loved her first.

As more time passes, he indicates to her that he must go away for some length of time, but that he would return and take her for his bride. But as there had been Chambers of testing experiences through which she had been drawn by his love in meeting him before, so there would be other Chambers of trials before she would see him again. But she cared not for that as long as she would continue to be drawn deeper into his love. This love was of such a quality, that it would take a heavenly story to compare with its depth and height.

While he was away, which was for a considerable time, the Shulamite longed for him, and was love-sick for him, at times dreamed both day and night for him. She sent messages to him through indirect means, not knowing the effectiveness of her messengers. There were, from time to time, mountains and hills of distance between them; yet, at other times, he seemed near in spite of his absence. However, she continued her obedient life in the vineyards of his fruits and gardens of his beauties.

After many, many days, a royal purple-covered, silver framed, golden railing and bottom carriage arrived in the rural area of her home. She could not believe its presence when she saw its beauty; others wondered at its sight and concerning its purpose. Sixty valiant men of Israel accompanied it and a written invitation was given to the Shulamite after earnest search had been made to bring her to the carriage. But the written invitation was genuine; it was signed with a royal name. She was to proceed in the carriage to the royal city of Jerusalem, to immediately go into the presence of the King's Mother to wait her audience with the King himself.

She entered the carriage, read the full character and description of the King's words. Her own loveliness was presented in the letter, being the result of the character and love of the King. But as there had been Chambers of victory into which she had already passed in coming to his love, so there would be other Chambers of testings into which she must enter along the way to Jerusalem as the carriage would stop from time to time, or, pass through some valley or over some hill.

Finally, however, she would reach a deep valley of nuts, "to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded," from which she would be raptured away by his love to the high Palace above all her past valleys and hills.

Her departure into the seventh Chamber of her bridal fulfillment did not hinder the full testimony of her Beloved Solomon to be left for those who remained back in the valleys and hills of the earth. Her testimony of her Beloved was well established in the earth before she left. For others, too, must ready themselves to share in the wonderful beauty of the Lamb's Wife and the final golden age throughout eternity."

In most of my commentaries, I outline the text but I am not doing so in the Song (I also didn't do it for my commentary on 1 John). Besides noting who is speaking, the Song does not lend itself to being easily outlined and the text is mainly a series of running dialogues between the various characters.

Why is Song of Solomon so important to the last days remnant saint?

1. This is Solomon's greatest, and most important song.

- A. It is the only one of his 1,005 songs that the Holy Spirit chose to preserve for us.
- 2. It details the relationship between Solomon and the Shulamite
 - A. By extension, it describes the relationship between Christ and the saint.
- 3. The Song shows how they met, the ups and downs of their relations, the blessings and the eventual fulfillment of it
 - A. Like any human relationship, the Song shows that the Christian life and walk has its difficulties and blessings.
- 4. It shows that the most important thing in the Christian life is his relationship with Christ.
 - A. It is not soulwinning, church planting or building, or anything like that. Service is important but relationship is more important than all.
 - i. There was a neo-fundamentalist conference in 2022 where one of the celebrity speakers mentioned that Fundamentalism (as they defined it) was centered on “service, standards, separation and soulwinning”. The host preacher left out the biggest “S” of them all, sanctification (holiness). But modern neo-fundamentalism cares little for sanctification and emphasizes numerical church growth. This is a major reason for the weakness in modern churches. Soulwinning is necessary but it is NOT a substitute for holiness and service doesn’t cause sanctification (that is usually the other way around).
 - ii. Neo-Fundamentalism⁴ specializes in “horizontal Christianity” which is all about service, numbers and results. What is needed is “vertical Christianity”, where there is the relation with Christ and commune with God.
 - B. This is the only thing that is going to get us through this age. Otherwise, this age will chew you up and destroy you.
 - i. Consider Amos 8:12, **Thus saith the LORD; As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear; so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus in a couch.**
- 5. It demonstrates the love of Christ toward us and how we ought to love Christ.
- 6. The Song introduces us to and describes a number of types of people that we will deal with in our Christian lives (virgins without number, Daughters of Jerusalem, etc...)
- 7. Of all the books in the Bible, the Song is the one that is the most likely to spark revival, primarily on a personal level. Since the Song deals with our relation to Christ and His love toward us, what better book is there to start a revival? Most preachers would go to Acts for revival, but Acts is a historical account of the early church. It does not deal as much with heart matters.
- 8. Consider the weakness in our churches. I heard an evangelist say once that he doubted if 10% of church members in our professing Bible-believing churches were actually saved. I think I believe him. If that is true, it is because carnality is the master sin in the churches. Pastors, who want to see their churches grow numerically, won’t attack the problem for fear that people will leave. One of the largest mission fields is not

⁴ The J. Frank Norris/Sword of the Lord/Jack Hyles version of Fundamentalism, which is not historic Fundamentalism.

China or Africa, but those who attend church on Sunday morning. Whatever percentage is saved, few are going on with God and few are taking their Christianity seriously in seeking a walk with God. The burdens of the Song of Solomon address these needs.

A. This is also demonstrated in the lack of divines and divinity schools in our generation. A theological divine is a man who knows his doctrines as well as his devotions. A divinity school stresses spirituality as well as doctrine. The neo-fundamentalist Bible Colleges⁵ will offer a “church education” class, usually an hour a day for five days a week. They may have a 1-hour class on prayer but the practical course hours may out-number the spiritual courses by 5-to-1. You have “Harvard Divinity School” and “Yale Divinity School” but you will get nothing but apostasy from them. Honestly, how many “divines” or “divinity schools” can you name today? I can only think of maybe three to five men (I know there are others that I simply do not know about in the limited circles in which I run, but there are not many) and one or two colleges, but that is it. I think a deeper personal study in the Song of Solomon would help that situation.

9. The Song is such a unique book with a unique presentation that only a certain type of commentary will be useful. Most critical commentaries will be of little help. Most “standard” commentaries will miss the deeper spiritual meanings presented in the Song. It will take a true divine to unlock the message of the Song and those kinds of commentaries are rare.

“There is no book of the Bible which affords a better test of the depth of a man’s Christianity than the Song of Solomon. (1.) If a man’s religion be all in his head—a well-set form of doctrines, built like mason-work, stone above stone—but exercising no influence upon his heart, this book cannot but offend him; for there are no stiff statements of doctrine here upon which his heartless religion may be built. (2.) Or, if a man’s religion be all in his fancy—if, like Pliable in the *Pilgrim’s Progress*, he be taken with the outward beauty of Christianity—if, like the seed sown upon the rocky ground, his religion is fixed only in the surface faculties of the mind, while the heart remains rocky and unmoved; though he will relish this book much more than the first man, still there is a mysterious breathing of intimate affection in it, which cannot but stumble and offend him. (3.) But if a man’s religion be heart religion—if he hath not only doctrines in his head, but love to Jesus in his heart—if he hath not only heard and read of the Lord Jesus, but hath felt his need of Him, and been brought to cleave unto Him, as the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely, then this book will be inestimably precious to his soul; for it contains the tenderest breathings of the believer’s heart towards the Saviour, and the tenderest breathings of the Saviour’s heart again towards the believer.”⁶

“The Holy Men of Church History. Besides the Holy Men of Biblical Inspiration and the Holy Men of Character in the Bible, there have been holy men of God down through history, outside the directly revealed biblical account. We are especially thinking of

⁵ Patterned after the burden of Jack Hyles and Hyles-Anderson College.

⁶ Robert Murray McCheyne, “The Voice of My Beloved” in Andrew Bonar’s *Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray McCheyne*.

those men in church history since the New Testament was completed, although a study could also be made of the Old Testament as well. We believe that our Heavenly Father has given us a legacy of saints which has been communicated to us through the various autobiographies and biographies of the centuries between the First and Second Advents.

"Although there is evident in church history the corporate manifestation of the church, there is equally manifested, and very importantly so, the presence of the individual church within the remnant men and movements. These individual puritans and pilgrims of the grace of God have been a great blessing to each of their succeeding generations. When we enumerate the names of the Waldensians, the Hussites, the Bogomils, the Moravians, the Little Flock, the Albigensians, the Paulicians, the Swiss Brethren, the Puritans, the Pilgrims, the Holy Club, etc., we do not identify them with total endorsement. But we do thank God for these remnant forces which so often demonstrated certain characteristics of purity and holiness: simplicity, spirituality, piety, love, communion, fellowship, godliness, character, integrity, joy, refreshment, hospitality, congeniality, firmness, discipline, steadfastness, and other virtues. They were usually small in number, overlooked by the average historian, possessed a dynamic sense to exist, left no institutions, emphasized the Scriptures, taught communion with God, often lacked administrative leadership, held much in common, and often experienced martyrdom. If we were to call the names on the roster of such holy grace, we would certainly leave out someone, but we must at least designate a token of their identities in the earth. They are at least seen in the following: Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626), Richard Baxter (1615-1691), Peter Bohler (1712-1775), Thomas Boston (1676-1732), William Bradford (1590-1657), David Brainerd (1718-1747), Phillips Brooks (1835-1893), John Calvin (1509-1564), William Carey (1761-1834), Peter Cartwright (1785-1872), Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847), Thomas Coke (1747-1814), John Huss (1371-1415), Sam Jones (1847-1906), John Knox (1515-1572), Hugh Latimer (1485-1555), Martin Luther (1483-1546), George Muller (1805-1898), Nicholas Ridley (1500-1555), Johann von Staupitz (to 1524), William Tyndale (1494-1536), Peter Waldo (1140-1218), Isaac Watts (1647-1748), John Wesley (1703-1791), George Whitefield (1714-1770), John Wycliffe (1302-1384), etc.

"Never has there been a time in history when we needed more examples of godliness and purity than in our own twentieth century. The world has all but lost an understanding of the glory of Christ in the life of the pure in heart. Who of us has not been richly blessed by Andrew A. Bonar's presentation of *Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne*? I continue to thank God for C. H. Spurgeon's "The Two Wesleys," a lecture delivered in the Metropolitan Tabernacle Lecture Hall, December 6, 1861. *The Life of Rev. John Fletcher, of Madeley*, reveals as much piety and humility into the soul as theology to the mind. What will happen to the saints of God when we no longer see and read these spiritual classics of church history as both devotional and inspirational to our daily lives? We shall lose much in future generations when these fountains are no longer brought into our present deserts of theological presumptions. From my own studies, I have realized that a complete and accurate account of the life and ministry of George Whitefield has not, to this day, been written in its proper research. Only heaven will reveal it. There is not only the realization of individual, personal communion with God, but in the corporate study, there is the call for church

revival among all the saints through these historical writings. Let there ever be the blessedness of this resource among us.

My second son, Paul Eric Spence, speaks of the following men as setting forth two great truths through their own ministries and writings: Richard Sibbes (1577-1635), Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661), Thomas Brooks (1608-1680), James Durham (1622-1658), John Bunyan (1628-1688), John Flavel (1630-1691), Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), John Newton (1725-1807), and Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813-1843). The two great truths they magnify are (1) the glories of Jesus, the Son of God, and (2) the blessedness of the unmerited grace of God through His Son.

"In our own time of the Great Apostasy, before the manifestation of the final Antichrist, let us not be discouraged or dissuaded from the longings of the glories of Christ and His grace in our own life as we war against the artistry of error. Saints are needed now, and saints are living now--in our time!"⁷

"First, there is a great dearth of books giving a genuine presentation of the Song of Solomon. The more popular ones are either too mystical or too physical; either too sensual or too romantic; either too modern or too intimate. There remains the quotations of Robert Murray M'Cheyne and Andrew A. Bonar of the Song in journals and sermons; the solid foundation of all terms, places, and persons of John Gill; the keenly devotional insights of Rev. Mr. James Durham; the practical and persistent commentary of George Burrowes; the purity of word studies of Dan T. Muse; and the plausible presentation of the plot of the Song by H. A. Ironside. Otherwise, we shall labor over and again to gain better works from other men.

"Second, the Song of Solomon is quite different in depth and spirituality over other books in God's Infalible Word. The drama of Job is obvious, although it, too, is presented in poetry; the hymnbook of Psalms is readily appreciated; the court scenes and theological treatises are evident in Romans; the fast-moving activity in Acts is always interesting; the presentation of faith and the faithful is inspiring in Hebrews; but when we draw aside to the Song of Solomon there are questionings and misunderstandings often assumed.

"Third, the twentieth century has brought the Christian world into the snare of "big-business church administration," mass evangelistic crusades, an emphasis upon numbers, as well as a displeasure for what some think of as a wasteful luxury to have a personal walk with Christ while millions die in sin.

"Finally, many have concluded that the Song has been terribly distorted and ruined for any serious consideration by modern man. Because of the preponderance of this conclusion, the study of the Song has almost become extinct, and many have forgotten that the Divines (distinguished from the fathers, scholastics, papists, theologians, and the churchmen), including some of the Reformers, in spite of the darkness of their day and its apostasy, found a great refuge of soul in this neglected Song of their own generation."⁸

⁷ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Quest for Christian Purity*, pages 307-309.

⁸ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, pages 1-2.

I don't understand the re-translating of the Song into verse by many commentators, especially the ones from the 19th century. There is no need to re-translate the Song of Solomon into your version of verse or poetry. These add nothing to the understanding or application of the book. The traditional readings in our Authorized Version are sufficient.

Song of Solomon Chapter 1

Song of Solomon 1 is one of the most spiritually fruitful chapters in the Bible. Charles Spurgeon lists one work by John Collinges on the first two chapters that runs 1,439 pages! It's hard to stop commenting on this chapter after you have started.

1:1 The song of songs, which is Solomon's.

Of the 1005 songs Solomon wrote (1 Kings 4:32), this one must rank as the best, greatest, the superlative, (hence the title "Song of Songs", the greatest of them all). Greatest of all songs was a love story which is designed to be interpreted as the courtship between the Christian and his Christ, the highest and noblest human topic there is. Most human songs sing about human emotions and experiences (especially sex). This Song sings about divine love.

Fallen humanity likes to exalt its singers and the sinful, humanistic things they sing about. Men will exalt Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, The Beatles, Taylor Swift or certain styles of music (especially jazz, which has a weird sort of popularity). Yet 99% of the music composed and sung by fallen man is the song of fools (Ecclesiastes 7:5) and is garbage. They may sing about love but it is rather about lust or carnal love. Rap music is nothing more than rape set to music. Country music is mainly about drunkenness and adultery. Jazz music^{9 10} started in the red-light district in New Orleans¹¹ with Dixieland music. There is some good secular music (such as the compositions by Bach or Schubert, both of whom were Bible-believing Christians), yet no song of human composition can compare with any song given by divine inspiration, such as the Song of Moses in Exodus 15, any of the psalms or this Song of Songs.

If Solomon has a song, then so does Christ! He will sing of His beloved.

1. Moses had a song- Exodus 15.
2. Israel had a song- Numbers 21:17.
3. Deborah had a song- Judges 5:3.
4. David had a song- 2 Samuel 22:50.
5. Consider the entire book of Psalms.
6. God will rejoice over us with singing- Zephaniah 3:17.
7. Contrast all this with the song of fools, which is a song of the world- Ecclesiastes 7:5,

It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.

Solomon, like his father, often resorted to music and poetry to express the deepest feelings of his heart, so it would be no shame for Remnant Christians to also resort to the arts to compose similar praises to their heavenly Solomon. Art has suffered terribly in our churches through the 20th century and into the 21st century. We know secular music (rock, country, jazz, adult contemporary...) are horrible and wicked. Southern Gospel and Christian Contemporary music are the soundtrack of the last day's apostasy in the churches. We produce little in the way of good literature. Christian "romance novels" and novels about the Amish are far more popular among Christians than genuine theology books, biographies and spiritual works. Poetry is dead among us. There are few godly hymn-writers among us. The Charismatics "praise" God with

⁹ Jazz is ultimately just a degenerate form of later classical music. Classical music was dead by 1900.

¹⁰ "Jazz" is a filthy slang term for sexual intercourse, similar to "rock and roll".

¹¹ Storeyville, which was a neighborhood in New Orleans where vice and prostitution was legalized around the turn of the 20th century. Peter Ruckman has a good presentation of this in audio series "The History of Popular Music".

their babble of tongues and emotional excesses but we think a more noble way to praise God would be through honorable art that is disciplined by Biblical law, order and design.

Solomon wrote 1,005 songs (1 Kings 4:32) and was quite a composer and musician. By comparison, Georg Handel wrote 119 symphonies, 163 pieces for baritone, 15 masses, 5 oratorios, 42 German and Italian songs, and 365 English songs. The total body of his work was 1,536 compositions. Solomon was not only the wisest man on earth but was one of the greatest composers ever. And Solomon did all this while ruling Israel at the peak of her power and influence. Solomon's work was centuries before the Greeks ever showed up. Secular historians like to say the Greeks "invented" music, poetry and scholarship, but Solomon beat them all by several centuries.

"So, my good Christian brother, what is "good Christian music" for YOU?

1. Any music that makes you think about God and Jesus Christ.
2. Any music that makes you feel like praying or reading the Book.
3. Any music that awakens in you a desire to serve God or to minister to others.
4. Any music that makes heaven and New Jerusalem more real to you.
5. Any music that picks you up spiritually and encourages you to go on serving God
6. Any music that reminds you of the sorrows and heartaches of those around you
7. Any music that makes you thankful for salvation and the blessings of God.

THAT IS "CHRISTIAN" MUSIC. If it doesn't do at least three of those things for you, it is not "Christian."

So here follows what can be "taken or left." It is a recommended list for a Bible believer to expose himself to. These selections are for study: prayerful study. Between them I would say that they cover the full gamut of feelings and experiences in the Christian life from the deepest sorrows and tribulations to the greatest joys and victories. They picture the conflict between the two natures, the goodness and mercy of God, the need to study the past and prepare for the future, the need to "go on" for God, the thrill of victory, the anguish of defeat and the eternal and lasting things that are "unseen." May God bless them to your edification.

J.S. Bach

B Minor Mass
Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor
Air for the G string
Jesus, Joy of Man's Desiring
Elne Festa Burg

G.F. Handel

Joy to the World
Largo from Xerxes
The Water Music
The Messiah
Suite No. 1 in G
Suite in D Minor
Twelve Concerti Grossi

J. Haydn

Quartet In D Minor
Surprise Symphony
Theme and Variations in F Minor

Bocherini

String Quartet In G Minor

Antonio Vivaldi

The Seasons
Concertos for Flute.

A. Mozart

Symphony in G Minor
Symphony In E flat
Overture to the Magic Flute
The Minuet from Don Giovanni
Piano Concerto in E Flat
Elne Kleine Nachtmusik

L. Beethoven

All seven symphonies
Violin Concerto In D Major
All Piano Sonatas
Romans in F for Violin and Piano

Franz Schubert

Symphonies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
 Unfinished Symphony
 The "Great" in C Major
 The Erl King
 Hark. Hark the Lark
 Rosamunde Ballet Music
 String Quartet in D Minor
 Marche Militaire;
 Schubert's Serenade.

J. Brahms

All four symphonies
 Tragic Overture
 Academic Festival Overture
 All Hungarian dances

Felix Mendelssohn

Symphony in A (Italian)
 Hebrides Overture
 Midsummer Night's Dream
 Violin Concerto in E Minor

Robert Schumann

Symphony in C
 Quintet in E Flat
 Carnival Suite
 Sonata for Violin and Piano

Franz Liszt

Les Preludes
 A Faust Symphony,
 Hungarian Rhapsody

Johann Strauss

All waltzes.

Richard Strauss

Der Rosenkavalier
 Death and Transfiguration
 Sprach Zarathustra.

Richard Wagner

The Flying Dutchman Overture
 Anything from Lohengrin and Tannhauser.

Anything by Telemann, Vivaldi, Bocherini. Purcell or Albinoni will be In the SPIRITUAL PERIOD around or before the time of Bach. All of It Is "good stuff".¹²

The Song of Solomon is one of three books in the Bible that centers on a woman. This is interesting since the Church and the individual Christians who make up the Body of Christ are addressed in the feminine gender in Scripture.

1. The Book of Ruth depicts the Christian (Ruth) seeking and finding her Christ (Boaz).
2. Esther deals with the Christian (Esther) reigning with Solomon in the Millennium (as seen with Ahasuerus, a limited type of Christ).
3. Song of Solomon deals with the relationship of the Christian (the Shulamite) and Christ (Solomon) and its ultimate consummation.

As we are introduced to Solomon, we must identify him in the typology he represents. We will do this with every one of the 20 characters we encounter. Solomon is obviously a type of the Lord Jesus Christ who is wooing a bride. He meets the Shulamite and spots her first. He initiates the courtship. The Shulamite thinks of herself as unworthy of his attention, yet Solomon sees something in her that she does not see in herself. This is a very fitting picture we have then of the Christian. Our attitude is much like that of the Shulamite- who are we that a king would pay us any attention? What does he see in me? Behold then the love and the grace of God which are directed to us, why we do not know. If grace had a reason, it would no longer be grace. If divine love had a human motivation, it would cease to be divine.

"Furthermore, Solomon is a type of Christ in the following particulars:

- 1) Solomon has a Gentile bride (1 Kings 7:8); Christ has a Gentile bride (Eph. 2:11–22).

¹² Peter Ruckman, "Music For Bible Believers", Bible Believer's Bulletin, April and May, 1988. I'm not sure I would agree about Richard Strauss and Wagner.

2) Solomon is King of the Jews (1 Kings 11:42); Christ is "King of the Jews" (Matt. 2:2; Luke 1:31–33).

3) Solomon could answer any question put to him (1 Kings 10:1–3); Christ was able to answer any question put to Him (Matt. 22:15–46).

4) Solomon got back all the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (1 Kings 4:21; 1 Chron. 18:3); Christ will get it when He comes again (Ezek. 47–48).

5) A Gentile Queen comes to see Solomon (1 Kings 10:1–13) just as the Gentiles will come to Christ in the Millennial kingdom (Zech. 14:16–19; Isa. 11:9–12; Matt. 8:11).

Of course, Solomon is also a type of the Antichrist. When the number 666 shows up in 1 Kings 10:44 and 2 Chronicles 9:13, the Bible starts discussing the sins of Solomon with regards to multiplying gold, horses, and wives (Deut. 17:14–17), then Solomon turns to idolatry (1 Kings 11) and becomes a type of the Antichrist. But up until that point, he is a type of Jesus Christ reigning in His Millennial kingdom. If Solomon is a type of Christ, then any woman connected with him as a bride or a wife in the Song of Solomon has to be a type of the Church, the Body of Christ (Eph. 5:22–32).¹³

"The word 'Solomon' is the masculine gender from which 'Shualmite' is the feminine. Therefore, both words are rooted in the same; both are related to 'Peace.' Possibly, a distinction should be made as 'Peaceable' and 'Peaceably' in the distinctiveness of their respective genders. The names of Patrick and Patricia, Robert and Roberta, Sherman and Sharman, Frances and Francis, are typical examples of the same linguistic patterns."¹⁴

"It was proper that such a Song should be written by Solomon. Aaron having prefigured Christ as a priest, and Moses foreshadowing him as a prophet, Solomon prefigured him as a king. And while David represents Jesus as suffering persecution and subduing the enemies of his people, Solomon represents him as the triumphant Prince of peace. Under Solomon, the kingdom of Israel was perfectly established by the conquest of all their enemies, and by the building of the temple in Jerusalem; and as the camp in the wilderness may represent the Church in this world, the reign of Solomon may be a representation of the Church in heaven. While, therefore, David sung, in the Psalms, of the various conflicts of the Christian life, Solomon here sings of that which is the end of all our conflicts, the consummation of the love of Christ and his Church."¹⁵

The Shulamite 1:2-7

1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love *is* better than wine.

The book opens rather abruptly, with little in the way of an introduction.

"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth"

1. "The 'kiss' in the Middle East has a far different meaning than to the romanticists of the West. This expression of affection is equally an embracing of shoulders, arms, both sides of the face, with a partial bow, prominently man to man, or in some situations, irrespective of sex. To say the least, it represents a respect and friendship beyond a mere sexual or intimate expression."¹⁶

2. This is a kiss of love and it is a high outward form of affection, probably *the* highest form. People who love each other kiss each other and the Shulamite desired this

¹³ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on the Song Of Solomon*, pages 3-4.

¹⁴ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, pages 16-17.

¹⁵ George Burrowes, *A Commentary on the Song of Solomon*, page 145.

¹⁶ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 18.

outward token of love from Solomon. The Shulamite would not think of asking Solomon to kiss her as that would not be proper etiquette for a lady. She rather expresses the hope that Solomon will start the process by volunteering the kiss.

3. There is a kiss of respect. In Europe and the Middle East, men will kiss each other as a form of greeting, something men in the West will not do as that is associated with sodomy.

4. The unsaved man can expect no such kiss, as they are not in the right relation with Christ to ask for one or expect one, since they are at enmity with God. Would an unsaved man want such a kiss from Christ anyway? He would rather desire some token from the world system that he is a part of than to receive it from Christ, Whom he does not know or love.

Biblical unveiling of the "kiss"

1. The kiss often preceded the blessing:

1.1. Genesis 27:26,27

2. The kiss was the social equivalent of our handshake or hug:

2.1. Genesis 29:11,13; 31:28,55; 33:4; 45:15; 48:10; 50:1

2.2. Exodus 4:27; 18:7

2.3. Ruth 1:9,14

2.4. 1 Samuel 10:1; 20:41

2.5. 2 Samuel 14:33; 19:39; 20:9

2.6. 1 Kings 19:20

2.7. Luke 15:20

2.8. Acts 20:37

3. Kissing was associated with making obeisance and submitting oneself to a superior:

3.1. 2 Samuel 15:5 **And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.**

3.2. Psalm 2:12 **12, Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.**

3.3. Roman Catholics do this with the pope when they kiss his ring. There are also various statutes in Rome that "the faithful" kiss. No Bible Believing Christian would ever do such a horrible thing.

4. Kisses are used in worship of false gods and for idolatry and apostasy:

4.1. 1 Kings 19:18, **Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.**

4.2. Hosea 13:2, **And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.**

5. Kings of the earth are commanded to kiss the Son:

5.1. Psalm 2:12, **Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.**

6. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other in Psalm 85:10, **Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.**

7. The adulteress uses kisses to seduce her victim in Proverbs 7:13, **So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him.**

8. The kisses of an enemy are deceitful:

A Proverbs 27:6, **Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.**

B. Matthew 26:48,49/Mark 14:44,45/Luke 22:47,48, **Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.**

9. Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss in Matthew 26:48,49/ Mark 14:44,45/Luke 22:47,48, **Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.**

10. A woman kisses the feet of Jesus in Luke 7:38,45, **And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment... Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.**

11. The "holy kiss":

A. Romans 16:16a, **Salute one another with an holy kiss.**

B. 1 Corinthians 16:20, **All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.**

C. 2 Corinthians 13:12, **Greet one another with an holy kiss.**

D. 1 Thessalonians 5:26, **Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.**

12. The "kiss of charity" in 1 Peter 5:14, **Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.**

A. "Charity" is a higher form of love than just the generic understanding of "love", as seen in 1 Corinthians 13.

"of his mouth"

1. This is "most sweet" according to the Shulamite in 5:16. How could the mouth of Christ not be sweet?

A. Men use their mouth for blasphemy, cursing, profanity or to stick cigarettes into or pour booze into. Christ's mouth is used to speak the precious truths of Scripture and to glorify His Father. This is how our mouths should be employed. How are you using yours? What is coming out of your mouth? What are you putting into it?

B. Ephesians 4:29, **Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.**

C. Colossians 3:8, **But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.**

2 "In the East the kiss was impressed on the mouth, the hands, the feet, the garments, and even the ground where the feet had trodden—the difference being caused by the greater or less intimacy between the individuals. Permission to kiss the hand of a sovereign is considered an honour; but for that sovereign to give another the kisses of his mouth, is evidence of the tenderest affection, and is the highest possible honour."¹⁷

"thy love is better than wine"

1. The Hebrew word here is alcoholic wine and the effects it can have. Wine does have some desirable effects in that it makes those who have well drunk seem to be in a happier frame of mind. But true love does what wine cannot in producing a genuine feeling of blessedness. Paul draws this contrast in Ephesians 5 where he urges not to be drunk with wine but rather to be filled with the Spirit. If you must be intoxicated, avoid wine and allow the love of God and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to do that work. Love is better than drunkenness although they may produce somewhat similar physical results. Wine makes the heart glad but love makes the spirit glad.

2. Here is something better than wine- the love of Christ that we are introduced to at salvation! The world offers its mixed and watered-down wine but Christ's wine far surpasses even the best that this fallen and wicked world has to offer. Once we have

¹⁷ George Burrowes, *Commentary on the Song of Solomon*, page 126.

tasted of that heavenly wine, nothing that the world will offer us will compare or distract us.

2.1. Why fool around with booze when we have something better- the love of Christ? Christians don't need intoxicating beverages as we have something better than wine, which is the love of Christ. The world loves its booze and drunkenness and they really think they have found the source of joy- in a bottle. Yet their joy only lasts until the buzz wears off. Then they have to deal with a hangover that would kill a horse. Even worse, the booze will land them in hell. The Christian has found something so much better, the Source of true and genuine joy that has no let-down and that lasts forever! Yet when we try to tell our fellow sinners of the "better bottle" we have found, they want nothing to do with it! Sinners are like the drunks who sit in the alley behind the liquor store, drinking Old Crow or Old Turkey Buzzard out of a paper bag, thinking they really have something!

How is the love of Christ better than wine?

1. **Because it may be taken without question and with no ill effects.** The wisdom of imbibing freely of the love of Christ shall never be questioned even by the pure spirits in heaven; this is the wine which they themselves quaff in everlasting bowls at the right hand of God, and the Lord of glory himself bids them quaff it to their fill. Many are the mighty men who have fallen down slain by wine.

A. Solomon says, "**Who has woe? who has sorrow? who has contentions? who has babbling? who has wounds without cause? who has redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine**" (Proverbs 23:29).

B. But who was ever slain by the love of Christ? Who was ever made wretched by this love? But you may drink freely and to your fill of the love of Christ and there are no ill effects. A man may get drunk on wine, beat his wife, starve his children and make a fool of himself, or worse. But there are no negative effects of the love of Christ.

C. "There may be, and there always will be in the world, questions about wine. There will be some who will say, and wisely say, "Let it alone." There will be others who will exclaim, "Drink of it abundantly;" while a third company will say, "Use it moderately." But there will be no question amongst upright men about partaking to the full of the love of Christ. There will be none of the godly who will say, "Abstain from it;" and none who will say, "Use it moderately;" but all true Christians will echo the words of the Heavenly Bridegroom himself, "Drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved."¹⁸

2. **Because it is to be had without money.** Many a man has beggared himself, and squandered his estate, through his love of worldly pleasure, and especially through his fondness for wine; but the love of Christ is to be had without money. What says the Scripture? "Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." The love of Christ is 'unpurchased'; and I may add that it is 'unpurchasable'. Solomon says, "If a man would give all the substance of his house for the love of Christ, it would be utterly condemned." Christ's love is the freest thing in the world, as free as the sunbeam, free as the mountain torrent, free as the air. It comes to the child of God without purchase and without merit, and in this respect, it is better than wine.

¹⁸ Charles Spurgeon, "Better Than Wine", *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Sermon 1896.

3. **Because it is to be enjoyed without tiring.** You will not tire of the love of Christ although you may eventually tire of wine. Even a drunkard may eventually tire of his wine, but the believer will never tire of the love of Christ.

A.. "He who has had most of Christ's love has cried, "More! More! More!" If ever there was a man on earth who had Christ's love in him to the full, it was holy Samuel Rutherford; yet you can see in his letters how he labored for suitable expressions, while trying to set forth his hungering and thirsting after the love of Christ. He says he floated upon Christ's love like a ship upon a river, and then he quaintly asks that his vessel may sink, and go to the bottom, till that blessed stream shall flow right over the masthead of his ship. He wanted to be baptized into the love of Christ, to be flung into the ocean of his Savior's love; and this is what the true Christian ever longs for."¹⁹

3.2. Again with Rutherford, Spurgeon continues, "But it would be far better if you could come up to Rutherford's ideal, "I would have my soul sunk over its masthead in a sea of love to Christ. I would be sunken fifty fathoms deep in the mighty shoreless ocean of his love, so that there might be nothing left of me, and that I might be swallowed up in love to Christ, and in Christ's love to me."²⁰

4. **Because it is without imperfections.** All wine has something in it which renders it imperfect, and liable to corruption; there is something that will have to settle, something that must be skimmed off the top, something that needs refining down. So is it with all the joys of earth, there is sure to be something in them that mars their perfection. Men have sought out many inventions of mirth and pleasure, amusement and delight; but they have always found some hitch or flaw somewhere. Solomon gathered to himself all manner of pleasant things that are the delight of kings; he gives us a list of them in the Book of Ecclesiastes, but his verdict concerning all of them was, "**Behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit**" (Ecclesiastes 1:14,17; 2:11,17,26; 4:4,6,16, 6:9).

5. **Because it will never, as wine will, turn sour.** In certain stages of development, and under certain influences, the sweet ferments, and vinegar is formed instead of wine. Oh, through what fermentations Christ's love might have passed if it had been capable of being acted upon by anything from outside of him! Oh, how often, beloved, have we grieved him! We have been cold and chill towards him when we ought to have been like coals of fire. We have loved the things of this world, we have been unfaithful to our Best-beloved, we have allowed our hearts to wander to other lovers; yet never has he been soured toward us, and never will he be. Many waters cannot quench his love, neither can the floods drown it. He is the same loving Savior now as ever he was, and such he always will be, and he will bring us to the rest which remains for the people of God. Truly, in all these respects, because there are none of these imperfections in his love, it is better than wine.

6. **Wine can run out and be exhausted,** as in the wedding at Cana in John 2. But the love of Christ can never be exhausted.

7. **Wine can cheer the heart but it is only temporary and the effects will eventually wear off.** The love of Christ is a permanent thing that lasts forever and only increases in strength and intensity as the years wear on.

8. **Christians don't need (alcoholic) wine!** It is not fitting for us to drink alcoholic wine.

A. Proverbs 31:4, **It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor princes strong drink.** Then a Christian does not need to drink wine because the same Lord who "**loved us and washed us from our sins in his**

¹⁹ Charles Spurgeon, "Better Than Wine", *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Sermon 1896.

²⁰ Cited by Charles Spurgeon in "The Memory of Christ's Love, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Sermon 1894.

own blood...hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father
(Revelation 1:5,6).²¹

The love of God is better than any earthly wine because God always gives the best wine at the last. At the wedding in Cana in John 2, the governor of the feast made that observation that usually, men set forth the best wine first, then the cheaper stuff. But because of Christ's miracle of turning the water into wine, the best wine was coming at the end. The world always gives the best wine at the first, in the days of your youth. When you have well drunk, the watered-down wine then is brought out. This is why so many sinners die a bitter death, because they are now on the vinegar when the world promised them the good wine. Look at many young singers, actors, stars...they are getting the good wine of the world in their teens and twenties. The world gets them hooked. But as they age into their thirties and forties, the world tires of them as it has squeezed all it can out of them. So now, they are given the bitter dregs of the world. But God does just the opposite. We get the vinegar first, in the days of our sins. When we are saved, then God brings out the good vintage of the Christian life and that vintage and life just keeps getting better and better (see John 10:10, where Jesus says He has come to give life and that more abundantly). And God just keeps giving better and better in this life, and when we die, God does not stop. In glory, the choice treasures from the divine wine cellar are brought out, and it just never stops- for eternity!

Here is the cure for drunkenness (or any other sin). Replace the love of that sin with the love of God and the divine love will crowd out the love for that sin. The human heart is large enough for only one such love, either for sin or for God. One will always crowd out the other. The Christian has no need for wine or booze or liquor because he has found something better, the love of Christ and communion with Christ. The love of Christ would be the perfect treatment for a drunkard or a drug addict, using the Replacement Principle. If you are going to take something away, you have to replace it with something better. This also works with music. Trying to wean yourself off of rock or country music? Expose yourself to the good, old hymns of the faith. Addicted to booze or drugs? Replace that love with a better love, the love of Christ.

Also consider Psalm 4:7,8 (**Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety**) where the joys of the believer outstrip any joy of an unsaved man. The love of Christ is greater than any love or pleasure that the world can offer.

Wine was also used as a medicine in the East in this day.²² See the Good Samaritan pouring in oil and wine to the wounds of the man attacked on the roadside in Luke 10:34. Wine can be used to heal the wounds of the flesh but only the love of Christ can be used to heal the wounds of the spirit that human medicine cannot touch.

"It is preferable to wine in the effects of it.

1. **Wine will revive and cheer a man that is of an heavy heart**, and therefore it is advised to be given to such, as in Proverbs 31:6 (**Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.**), yet it will not bring a man to life that is dead; but such is the nature of Christ's love, that when it is conveyed

²¹ It is amazing how many professing Christians want to drink alcoholic wine "casually" or use alcoholic wine in communion (thus destroying the type of the sinlessness of Christ's blood). They insist it is no sin to drink intoxicating beverages. They insist on their "liberty" to do so. These same people then mock we Bible- believing Christians for abstaining and using non-fermented grape juice in our communion services.

²² It still is today. Cough syrup has alcoholic. Paul did tell Timothy to use a little wine to fight stomach problems in 1 Timothy 5:23.

into the heart of a sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, it makes him alive; for whenever it is a time of love to a poor sinner, it is also a time of life; nay, it not only conveys life, but it maintains and supports it and keeps souls from dying; he that has had it shed abroad in his heart, by the Spirit, shall never die the second death.

2. Wine may remove a worldly heaviness, or a sorrow on the account of worldly things, the things of time; but not of spiritual heaviness, or a sorrow on the account of the things or another world, the things of eternity; but the manifestation of Christ's love to the soul, can remove this sorrow and heaviness, and fill it with a joy unspeakable and full of glory, and give him that ease, comfort, and satisfaction of mind, he is wishing for:

3. If a man drinks never such large draughts of the wine of Christ's love, it will never hurt him, when other wine, with excessive drinking of it, not only wastes the estates, but consumes the bodies, and destroys the health of men; but of this a man may drink freely and plentifully, without doing himself any hurt; nay, it will be of considerable advantage to him, and therefore says Christ, in 5:1. Eat, O friends, yea, drink abundantly, O my beloved."²³

"She is thus confessing at this stage that the ordinary or elementary relationship can no longer satisfy her heart and that she craves that direct expression of His love for herself which is not possessed by another—in other words, she wants to go much further than the ordinary believer. This marks the starting point of real spiritual progress. It is an inward spiritual longing for the Lord Himself. The ultimate realization of His love and this quest of the heart with its fervent desires are eternally inseparable. If a believer has not this reality of a questing spirit created within him by the Holy Spirit—this dissatisfaction with the ordinary and this ardent pursuit of love's full end—then it is utterly impossible to attain to any intimate relationship with the Lord."²⁴

1:3 Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.

"savour" The smell.

The **ointments** would be like perfume or cologne which would be very fragrant. Solomon's name is poured out as one pours out this type of ointment. The result would be filling the room with a fragrant odor. The name of Christ, when it is poured out in preaching, witnessing or public prayer, likewise fills a room with a sweet-smelling savor. All of Christ is savory- every act, word, deed and office that He possesses. We cannot say too much about the name of Christ. A commandment was dedicated to ensuring its preservation and respect (see Exodus 20:7, where the name of Christ was not to be taken in vain.). The name of Jesus is above every name and every knee will bow to it. We must dedicate ourselves to upholding it and promoting it through evangelism and the Christian life. Let us also make sure we do not do damage to it through a sinful life!

"thy name"

1. There is nothing greater in the Christian life than the exaltation of the name of Jesus. Not even soul-winning, or some other human work, is greater than exalting His name.

2. Think about the names and titles for Christ. For example, Isaiah 9:6 lists four great titles for Christ as **"Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."**

²³ John Gill, *Exposition of the Song of Solomon*.

²⁴ Watchman Nee, *The Song of Songs*.

3. The character of a person is often bound up in a name. Nabal (1 Samuel 25) means "fool" and that is exactly what he was. Christ changed Simon's name to Peter. Saul became known as Paul, "the little one".
4. Christ's name does this, not some theological system or confession of faith or some "big name" preacher or denomination. Pouring out Calvinism or Lutheranism or premillennialism will not fill a room with a pleasant theological smell as these systems are all flawed, human and limited. We put too much stock in a theological system or the teaching or some man or denomination, making them into idols and putting our faith and trust in these things instead of looking to Christ and Christ alone.
5. "Too many professing Christians of our time are more delighted with their experience, the Song, the feeling, the romance, or their emotions than they are the Lord. When the Christian life becomes more subjective, centering upon self and feeling, then the spirituality of the person will deteriorate into legalism and pride rather than being centered upon the Lord Jesus. Faith and Love separated from its rightful Object, the Lord Jesus, is nothing! Faith functions best in the objective sense of God's Word. Although self-inventory, self-contemplation, and self-examination are often abused, yet after such a necessary time from its benefits, we must turn to our Beloved, The Name, again."²⁵

"thy name is as ointment poured forth"

1. The name of Christ is as ointment poured out, much like the drink offering was poured out upon a thirsty earth by the priest. "Yes, Jesus is viewed at Calvary, where He poured out His soul unto death. We think here of another woman in the Bible, the wise woman of Tekoa, when she was concerned before King David over his son Absalom. Joab orchestrated the occasion somewhat (2 Samuel 14:1-3). Her extended plea resolved in her longing heart that the King would 'fetch home again his banished'- his son Absalom (v. 13b). But the classical statement that contains the preciousness of her argument is reached: 'For we must needs die, and are as water split on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him (2 Samuel 14:14).' It takes a poured-out life through the Savior to 'devise' a 'means' to recover and save life 'spilt on the ground'."²⁶
2. As a perfume, Christ must fill the room (or a believer's heart) continually. A room freshener that is not powerful enough to last a long period of time or to completely overpower the offensive odors of a room is not worth its weight. But Christ is an eternal fragrance and His sweet-smelling savor is powerful enough to mask the offensive stench of the world.
3. The name of Christ is to be considered as ointment- it is sweet, fragrant, costly. It makes those who don't smell so good spiritually to smell better. Nothing else can make a sinner stinking from his constant contacts from the world smell better than a good application of Christ upon his soul. Christ turns that stinking sinner into a sweet-smelling saint- nothing else can.
4. Christ's name, as that ointment, must be poured out in order to have any effect. Perfume in the container cannot make a room or a person smell better. It must be taken out of the bottle and be applied before it can have any effect. Likewise, Christ must be taken out of the church building and poured out into the streets and the world of sinners in order for sinner to be able to enjoy His fragrance.

²⁵ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 20.

²⁶ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 24. Spence identifies this "ointment" with the Holy Anointing Oil of Exodus 30:22-33. I interpret more as regular perfume.

5. Since most sinners do not enter church buildings, they would not be able to partake of the fragrance that is Christ's name unless someone took the bottle out to where the sinner was. This is called evangelism- giving sinners an opportunity to enjoy Christ. The best evangelism is letting the sinner get the fragrance of Christ.

6. "The custom of anointing the body is usual in hot climates and contributes greatly to comfort. Even the Greeks, Romans, and others, whose limbs were mostly protected by clothes from the dryness of the air, found the advantage of its use. In going to entertainments, it is probable, that like the Greeks, the Egyptians anointed themselves before they left home; but still it was customary for a servant to attend every guest, as he seated himself, and to anoint his head; and this was one of the principal tokens of welcome. The ointment was contained sometimes in an alabaster, sometimes in an elegant porcelain vase; and so strong was the odour, and so perfectly were the different component substances amalgamated, that some of this ancient ointment in one of the alabaster vases in the museum at Alnwick Castle, yet retains its scent, though between two and three thousand years old." (Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, vol. iii. 379.) "To what extent the luxury of using fragrant oils and the like was carried on, may be inferred from Seneca, Epist. m, who says, that people anointed themselves twice or even three times a day, in order that the delicious fragrance might never diminish. The wealthy Greeks and Romans carried their ointments and perfumes with them, in small boxes of costly materials and beautiful workmanship."—Smith's *Dictionary of Antiquities*.²⁷

What kind of a fragrance is our local church putting out? What do we smell like spiritually?

1. Some smell like hyper-evangelism, bus routes, evangelistic Sunday Schools and services (instead of teaching Sunday Schools and services), "preaching services" instead of worship, attendance and horizontal growth. These churches will do just anything to attract a crowd, including compromise and watering-down the preaching of the Word of God.
2. Some smell like liberalism, modernism, or other shades of formalism.
3. Some smell like a Charismatic freak show, complete with "Christian" rock music, "worship leaders", emotional "preaching" and other modern nonsense.
4. Some smell like a personality cult, where the pastor is trying to build his own little empire. Think of churches that pattern themselves after Jack Hyles and his mentality and instrumentality.
5. Some smell like nothing more than denominational carbon-copies of what their District Superintendents or Bishop or some other "big name" preacher is telling them to say.

To be frank about it, these churches "stink". The churches that "smell good" to the Lord are churches that:

1. Emphasize the preaching and teaching of the Word of God above all else
2. Reject the contemporary Christianity of our day and deliberately seek out "the old paths" and "the good way". Or they re-interpret the "old paths" in a new definition. Modern neo-Fundamentalists²⁸ who affiliate themselves with the *Sword of the Lord*²⁹ do this. They style themselves as "Fundamentalists" but know little about the movement. They deny repentance, think preaching volume equals spirituality, leave off Biblical scholarship and are hyper-evangelical, bowing at the altar of church growth and cheap evangelism.

²⁷ George Burrowes, *Commentary on the Song of Solomon*, pages 132-133.

²⁸ Modern "Independent Fundamental Baptists" as the historic Fundamentalist movement died in the 1990s.

²⁹ Was the *Sword of the Lord* ever truly a historical Fundamentalist newspaper? Opinions vary. I am in the "not really" camp, despite claims by John R. Rice to the contrary.

3. Practice separation from the world, both personal and ecclesiastical.
4. Have spiritual and humble leadership.
5. Have the right attitude and heart about them.

“the virgins love thee” When Christ fills the room, then do the virgins respond. Every virgin loves Christ.

1. Who are the virgins?

A. They are the undefiled, pure companions of the Bride.

B. We see them again in Song 6:8.

C. They would be our companions, our fellow-travelers and pilgrims, Old Testament and tribulation saints in this doctrinal application.

i. We need holy companions in our Christian walk for fellowship, encouragement and example. Look for holy people in your circle. Read the works of great saints of the past and make them your companions for your current walk.

D. A virgin is an undefiled one. A Christian is undefiled in Christ, who is pure, unspotted (James 1:27, **Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.**) and separated from the world. One who is so undefiled will love Christ. They will be attracted to Christ and will love Him. When they hear the name of Christ in a message or a prayer, they will be attracted to Him and their love for Him will be magnified and be displayed.

E. If you are a spiritually undefiled virgin, you will love Christ and be attracted to Him. A professing Christian who has no such attraction to Christ is not such a virgin, nor does that man love Christ as he ought.

2. The unsaved man is obviously not a spiritual virgin as he has no true love for God (else he would be saved) and is living in the defilement of sin. He cannot become a virgin and love Christ properly until he is born again.

3. The backslider is not a spiritual virgin since he has fallen out of love with Christ and has played the spiritual adulterer by going back to the world. He was in love with the world, met Christ, was saved, fell in love with Christ, then was seduced away again by the world and abandoned Christ. He was cleansed from his sin but has chosen to return to the hog-pen of this world and has defiled himself once again.

A. Peter 2:22, **But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.**

4. Prophetically, the virgins would be tribulation saints (Matthew 25, Revelation 14) so we can expect to see tribulation and millennial references in the Song. It is a Jewish book after all so we can expect a lot of dispensational material.

A. We see “wise virgins” and “foolish virgins” in Matthew 25. This is a Jewish and tribulation context, as this text must also be. The virgin here then must be the tribulation Jew who does not fall out to the Antichrist in the tribulation but who remains true to the Scriptures (Revelation 7,14).³⁰

5. The virgins (undefiled ones) love Christ. A good man will love Christ. Someone with a pure heart will love Christ. Good people love Christ, wicked men hate Him. A defiled man will not love Christ as his heart is not fit for it. If a man rejects Christ, he is not a good man, no matter how outwardly moral he is. But when a bad man accepts Christ, he becomes a good man with a redeemed heart and he is now a spiritual virgin. The

³⁰ See my commentary on Matthew 25 in *The Pilgrim Way Commentary on Matthew* for a fuller treatment, available for free at www.pilgrimway.org.

best people who have ever lived were/are Christians. No unsaved man qualifies as he has rejected the love that moved the Son of God to die the worst death possible to die for that sinner.

6. A spiritual person will be attracted to a spiritual person and ministry while a carnal person will be attracted to a carnal presentation of Christian. Look at what a professing is attracted to and what he likes. Is he gravitating toward Christian Contemporary Music or Southern Gospel Music? Toward a manifestation of the "Prosperity Gospel?" Does he emphasize church numerical growth and soulwinning statistics above all else? That is not a spiritual virgin. The virgin is looking for spiritual things, like prayer, meditation, good music and an emphasis on Christ.

A. A virgin will be attracted to spiritual people and spiritual things while a non-virgin will be attracted to carnal churches and worldly people. People like to hang out with their own kind.

For the spiritual application, what are the distinguishing marks of a virgin? (from John Gill's *Exposition on the Song of Solomon*)

1. **For their chaste and strict adherence to Christ**, their only husband, to whom they are espoused; "I have espoused you to one husband," says the apostle, "**that I might present you a chaste virgin to Christ;**" (2 Corinthians 11:2).
2. **For the singleness of their love and affection to Christ**. Their love is not common to all; it is not bestowed upon any creature, but purely reserved for him who alone deserves it; they can every one of them say, "**Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee,**" (Ps. 73:25). Christ requires all their love, he will admit of no rival in it, and they are heartily willing to bestow it all upon him. Those who love any creature, or creature-enjoyment more than Christ, or equally with him, are not worthy of him, nor worthy to be called by the name of virgins.
3. **For their incorruptness in doctrine of faith**. Virgins are such, who having received, "hold fast the faithful word, as they have been taught;" whose souls having been nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrines and established therein, cannot be moved from thence, but will earnestly contend, and strive together "for the faith once delivered to the saints."
4. **For the truth and sincerity of their worship**: they are such who "worship God in spirit and in truth." They have not committed spiritual whoredom, which is idolatry, so they serve the Lord with pure spirits; they desire that whatsoever they do, more especially in divine worship, might be done in faith.
5. **For the purity of their lives and conversations**. Their garments are, in some measure, kept from being spotted with the "pollutions of the world," and which they also frequently wash and make "white in the blood of the Lamb."

"The virgins" denote "the hidden ones" of Psalm 83:3. The expressions are synonymous. The virgins are the companions of the spouse. They are equally chaste and are equally in quest of the Lord. Walking in this spiritual way, then, this loved maiden is far from being alone. Indeed, she is simply one of many virgins."³¹

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

³¹ Watchman Nee, *Song of Songs*.

The Shulamite desires not only a "general call" unto salvation that all men receive, but also a special, specific drawing to Christ Himself. How many Christians respond to the call of salvation but never respond to the call to the Christian life and close, intimate fellowship with Christ! There is a call to salvation and a call to sanctification. One gets us saved, the other makes us a saint. We must hear both calls and we need divine help to respond to both calls.

"Draw me"

1. If the Lord does not draw the sinner, then the sinner cannot be saved (John 6:44, **No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.**").

A.. Followers of John Calvin twist this into a non-scriptural philosophy (not a doctrine) called "Irresistible Grace." This teaching is that if God has chosen you as one of "the elect," then His grace will draw you to receive Jesus Christ, and there is nothing you can do about it. This is not the place to present a full refutation of the teachings of John Calvin and his mentor Augustine, but we do let it be known that we do not hold to this teaching because we do not believe it to be Biblical.

2. The Shulamite will come voluntarily if called but she will not come unless drawn, or invited.

3. "To be saved, we must be drawn; but there remains the drawn life."³²

3.1. We must be drawn to salvation for we cannot approach God on our own, in our sin. No man can come unto Christ except the Father draw him (John 6:44 **"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."**). No man can be saved unless the Father draw him, nor can a man have a desire for and live the Christian life unless the Father draw him as well. Even Christians need a drawing for a sanctified life. But how few respond to both drawings!

3.2. Isaiah responded to a general call in Isaiah 6 and then got the specific call after that. All men get a call to salvation but few respond. Then all Christians get a call to a sanctified life but only a few of them will respond. If a saved Christian makes up a remnant, then a sanctified Christian is a remnant of a remnant.

"Draw me, we will run after thee"

1. Who is the **"we"**? We know the **"me"** is the Shulamite, but who is the **"we"**? The Shulamite's company, her friends, those who share her heart and desire toward Solomon, will follow her as she runs after Solomon. One godly example is powerful to others, for one godly example and heart may influence uncounted multitudes toward righteousness. They follow Solomon as the Shulamite follows him.

A. This reminds us of the 144,000 who follow the Lamb wherever He goes in Revelation 14:4.

2. The Shulamite says draw me and we will run after Solomon. If the Shulamite gets any hints of encouragement from Solomon concerning her desire toward him, then she will respond by running after him.

3. "Draw me" is the highest expression from the Shulamite heart as directed toward Christ. They want nothing more than to be in fellowship with Christ and to have that personal relationship with Him. Nothing else matters. The believer has a personal, individual and unique relationship with Christ. Wherever the Shulamite goes, the virgins follow. She is going to be with Solomon and the virgins certainly want to be there too. She desires the drawing and she receives it but more than she expected.

³² O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 28.

4. She says **“draw me and we will run...”** Note the change in the pronoun. She will not come alone but will bring others with her to Solomon. Not only is this evangelism of the sinner but also evangelism of the saint (see remarks under Song 6:1). We should not come to Christ alone but should always be bringing someone with us, either in salvation or a brother influenced to sanctification by our example and encouragement.

5. "Be quick, my soul, be quick about heavenly things! Creep, if thou wilt, about thy worldly business; but run after thy Lord."³³

A.. Men run to Super Bowl parties, vacations, to the bar, to the brothel, to the night club, but they creep to Church. The spiritual man is just the opposite. You have to drag him to places of sin but you can't keep him away from church activities.

6. We walk with God but we should run after Christ.

A. Genesis 5:22,24, **And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters...And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.**

B. Genesis 6:9, **These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.**

C. Genesis 17:1, **And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.**

D. Amos 3:3, **Can two walk together, except they be agreed?**

7. When the Shulamite is drawn (and not driven), the virgins follow after. Again, this is not really evangelism since the virgins are already saved, but an application could be made.

A. When a sinner is saved, it is hoped that others will follow him into grace once they examine the change that comes into the life of that new believer.

B. This would be better understood as exhortation- follow me as I follow Christ! One thing that encourages so many to follow Christ is a godly example of another. If we meet a Christian who is in love with Christ and is following hard after Christ, does not the radiance of his testimony and love also to compel us to join him in his quest for the Christian life?

C. You ought to be influencing saint and sinner both for good and for Christ by your very life and testimony. If you love Christ enough, both sinner and saint will see it and will be impressed to follow after your Solomon as well.

“the King’s Chambers”

1. Think about this high honor- the very King Himself took **me** into His chambers! Look at the personal reference here. Not a king or a queen or a rich man or a powerful person or a famous person, but me! He wanted me! He deliberately chose me to be with Him!

A. Naturally we believe in election (every Christian does!) but we don't have to be a Calvinist to do it or believe it in the same way they present the doctrine. We know that God has chosen us unto salvation, and we can't figure out why. But we should certainly rejoice and be glad that He wants us to be with Him!

2. I think the Shulamite was quite surprised when she wound up all the way in Solomon's inner chambers. She certainly wasn't expecting it. She wanted Solomon to draw her and look what she got!

A. Salvation is always more than we expect. We think it is simply forgiveness of sin and fire insurance, but how much more is included in the package that we

³³ Charles Spurgeon, "The Memory of Christ's Love" in *The Most Holy Place*, 36).

knew not of! Christ always gives more than what we can ask, think or expect- and He never fails, disappoints or comes up short.

3. "The Christian is born again in a 'mother's chamber', typical of the earthly relationships of the church. The Christian Life is finalized and matured in the King's chambers, typical of the work involved in our growth in grace."³⁴

A. Verse 4 speaks of "his chambers", the King's chambers of Solomon. After the new birth in the "mother's chamber" of the Church, the new Christian is immediately led into the King's chambers as the Christian life is begun.

4. These chambers would like the bedroom or the private area of the house where guests do not go. Everyone has that private area in the house reserved for the most intimate of friends. It is just like in our fellowship with God in prayer. We do not have the restriction placed upon us that the Old Testament Jew had in the tabernacle or temple, in that he could only approach so far but could not go all the way into the holy of holies. We can. We are bidden to come boldly into the very innermost portion of the heavenly temple of God and there to commune. When we pray and worship, we also go into the chambers of the King.

5. This is what full salvation is, being drawn into the King's chambers for communion and fellowship. Before this drawing, all of us were far outside the King's chambers and had no hope of ever getting in. We were without hope and with God in this world, strangers from the commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:12, **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 salvation changes all of that and gives us a relationship with God we did not have before. And this is only possibly through the blood of Christ and the new birth.

A. Many are content to dwell in the outer court yard or to live their lives nowhere near the courtyard and the chambers at all. They are far from Solomon yet this does not bother them. But the Shulamite heard must be as close to Solomon as she can get. Nothing else will do, no other place is acceptable.

6. It is within these very inner chambers where this necessary personal communion is cultivated. Intimate fellowship with Solomon is not grown in the outer court but rather in the prayer closet and in the inner chambers.

A. One reason why many Christians never develop this close communion is because they never allow the King to draw them into His chambers. Intimate communion is done in secret, not in the crowded church building. Do you want close, intimate communion and fellowship with Christ? Get alone with Him in His chambers. Every Christian has their own inner chamber where they can also be alone with Christ- it is called the prayer closet, the secret place, that place of secrecy where we can go to be alone and to fellowship and pray. It is the quiet place, the lonely place, the secret place, but that is where we meet Christ. He draws us into His inner chambers and we meet Him in ours.

B. Christ does not save people *en masse* nor is communion built around the masses. God is a God of the individual and He saves men one at a time. God fellowships and communes with individuals more than He does with the masses. If the virgins want to get into the chambers, they must enter on their own and build their own personal relationships with Christ. They can't live on the blessing of another just as we can't get saved or grow on someone else's faith.

³⁴ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 30.

“we will remember thy love more than wine”

1. The Shulamite and the virgins promise to remember Solomon's love more than wine. We have remarked about the wine under 1:2 and again we emphasize that a relationship with Christ whereby we can be filled with the Spirit brings more joy than wine ever can.

2. Here is the definition of love in the truest sense, what follows in this verse. Do you wish an example and a definition of love in its highest form? Then consider the Father sending His Son to deal with the sin problem of man once and for all in the matter and circumstance in which He did. Every other definition of love fails in comparison. We do not know how to properly love God. We, as sinners, cannot love Him properly, so our love toward God is not significant in our relationship to Him. Our spiritual presupposition does not begin with our love toward God. That is not its starting point. This starting point is that He loved us. We start with that in our theology. That is more important than our loving Him.

3. Herein is love! God the Father sent His Son, His only Son, the delight of His heart, to be birthed into this world and live in poverty for 33 years in a backwater Roman province. He will be despised, rejected, mocked, insulted, ridiculed and put to the most painful, shameful and humiliating death that a man could die. On top of that, Christ will be nailed to that cross for 6 hours and literally become sin incarnate as He takes the sin of the whole upon Him to bear it and suffer the penalty and judgment of it. Christ will become sin and will force the Father to turn His face from His Son while on the cross because the Father could not allow Himself to gaze upon sin, even if it was personified in His own dear sin. The Father will be forced to pour out His infinite wrath upon His own Son and to bruise Him, and eventually die the death of hell. This is love! Would you be willing to sacrifice your only son for 33 years like this? Would you allow sinners to treat your son like Christ was treated? Would you place yourself into a situation where you would be forced to forsake your own son in his hour of greatest need and even to smite him? I doubt it for we simply do not have that kind of love. But God has that kind of love. If you want a good definition of love, then study the incarnation and the cross.

4. “God sent such a One— He “sent His Son.” If men send an embassy to a great power, they select some great one of their nation to wait upon the potent prince. But if they are dealing with a petty principality, they think a subordinate person quite sufficient for such a business. Admire, then, the true love of the infinitely gracious God, that when He sent an embassy to men, He did not commission an angel nor even the brightest spirit before His Throne, but He sent His Son— oh, the love of God to men! He sent His equal Son to rebels who would not receive Him, would not hear Him, but spat upon Him, scourged Him, stripped Him, slew Him! Yes, “He spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all.” He knew what would come of that sending of Him and yet He sent Him!”³⁵

This is really a double resolution:

1. **We will be glad and rejoice in thee.** Let the world rejoice in their clay idols (to cite Samuel Rutherford), such as Oscars, vacations, Super Bowls, etc. They are all worthless in the light of eternity. The Christian is one who understands the correct valuation of things in the context of holy things and in the light of eternity.

2. **We will remember thy love more than wine.** There is also a holy resolve in this- we WILL remember the love of Christ. Memory may fail in all else but as long as we do not forget the love of Christ toward us and His work accomplished on our behalf on the cross, we will be well. Old age or other conditions may rob us of memory and mental

³⁵ Charles Spurgeon, “Herein is Love”, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Sermon 2448.

faculty, but may God help us never to forget this, even if we were stricken with the worst of a disease such as Alzheimer's.³⁶

"The upright love thee"

1. Here is the 4th class of characters, the Upright Ones, who, like the virgins, also love Solomon.
2. They are different from the virgins in Song 1:3, although they also love Solomon, due to the different Hebrews words used. But who are the upright? The Hebrew suggests those who are "upright" are even, prosperous and straight. Anyone who is upright morally and in spirit will love Him who is all Light and Purity, who has no sin.
3. A man may be moral and honest but if he does not love Christ, he cannot be said that he is upright, even if he should make a profession of salvation. Conversely, the backslider, the carnal, the apostate, do not love Christ (properly, if at all) since they are not in a position of spiritual uprightness.
4. The virgin is pure but may be a bit inexperienced in the Christian life. Virgins tend to be young. The upright is also pure but is more mature and experienced in the things of God. The virgins are not expected to stay that way for the rest of their lives (no perpetual virginity here!) but one can be upright for an entire life.

Let's review our current cast:

1. Solomon- Christ
2. Shulamite- the Christian
3. Virgins- undefiled but inexperienced ones
4. Upright- more mature than the virgins.

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

"I am black"

1. The Shulamite now begins a bit of introspection and begins to see her own unworthiness to partake of Solomon's favors. After all, he is a king while she- what is she? A nobody, an unimportant person, overlooked by all of this world's mighty ones, with nothing to offer to Solomon.
2. This is another demonstration of the grace of Christ, who is All in All, as He selects unattractive nobodies to commune with Him. Why Christ chose us is something we will never understand, even in glory. Instead of trying to figure out who is among the elect and why, we ought simply to be grateful that we have been elected in Christ and that we have the opportunities to fellowship with our heavenly Solomon.
3. She is "**black**" also in the sense that she was "low on the totem pole" in terms of society, breeding, education, and social standing. She was a nothing, a nobody, and no one really cared for her.
 - A. What a picture this is of the sinner! Before he is saved, he is nothing, a nobody in the sight of heaven. He may be a millionaire who hobnobs with all the Hollywood types and who dines at the White House. He may be a "big shot" in the eyes of man but in the sight of God, he is a nothing and a nobody until he accepts Christ and becomes a Christian. The Christian seems himself as a vile sinner, mired in corruption and unholiness, totally and completely unworthy of even the least of God's favors. This is the correct view we should have of

³⁶ My mother suffered from this. I know how horrible it can be.

ourselves. But God sees us quite differently through the eyes of divine mercy and grace. The Christian will then be a “big shot” in heaven who will be recognized by the saints, the angels and God!

4. I don't think it necessary to assume that the Shulamite was black racially, although that is certainly possible. She could have had a darker complexion but even if she did, it would make no difference in the narrative. While the race of the Shulamite is not important here, but that fact that she is probably a Gentile is. As Christ had a Gentile bride and as Joseph and Moses had Gentile brides, so does Solomon. We know Solomon had 300 wives and his first, or “primary” wife was an Egyptian (Pharaoh's Daughter).

A. That she was of a darker complexion is of no doubt, but it could also have reference to having such a dark complexion due to many hours out in the sun working. The sun had burned her and dried her skin. Her skin as not as soft and supple as that of a princess who just lounges around the palace all day. No, this Shulamite had no privileges of a royal upbringing- she was a working girl. She was up early and out in the vineyard, toiling in the hot sun all day. That will put a tan on a person and toughen the skin. She was still not unattractive in such a state, for this kind of girl, who knows hard work, has a beauty about her that the sun and the hot winds cannot dry up. Yet she is still comely enough for Solomon. Physically, she was not all that she felt she could be but spiritually she felt that she was suitable for Solomon. She had comeliness that many country girls have- a simplicity, innocence and straightforwardness of character that ends to appeal to men of character and principle, which included Solomon.

“but comely”

1. The Shulamite thought herself as unattractive in one way but comely in another in that Solomon had taken an interest in her and that gave her a sense of self-worth. Any and all value we have is in Christ alone.

2. This seems to be a paradox. How can you be unattractive yet comely at the same time?

A. The Christian is a paradox. He is a sinner yet he is highly loved and valued by Christ.

i. “The Divines of Church history are remembered by their intense and consistent emphasis on Christ and His grace, from whatever remnant background they had an identity. But along with their love and interest in these two truths, they are also remembered by their acknowledged saying, “I am ruined.” Whenever they would write of their Lord, they would say, “I am redeemed”; when they would view themselves apart from that Christ and His grace, they would say, “I am ruined.” This paradox should always be among the souls of the Shulamite heart. It is simply another way of saying, “I am black, but comely.”³⁷

B. Christ is. He is human yet divine. He is beaten beyond human recognition in His passion (Isaiah 52:14, **As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.**) yet He is altogether lovely (Song 5:16).

i. This speaks of the hypostatic union of Christ, where He is human and divine, black but comely.

³⁷ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 33.

“Daughters of Jerusalem”

1. They are a prominent and important group in the Song.
2. They would represent carnal church members.
3. They seem to be constantly picking on the newly-saved Shulamite and try to pour cold water on her budding relationship with Christ. Carnal Christians have no real interest in developing their own personal relationship with Christ, but they want no one else to do so either. They can't stand to see someone else in revival because it condemns their own hearts. If they do happen to see a new Christian falling deep in love with Christ, instead of encouraging her and following her example, they try to discourage her, mainly due to jealousy of Solomon's favors toward her.
4. There may have been some jealousy in their response to the Shulamite. They were better than this shepherd-girl yet Solomon was ignoring them and paying attention to her! "Who was this Shulamite anyway? She's all tanned and hardened and is an unimportant nobody. What makes you think Solomon would pay any attention to you? Why, look at you! What makes you so special? You didn't go to the right school! You just got recently saved. We've been in this church for years and now you come blowing into town and try to make us look bad with your 'super-spirituality'!" The Shulamite would deny none of it for it was all too true. Such criticism would be enough to discourage many a young Christian from pursuing Christ.
 - A. To end such carping, the new Christian may just freeze up and dry up like his critics. Thus, the daughters of Jerusalem have become a stumbling block to a babe in Christ and they will pay dearly for it at the bema seat.
5. Why are they referred to as the Daughters of **Jerusalem**? Because they are legalizers who kept looking to Jerusalem and Judaism (Galatians 4:26, **But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.**) for their spiritual bearings instead of looking to Christ. They would have behaved like a Jew who would be offended if a Gentile got in on a spiritual blessing. The Daughters would rely on their church membership, family heritage, good works and tradition to make them acceptable to Christ. The Shulamite had none of that so she must rely upon grace for her relationship and these legalizers couldn't stand that.
6. The Daughters do not have a good testimony in 2 Kings 19:21, **This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee** (see also Isaiah 37:22)."
7. "Now to what class of persons does the phrase "daughters of Jerusalem" refer? This is a book in poetic song of spiritual and heavenly experience, hence the Jerusalem mentioned here most certainly does not have reference to the earthly but, rather, to the heavenly Jerusalem. These daughters are within the realm of the heavenly Jerusalem, by which is meant the system of grace. They must, therefore, represent those who are saved and who love the Lord Jesus Christ. Addressing them as "ye daughters" definitely indicates they are those who are born of God. They seem to lack, however, the desire for that fervent pursuit of Christ which is found in the Shulamite maiden. They represent a lukewarm, beclouded, and casual company. Mr. Hudson Taylor once remarked: "In appearance they are saved—but merely saved, that is all." They are the Lord's people, but have not the degree and warmth of true, full bridal affections."³⁸
8. The Daughters appear in the following verses in the Song; 1:5; 2:7; 3:5,10; 5:8,16; 6:9?; 8:4

³⁸ Watchman Nee, *Song of Songs*.

“Kedar...curtains of Solomon”

1. She was as black as the **tents of Kedar** and as **the curtains of Solomon**.
 - A. These tents may have been made of a dark goat's hair and she compares herself to these rough and dark tents.
 - B. Those in Kedar were Bedouin sheep-herders who live in such dark-colored, weather-beaten tents.
2. These **curtains of Solomon** are a bit of a mystery. She may have been saying that she was as rough as the tents of Kedar but still as attractive as the curtains in Solomon's chambers.
 - A. The believer is a hypostatic union as these tents and curtains. He is black in himself with his inward sins and corruptions, but he is comely in Christ. In himself he is foul as the smoke-dried tents of Kedar: but in the Lord, he is as comely and rich as the curtains of Solomon.
 - B. The Christian has two natures within him, the sinful, Adamic nature, called the "old man", received at birth, and the divine nature of Christ, received in the new birth. The old nature is black in its sinfulness. But the new nature is comely and beautiful in the sight of God. The Christian has these two natures indwelling Him, just as Christ has a human and divine nature. We refer to that as the hypostatic union of Christ. But we must also apply that term to describe these two indwelling natures that make up human nature. We will see Christ's hypostatic union in Song 5:10, where the Shulamite refers to Him as "white and ruddy", where the white refers to the deity of Christ and the ruddy refers to the humanity of Christ. The divines of Church History understood this hypostatic union of human nature.
3. We need to run this to Psalm 120:5, where the psalmist laments that he sojourns in Mesech and dwells in the tents of Kedar. The Shulamite gives a positive view of the tents of Kedar, the psalmist a more negative one.
 - A. Kedar is mentioned in Genesis 25:13; Song 1:5; Isaiah 60:7 and Jeremiah 49:28,29.
 - B. No doubt one reason why the psalmist pronounced a woe unto himself for living here was because of the bad neighbors. Bad company ruins any neighborhood and no doubt, the residents of Mesech and Kedar were sinners who would have depressed any saint. We have a similar situation today, as there are no godly locations on earth in which to live. There are no Christian countries, states, counties or towns in which to dwell. Even the so-called "Bible Belt" is anything but. We must dwell with the worldly and oftentimes, their filthy and carnal conversation vexes the soul of the righteousness to the extent that we also cry out in a woe.
 - i. The psalmist only "sojourned" in Mesech- just passing through. But even passing through Sodom or Vanity Fair can be a sore trial. And then he mentions "dwelling: in the tents of Kedar. Even when he came home, the spiritual conditions were no better than they were in his journeys.
 - ii. What is it like to dwell among such a people? See Jeremiah 9:2,3 for an example: **Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD.** Or maybe Lot dwelling among the Sodomites, how he vexed his soul daily with their filthy conversation (2 Peter 2:8, **For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing**

and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;).

iii. David is in these two geographies but he is a saint out of place and is not happy. No Christian should be dwelling out of the will of God in such a place. The backslider leaves the Promised Land of the will of God to dwell among heathen who have no use for his God or Bible. The backslider is out of place and he knows it and he is miserable. He is a stranger there. He does not belong here. The same is said for the carnal Christian, who is not going on for God. He, too, is in the wrong place spiritually and there can be no happiness or satisfaction for him until he resolves to go "back to Bethel". He has realized that he is not where he should be and resolves to get out of that place. That is the recovery and revival of the saint.

4. "There should come a point in the life of the Christian that he awakens to the fact that he is not living where he should live in God. Although he has been born again and his sins are under the blood, spiritually he realizes he is living outside of the Promised Land. In this wilderness things are not going well with him; things are not going well with his family. At this point God begins to pull on his heart with an awakening desire to arise to a better life with God. Most churches today believe that the new birth experience is all that is to be found in God; therefore, the pulpit is not pressing the people forward. They do not believe there is any more to the gospel of Christ than a simple new birth experience... Thank God for the new birth, but it is only an entrance into an immeasurable life in that gospel. If and when we enter such a complacency, God will begin to draw us with His great love. A child of God will become hungry for God, thirsty for God. This is the love of His Saviour that is starting to draw him. It is the cry 'I must have a better and nobler life in Christ.' The cry may be 'I don't want to live in this present condition; my family is falling apart; my life has grown cold; I am further away from God than I was ten months ago; Lord, I can't stay in this condition any longer.'"³⁹

Our cast of characters now includes the following:

1. Solomon- Christ
2. Shulamite- the Christian
3. Virgins- undefiled but inexperienced ones
4. Upright- more mature than the virgins
5. Daughters of Jerusalem- carnal Christians

1:6 Look not upon me, because I *am* black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; *but* mine own vineyard have I not kept.

"**Look not upon me**" as the idea of looking upon with contempt, disdain, despite or astonishment. The Shulamite did not want any attention. She felt herself to be unworthy and unattractive. This is because she was humble and had the right (spiritual) estimation of herself. Compare her attitude with many preachers (especially Independent, neo-Fundamental Baptists) who are forever calling attention to themselves or are encouraging others to bring attention to them. If someone were to praise such men, they would revel in it. But a Shulamite would respond "Stop it! Do not speak well of me! I am a great mass of corruption and sin. I am black, sinful, repulsive!" The better Christ a man is, the more abashed he always feels; because to

³⁹ H. T. Spence, *The Ascent of the Christian Life*, pages 18,19.

him sin is so exceedingly hateful, that what sin he sees in himself he loathes himself for far more than others do. The ungodly man (sinner or backslider) would condone very great sin in himself; though he might know it to be there; it would not disturb him; but the genuine Christian being another sort, having a love for holiness and a hatred for sin, cannot bear to see the smallest speck of sin upon himself.

"Oh, there is nothing that brings a blush to a genuine Christian's face like praising him; for he feels—"Praise such a heap of dirt as I am? Give any credit to such a worthless worm as I am? No; do not cast admiring glances at me! Do not say, 'That man has many virtues and many excellences!' 'Look not upon me, for I am black.'" Are there not some who will imitate any Christian—and be very right in so doing—any Christian who is eminently godly and holy? There will be many who will follow in his footsteps. I think I see such a man turn around to his followers and say: "Do not look at me; do not copy me. I am black. Copy a better model even Jesus. If I follow in his footsteps, follow me; but inasmuch as I have gone astray like a lost sheep, follow the shepherd; do not follow my example." Every Christian, in proportion as he lives near to God, will feel this self-abasement, this lowliness of heart; and if others talk of admiring or of imitating him, he will say, "Look not upon me, for I am black." And as he thus, in deep humility, begs that he be not exalted, he will often desire others that they would not despise him. It will come into his mind, "Such-and-such a man of God is a Christian indeed; as he sees my weakness, he will condemn me. Such-and-such a disciple of Christ is strong; he will never be able to bear with my weakness. Such-and-such a Christian woman does, indeed, adorn the doctrine of God her Savior; but as for me, alas! I am not what I ought to be, nor what I would be. Christ of God, do not look upon me with scorn. I will not say that you have motes in your own eyes. I have a beam in mine. Look not upon me too severely. Judge me not harshly. If you do look at me, look to Christ for me, and pray that I may be helped; 'for I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me.'" Still I would have you beware of affecting aught that you do not feel. Humility itself may be counterfeited with much ostentation. Wherever there is anything, as it is practiced by some people who depreciate themselves but do not mean it, it is loathsome to the last degree. I recollect a very proud man, certainly twice as proud as he was high, who used to pray for himself as "God's poor dust." There was nothing, I am sure, about his conduct and conversation that entitled him to use any such expression. I have heard of a monk who said he was full of sin—he was as bad as Judas; and when somebody said, "That is true," he turned around, and said, "What did I ever do that you should say so?" The effrontery of the arrogant is not more odious than the servility of the sycophant. There is a great deal of self-abnegation which is not genuine; it is the offspring of self-conceit, and not of self-knowledge. Much that we say of ourselves would mightily offend our vainglory if anybody else said the same of us. Oh, let us beware of mock humility! At the same time, the more of the genuine article we have the better, and the more truthfully we can cry out to God's people, "Look not upon me, because I am black," the more clear will it be that we are, after all, amongst the fairest."⁴⁰

The sun "**having looked**" upon her, or having beat down upon her, reminds us of the tribulation saints in heaven. It is said in Revelation 7:16 that the sun shall no more light on them, nor heat. The sun here describes the tribulations they went through while on earth, being persecuted by the Antichrist. The Shulamite is undergoing similar persecution from the Daughters of Jerusalem and her Mother's Children in the church. The sun here is probably a literal figure but it represents tribulation. The worst tribulation and persecution that a Christian will receive will be from the Daughters of Jerusalem, as well as from her Mother's Children in the Church. The world will not persecute the Christian nearly so much as will professing Christians.

⁴⁰ Charles Spurgeon, "Self-Humbling and Self Searching", *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, volume 17, page 267, sermon 990.

“mother” Not every mother is good or godly. Many women make horrible mothers as they have very bad hearts. Some are like Micah’s mother in Judges 17. This type of spiritual “mother” typifies the misleading, legalistic, criticizing mother, using her spiritual daughters against the Shulamite. She imposes the legalism of works, hindering grace in doing its own work in the private vineyard of the soul. Her ways are false, earthly, carnal. She hinders the work of the true, spiritual mother, from above. We have seen spiritual leaders like this, who do more harm than good to their followers. They care more for the outward than they do the inward. They care for visible results for than they do the inner workings of God. They end up being a discouragement to the soul by their legalism and lack of spirituality.

Who are her **mother's children**? These are the other church members who were having problems with this new convert who had more zeal than knowledge. She was causing more problems than she was solving, and the "brethren" were grumbling. It is like a green rookie coming into a platoon of battle-hardened Rangers, preparing to go to the front line. Now how much of a help will that rookie be? Will he be appreciated by these veterans? Hardly. Let the rookie complete his training and then send him in, but not before. These "mother's children" are relations to the Shulamite since they have the same mother- the Church. This circumstance caused the children to be angry, or literally incensed with the Shulamite.

The **"mother's children"** as well as the Daughters of Jerusalem were all dedicated to the work in the vineyard but were not sympathetic to the building of the relationship with Solomon. To them, the work was higher than the relationship. What a sin this today, where the work of the ministry is seen to be more important than the ministry. I had a man call me recently inquiring about the Bible college where I served as Academic Dean. He had just finished talking with Hyles-Anderson College, headed up by Jack Hyles before his death. They told him that he would be expected to work all day Saturday and Sunday on the bus routes and work the other 5 days in soulwinning ministries. This was seen as more important than time spent with the wife and children, or even alone with God. The work of the ministry came before everything else, including family and devotional time. He asked me what I thought of that. I condemned it outright and encouraged him to put as much distance between him and Hammond, Indiana as he could if he wanted to keep his family, sanity and relationship with the Lord. These Daughters of Jerusalem would just as soon work you to death on the bus routes and in the Sunday School and in visitation than to see you cultivating and developing that personal relationship with God, which is the most important thing in the life of every believer, especially to the Shulamite soul.

The Shulamite is now taken into the Chamber of Works as she is put into the vineyard. We see a common problem in our Fundamentalist churches as expressed by the plight of the Shulamite. She was black- sunburned due to long hours in the vineyard. She had accurately judged herself and found herself wanting. True Christians do this daily. They evaluate their walk with God and are constantly dissatisfied. Yet the mere professor, the legalizer, will never do this. He is working his way to heaven without the benefit of grace and is generally satisfied with himself. Sure, he could do better, but his progress is most admirable in his own eyes and is content.

"The Christian in his right state tests himself to see whether he be in the faith...He knows that Heedless and Toobold are always bad pilots, so he sets Caution and Self-examination at the helm...In his anxiety to be pure from evil, the godly man will be eager to notice and quick to detect the least particle of defilement. For this reason, he discovers more of his blackness than any other man is likely to see...The mere professor never does this. He neither scrutinizes himself. He flatters himself in his own eyes and goes on presumptuously."⁴¹

⁴¹ Charles Spurgeon, "Self-Humbling and Self Searching", Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, volume 17, page 267, sermon 990.

This will prevent us from setting ourselves up as an example unto others. Everyone has heroes in the Christian life, someone who especially appeals to our heart. We say "I want to be like him". But if the object of your affections knew that, he would say "Look not upon me, for I am black." This is the proper attitude to take. Beware of the man who deliberately sets himself up as a model and encourages others to emulate him! He does not see himself as black. He has deceived himself in believing that he is white, a fit model in the flesh. From these proud Pharisees turn away.

What was she doing in the vineyard? She was working to tend vines which did not belong to her. But she must have had some personal vines of her own for she mentions neglecting her vines to tend to the vines of others. Let's make an application here. How many Christians today could say that they were so busy tending the vines of other people that they neglected their own? This happens all the time, especially to young Christians. The Shulamite had only recently been saved and she finds herself out in the vineyard. Like many new converts, she was consumed with a zeal to work for her Beloved. She wanted to *do* something just after she was saved. The pastor of her church put her on the bus route and had her knocking on doors while yet a spiritual baby. She was so busy in the doing that she neglected her own spiritual development and cultivating her relationship with Solomon. As a result, two things happened:

1. Her vineyard (spiritual life) suffered.
2. Her mother's children were angry with her. She obviously was not doing too good a job tending the vines and the other members of the church faulted her for this.

Instead of "doing", she really needed to concentrate of "being" first. Instead of doing works, she needed to concentrate of developing the relation with Solomon.

When someone just gets saved, the last thing they need to do is start working in the vineyard. The most important thing for a young Christian is not doing but growing. We ought not to allow new Christians to go out into the vineyard until they have matured in their own personal relationship with Christ first. Tend to your own vineyard first and make sure that it is healthy. Then go out into the vineyard (either the church or the world- a place of ministry) and tend the vines of others.

How little of our time has been spent with God! How little part of our thoughts has been occupied with meditation, contemplation, adoration and other great acts of devotion. How little have we surveyed the beauties of Christ, His person, work, sufferings and glory!

"We have been in the shop, we have been on the exchange, we have been at the markets, we have been in the fields, we have been in the public libraries, we have been in the lecture room, we have been in the forum of debate; but our own closets and studies, our walk with God and our fellowship with Jesus, we have far too much neglected." ⁴²

We also think of the holy work of Scripture work- reading, meditating, studying. "Our Puritan forefathers were strong men because they lived on the Scriptures. None stood against them in their day for they fed on good meat, whereas their degenerate children are far too fond of unwholesome food. The chaff of fiction and the bran of the Quarterlies are poor substitutes for the old corn of Scripture."⁴³ If Spurgeon would say this in the mid-19th century, how much truer is this observation today?

Why should young Christians be discouraged from spiritual work? They are spiritual babes! What can they do? Babes can't do anything. They knock the furniture over and generally leave

⁴² Charles Spurgeon, "The Unkept Vineyard", *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, volume 32, pages 695-6, sermon 1938.

⁴³ Ibid.

a mess. Let the young Christian mature for a year. Let him learn the basic doctrines of the faith and learn of prayer and Bible reading. After he has matured, then send him into the work. The young Christian had better get that personal relationship with Christ worked out first before he puts his hand to the work. If his personal relationship with Christ is wrong then nothing else will be right. Deuteronomy 24:5 says **"When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken."** Here is the principle for the Shulamite who has just recently been married through the new birth. She is to stay home for a year before going out to the war. Get that marriage established and on a solid footing, then go out there and work, not before. Your marriage to Solomon is more important than any work you may do for Him.

I have always said that Christ is more concerned about what you *are* for Him rather than what you do for Him. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.

The Shulamite fell into the trap that exists in New Evangelical and Neo-Fundamentalist churches which put so much emphasis on the method of the Christian life rather than the spirituality of it (and this would include most Fundamentalist churches that think "soulwinning" [as they define it] is more important than living a Christian life). They think that spirituality is equated with service and they couldn't be more wrong if they tried. They kept her so busy on the busses and on visitation that she had no time or strength left to go through her own spiritual exercises. Your spirituality and relationship with Christ have no bearing on your service. You could wind up on your back for the rest of your life- then what of your service? "The enemy of our souls will endeavor to get us so busy in the vineyard of the church that we will neglect the vineyard of our closet. Works may not be substituted for salvation by grace in the sinner's need, and it may not be substituted for obedience and communion with Christ in the Christian's life."⁴⁴

We dare not neglect one element of vineyard work and that is the work of building up our personal relationship with Christ. Physical work may be put aside for a season if need be but not this. If necessary, call for a moratorium on your work and spend a week in dedicated prayer and meditation on your relationship with Christ and your consecration and spirituality.

Yet how many Christians have not kept this part of their vineyard? They may run to and fro throughout their personal vineyard as they win souls and build churches yet allow the weeds to infiltrate the work of the prayer closet. Why, here is the greatest and more important work of all, as it fits us for all other works. A man is not fit to be a soulwinner until he has mastered the art of prayer, communion and meditation. This work may be neglected, with disastrous results.

Why do the carnal Daughters of Jerusalem put so much emphasis on works?

1. **To cover their lack of spirituality.** They have a weak relationship with Christ if they have any at all. To make up for what they lack in devotion, they try to substitute it for service, hoping that God will accept their works in place of their devotion. This would be like Cain offering the works of his own hand to make up for the spirituality that he lacked but that his brother Abel had. We know how that story went. It is easier to work and to appear outwardly spiritual than it is to actually be spiritual. It is easier to "do" than to "be".
2. **To cover sin in their lives.** Many Neo-Evangelicals and Neo-Fundamentalists lead immoral lives since the Christian life is never preached to them, nor is it emphasized. I am not surprised by the high level of immorality in these churches that stress service over spirituality. When the inevitable sin does occur, they will try to placate God and their own consciences by saying "Okay, I've sinned a great sin, but look at all the work I have done and am doing! Look at all the souls I've won and baptized! Look at all the busses my church is running! Look on how many ministry boards I serve on! Doesn't that count for something?" They always run to Samson as their leader in such matters. They

⁴⁴ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 37.

believe that it depends how fast you were running when you fell, as to whether God will lift you back up again. Yet they do not realize that works do not cover a multitude of sins and God has never accepted works as a payment for sins and carnality!

3. Showing our works is easier than showing your heart. Only God can look on the heart, so we would be unable to “show off” or impress the brethren with our spirituality based on our heart alone. But when we work and generate/produce results, we can brag on them and everyone can see them, and then laud us to be some great spiritual giant as we have so many people “saved” or because our church attendance is no impressive.

We add a new name to our cast of characters:

1. Solomon- Christ
2. Shulamite- the Christian
3. Virgins- undefiled but inexperienced ones
4. Upright- more mature than the virgins
5. Daughters of Jerusalem- carnal Christians
6. My mother's children- church members of the same church as the Shulamite

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

Yet even in the vineyard, the Shulamite is longing for fellowship with Solomon. The Shulamite makes a direct inquiry of Solomon- where are you? She doesn't bother asking the Daughters of Jerusalem for they wouldn't know- they are too carnal.

She addresses Him in a very endearing term- "Thou whom my soul loveth". A Shulamite loves her Solomon, else she would not be a Shulamite. There is loveliness in Christ that she can see but that the blind Daughters of Jerusalem can't see through their carnality. She loves Solomon because he first loved her. If he ignored her, she might adore him from a distance but there would be no true love since there would be no true communion. But when Christ loves us, then we may reciprocate that love.

The questions:

1. **Where do you feed?** Where is Christ and where does He feed? Where does He go for His nourishment? There are a lot of false shepherds and false flocks out there vying for our attention. We need discernment not to feed in the wrong pasture. The Shulamite might end up in a field of Mormon ragweed or Jehovah Witness Bermuda grass or Charismatic poison mushrooms and wind up spiritually poisoned. This she strives to avoid. Else she may be as one that turns aside into error. Only the Shepherd can prevent that. There then is a sense of spiritual urgency in this question.

2. **Where do you make your flock to rest at noon?** The Shulamite desires to feed with His flock but she can't until she finds Solomon and the flock. This shows a good heart- she wants to be part of His flock and wants to dwell where the rest of His sheep do. She not only wants the Shepherd but wants to be one of His sheep. Of course, we are part of the sheep of His pasture if we are saved and He is our Shepherd. “Noon” is also the hottest part of the day, so she is also seeking out fellowship with the Lord during the trials and the heat of life, as we all should.

The question remains- where is He and where is His flock? In other words, which church should I join? Many churches claim to be so but are not really sheepfolds but are more like zoos since

they have everything except sheep in them. Where is the Shepherd? Near his sheep. Where is His flock? In a Bible preaching, Fundamental church and this is what the Shulamite is looking for. This ought to be the desire of every Christian- to find that flock (local church) that has the True Shepherd- and we don't mean the Pope and the Roman Catholic menagerie.

"At noon", in the heat of the day when a rest, or a siesta is needed. When the world has sapped me of all my strength and spirit, where may I go to rest? Where may I go to escape the heat of the day? In the house of the true and living God with the rest of the true sheep.

"The Shulamite wanted to be fed, and she wanted to be fed with true doctrine. Not any old pasture would do. She wanted the right pasture, she wanted the right flock, and she wanted the right shepherd. Is that the language of your heart? Have you ever examined the other flocks to see how they fare? I am talking about the flocks that feed on the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Time*, *Life*, *Esquire*, *Playboy*, *U.S. News and World Report*, and all of that godless, depraved trash. Are they fed any better than you are? Are they happier than you are? Are they safer than you are? Are they any better off? Brethren, the slop of this world is for pigs; sheep do not eat that garbage (Luke 16:15). Sheep want something that will sustain them. That sustenance is found in the pasture, not the hog trough...The world views that Book as dull and judgmental and prudish and full of contradictions. It is like a barren wasteland to the lost. They cannot believe it. But to the Christian, it is a dinner table full of roast beef, baked chicken, steak, hot biscuits, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, fried mullet, hush puppies, corn on the cob, butter, corn bread, jalapenos, nachos, etc. "⁴⁵

"Where doest thou feed thy flock? In thy house? I will go there, if I may find thee there. In private prayer? Then I will not be slack in that. In the Word? Then I will read it night and day. "⁴⁶

Solomon 1:8-11

1:8 If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

Solomon now answers. He refers to the Shulamite as "thou fairest among women" as if she were the most beautiful girl in the world. She was to Solomon, even if she was a bit plain and simple. But not only do godly men see the outward beauty of a woman but also the inner beauty of character, spirituality and maturity. Christ naturally sees the Christian and the Church as a whole like this. We have so many flaws and defects to make us rightly see ourselves as anything but desirable, yet Christ sees through all that and just pours it on us in His love and affection. She thought herself black but Solomon saw her as lovely.

James Durham, on page 103 of his commentary on the Song of Solomon, gives four reasons as to how Christ can so refer to a believing sinner as "thou fairest among women":

1. By communication and participation of the divine nature.
2. In respect to the imputation of Christ's righteousness.
3. In respect of Christ's gracious acceptance.
4. In respect of his design, project and purchase...he will have his people made completely beautiful and spotless before he is done with them.

⁴⁵ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on the Song Of Solomon*, pages 37-38.

⁴⁶ Charles Spurgeon, "The Church's Love to Her Lord" in *The Most Holy Place*, 86.

"O thou fairest among women..." "Happy are those converts to Christ who have been won by the 'fairest among women'. Sometimes we witness a kind of convert brought to Christ by the weak 'daughters of Jerusalem' and their 'kids' do not feed in the best pastures close to the Shepherd's tents."⁴⁷ This is a good point. Even the carnal ones in the church occasionally win a soul but that won soul may not have been won in the highest motivation or in the best way. Yes, one can be led to Christ by Jack Hyles or Billy Graham, but that is not the best way to come into Christ's flock, nor is it the best place to feed. You could get fed in a New Evangelical flock but that is certainly not the best place to feed! Let us not be satisfied with "the good" and go onto "the best!" Maybe you can't help how you were brought into the flock, but you can do something about which field you feed in. You can't choose the place, time or circumstance of your physical birth, just as you cannot with your spiritual birth. But after you have been born/born again, you can make the intelligent decision for culture in your life/spiritual life. You can come out of that bad circumstance you were born into and go unto something better. This is what the Shulamite soul desires, not just to "feed" but to feed among the flocks of Solomon. She wants to be with those who are with Solomon. It is not enough to just be saved with her. She wants to go all the way with her Solomon, unto perfection (Hebrews 6:1).

"If thou know not" Why wouldn't the Shulamite know? Someone didn't teach her. That is the responsibility of the pastor. The primary duty of the pastor is not evangelism or going after goats. He is to feed sheep by teaching them and watching over them. If he does not do that or if he spends more time evangelizing the lost than he does ministering to the saints, then he is an unfaithful pastor. Someone had neglected the Shulamite for she did not know where Solomon's flock was. She couldn't find it. Why not? Because her pastor, who was responsible for her spiritual education, had somehow failed her. She was not lost and wandering, in danger of being snagged by any number of false shepherds (modernists, liberals, Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Charismatics...) " Solomon Jarchi expoundeth it 'If thou know not whether thou shouldest go to feed thy flock, thou fairest among women, because the pastor hath ceased to govern or manage them'"⁴⁸.

Solomon tells her to follow the footsteps of the flock. Follow the godly Christians and they will lead you to where I dwell. Christians should be drawing others to true worship by the witness of their testimony, life and heart. They are living road signs, seen and read of all men, point both saint and sinner to the place of true worship. There feed, in that church, under that under-shepherd. Again, we say that Christ is where His flock is. Find a Bible preaching church and that is where you will find the flock feeding and where you will find the Shepherd.

Solomon tells the Shulamite to feed her kids beside the shepherd's tents. She seems to have others following her (the undefiled ones? The upright?) as she searches out Solomon. She is not alone in her quest of Solomon but is rather leading her godly train with her.

We notice that in 1:7 that some sheep are turned aside while some feed "besides the shepherd's tents" in 1:8. "Some sheep flock together by the 'wayside' (Matthew 13:4,19) without good and true shepherds. Others, however, are known to only follow true shepherds, obeying and following as 'the flock' of God. We know of no other way to address this difference in some 'flocks'; it is an unfortunate distinction because we do not know who is really saved by the grace of God."⁴⁹ These then are the two classifications of sheep- the wayward ones (the carnal, backslidden ones) and the ones by the Shepherd's tent (the spiritual ones).

⁴⁷ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 40.

⁴⁸ Henry Ainsworth, *Annotations on the Old Testament*, page 690.

⁴⁹ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 41.

It was not unusual for young women to act as shepherds and flock-keepers, as mentioned here.

Titles of the Shulamite in the Song:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. "fairest among women" (1:8). | 16. "Thou art beautiful" (6:4). |
| 2. "my love" (1:9). | 17. "comely" (6:4). |
| 3. "thou are fair" (1:15). | 18. "terrible" (:4). |
| 4. "I am the rose" (2:1). | 19. "is but one" (6:9). |
| 5. "the lily of the valleys" (2:1). | 20. "the only one" (6:9). |
| 6. "the lily among thorns" (2:2). | 21. "the choice one" (6:9). |
| 7. "my love among the daughters" (2:2). | 22. "the company of two armies" (6:13). |
| 8. "my fair one" (2:10). | 23. A fifteen-piece portrait: feet, thighs, navel, belly, breasts, neck, eyes, nose, head, hair, stature, breasts, nose, roof of the mouth, and lips (7:1-9). |
| 9. "my dove" (2:14). | 24. "I am a wall" (8:10). |
| 10. Seven-fold description: eyes, hair, teeth, lips, temples, neck, and breasts (4:1-7). | 25. "One that found favour" (8:10). |
| 11. "my spouse" (4:8). | 26. "Thou that dwellest in the gardens" (8:13). |
| 12. "my sister" (4:9). | |
| 13. "a garden enclosed" (4:12). | |
| 14. "a fountain of gardens" (4:15). | |
| 15. "my undefiled" (5:2). | |

1:9 I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.

Solomon now compares the Shulamite to a company of Pharaoh's finest horses. There were no finer horses to be seen in this day. Some women (yea, even Christian women) more resemble nags than horses but not the Shulamite. She had a beauty, stature, strength and grace that only Solomon could see and appreciate. The Shulamite would have never have seen herself in this light. None could compare with Pharaoh's stables just as none could compare with even the most humble believer in the eyes of Christ. The Shulamite is compared to a fine horse but she certainly was no nag or "horseface". She did not look like a nag, nor did she have the personality of one.

These horses would be very rare and valuable, which would be the finest horses available, fit for a king. This is the same opinion that Solomon had toward the Shulamite, in the same way that Christ views and values the Church. The Shulamite never saw herself in that light and never would have estimated herself to have so much value and worth in the eyes of a king, but that is how Solomon viewed her, with the same appreciation and love as Pharaoh would have viewed his prized stable of champion horses.

Solomon knew his horses for he multiplied horses to himself, although Deuteronomy 17:16 forbade it: **But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.** Solomon went and did it anyway in 1 Kings 4:26; **And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.**

There is a hint of militancy in this comparison since the reference is to Pharaoh's chariots which were used in war. The Christian is a soldier and is expected to fight for the faith but he must fight in a beautiful and magnificent manner. There must be dignity in the battle as these horses would possess. If you fight, you must do so as a Christian- watch your attitude. A bad attitude and a bad heart in the battle means you may win that battle but you are the loser for it. Fight in a

beautiful, stately and dignified manner, with a sword in your hand and a song in your heart. Be militant, but magnificent as Pharaoh's horses.

"The reference to horses in Pharaoh's chariots refers to the bridal procession when Solomon left Egypt, and rode in a gilded chariot, drawn by the finest horses in the world. The occasion was the bringing of Pharaoh's daughter to Jerusalem as his wife."⁵⁰

1:10 Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold.

Her cheeks, or jaw bones (Hebrew) are as if they were set with rows of jewels. The cheek is the support structure of the face and it reminds Solomon of a row of precious jewels.

Her neck, which is the support structure for the head, looks like it has chains of gold. A strong and solid neck means the head is held high and proud. The Shulamite was probably too poor to afford to deck herself with these kinds of ornaments but the beauty of her character and personality more than provided for her the decoration for her body which money could not have bought.

The neck can also be a type of stubborn self-will. It needs to be "broken" with the adorning of the ornaments of the grace and love of Christ.

1. Exodus 13:13, **And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.**
2. Exodus 34:20, **But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty.**
3. Proverbs 29:1, **He, that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.**

Gold (Song 1:10), in Old Testament typology, is consistently interpreted as referring to the deity of Christ, while silver (Song 1:11) represents the atonement on our behalf. Both were prominent in the construction of the tabernacle. There was no more desired precious metal than gold in the ancient world.

1:11 We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver.

This could refer to either the jewelry the Shulamite will be given for ornamentation or the clothes she will be given as a consort and future bride of Solomon.

Since there is more spiritual typology in clothing, let's take that route. These will be the ornamentation of the clothes that Solomon will provide for the Shulamite. If she is to be spending time around King Solomon and in his courts then she must be properly attired. If we are going to be spending time in the company of and in the courts of the King of Kings, we need the proper spiritual attire. The matter of clothes is an important one in Scripture as it typifies the spiritual state of the wearer. To be dressed in fine linen, clean and white is to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ. To be dressed in rags is to be clothed with our own righteousness. But it is Christ who provides the proper spiritual clothing for His people, not us. We do not have to weave our own clothes, nor do we have to buy them but they are provided for us by Christ. And not just any clothes, but that with golden borders and studs of silver. Again, referring to Bible

⁵⁰ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 43.

typology, the gold represents deity while the silver stands for redemption- borders of deity and studs of redemption make up this garment provided to the believing Shulamite and by extension, the Church. She would be clothed by Christ and in the garments he provides.

Who is the "we" that will make these garments? We are not told although we may infer that Christ has some help in the weaving of these garments. Think of all the people that Christ uses to bring a soul to salvation- every person who witnesses to that soul, who gives him a tract, who prays for him, who preaches to him, who lives a godly life before him...do not all these participate in bring that sinner to righteousness? Then would they also at the same time be helping Christ to weave that new Christian's robe of righteousness through their ministries? They who win souls or who so work in the vineyard are the ones who help Christ in this garment-mill.

The Shulamite 1:12-14

1:12 While the king *sitteth* at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.

"Solomon's table is a topic of special significance in the Scriptures. "And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallow deer, and fatted fowl. ... And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers ..." (1 Kings 4:22–23; 10:5). Such was the provision for "all that came unto king Solomon's table" (1 Kings 4:27). It was rich provision and blessed with his own kingly presence.

"While the king sitteth at his table" may be said to represent what the maiden has in the enjoyment of the full abundance of the Lord's provision. This bounty may be divided into two classifications. First, there is food made of flour or meal substance. This signifies the perfect Manhood of the Lord Jesus—His own holy life. Second, there is food of meat substance. This expresses our Lord's accomplishments—His work and sacrificial death so that believers may have intimate communion with Him in His enthroned life. "While the king sitteth at his table" denotes the precise time when there is a partaking of spiritual satisfaction in communion with Him.

"This is a time of real spiritual joy. Each time we come to the King's table the chief entertainment is spiritual food in order to bring us into intimate communion with Himself. We partake then of God's accepted and prepared sacrifice—that redeeming sacrifice so well-pleasing to God. (Thus in the Old Testament days His people could partake of the set-aside portions of the sacrifices for their nourishment and strength.)."⁵¹

The dialogue goes back to the Shulamite as she speaks of her perfume. She is with Solomon in the banquet hall and she is well-arrayed no doubt in fine clothing but also with fine perfume, called spikenard. Her fragrance fills the room with a sweet-smelling savour just as any godly fellowship would do. Her very presence and company is a source of great delight for Solomon. When you love someone, you want nothing better than to simply be with them. The Shulamite didn't even have to do anything to fill up the room with the fragrance of her presence- just be there and that was good enough for Solomon.

⁵¹ Watchman Nee, Song of Songs.

This kind of perfume is very expensive, and the Shulamite certainly couldn't have afforded it herself. It must have been given to her by Solomon. Just as the gospel graces are beyond our reach wherewith we may adorn ourselves, they are given to us by Christ. Solomon gave the Shulamite the spikenard to wear- it does no good in the bottle. When she put it on it pleased him that his gift was going for the use intended. The same it is with the graces that Christ gives us. They do no good bottled up or hid under a bushel, but we must bring out and wear that which Christ has done for us and given unto us so that He may enjoy that spiritual spikenard which He has given us.

These kinds of graces, like the spikenard, send out their savor without us having to do anything. You don't have to help perfume to fill up a room- it does so by nature- it can't help but fill the room. You don't have to help it. The same is true with our testimonies. You should not have to strive or push to be a blessing- that should come naturally. Your relationship toward Christ and your spiritual maturity should be such as that you bless others without even trying. If spirituality is forced, then its phony.

Uses of spikenard in Scripture:

1. Song 1:12, **While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.**
2. Song 4:13, **Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard,**
3. Song 4:14, **Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:**
4. Mark 14:3, **And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.**
5. John 12:3, **Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.**

A. It was used to anoint Jesus for His burial.

The Shulamite is in the banquet hall with Solomon, no doubt increasing a more advanced fellowship. Fellowship always seems to be at its best when there is food present. But this is another high privilege for the Shulamite- first, going into Solomon's inner chambers and then sitting down at meat with him.

Solomon/Christ is referred to as the "King" here showing the dignity, sovereignty and majesty of them both.

1:13 A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night between my breasts.

Myrrh is that herb that represents bitterness in Scripture yet it is very fragrant and also is of some value. It is bitter to the taste but sweet to the smell. It is both sweet and bitter, like Christ. He is of course all sweetness but in times of chastening or testing, His strokes or His silence or His temporary withdrawals can be bitter to endure. Christ is like a bundle of this fragrant herb, not just a stalk or two.

Solomon also goes from being a King to being the "**wellbeloved**", a deepening of the relationship. We may very well recognize Christ as King, but we should also be striving to see Him as our "wellbeloved".

Myrrh also occurs in the following passages in Song:

1. **3:6 Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?**
2. **4:6 Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.**
3. **4:14 Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:**
4. **5:1 I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.**
5. **5:5 I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.**
6. **5:13 His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.**

We will be seeing much more of this bitter herb in the accounts of this relationship. Even in the best and strongest of courtships there are times when the bitterness of myrrh enters in and such was certainly the case in the life of the Shulamite.

Myrrh itself is used in the following manner in Scripture:

1. It is associated with the selling of Joseph into Egyptian slavery. Genesis 37:25, **And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.**
2. Used in gifts:
 - A. To Joseph in Genesis 43:11, **And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds.**
 - B. To Christ in Matthew 2:11, **And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.**
3. Used in the anointing oil in the tabernacle in Exodus 30:23, **Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels,**
4. Used in purification rituals in Esther 2:12, **Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odors, and with other things for the purifying of the women.**
5. Christ's garments smell of myrrh in Psalm 45:8, **All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.**
6. The adulterous woman also perfumes her bed with myrrh. We are not surprised that the harlot counterfeits the usage of myrrh, since Satan always imitates that which Christ does. Proverbs 7:17, **I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.**

7. Used as a description of Christ in Song 1:13 and 5:13, **His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.**

8. Used to describe the Shulamite in Song 3:6, **Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?**

A. She also anoints herself with it in Song 5:5, **I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.**

9. There is a mountain of myrrh in Song 4:6, **Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.**

10. Christ goes into His garden to gather myrrh in 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 honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.**

11. It was given to Christ on the cross as a stupefying agent to hasten death and to deaden the pain but He did not receive it in Mark 15:23, **And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.**

12. It was used in the burial preparation for Christ's body in John 19:39, **And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.**

The "lying all night between the breasts" is a night of lovemaking and communion, showing the embraces of fellowship and very intimate communion. This is the location near the heart. Spending the night with Christ is every bit as enjoyable as the nights spent with the husband or wife. It is during the night periods that the love is usually consummated, and it is during this time that we are usually visited by Christ. Christ shies away from the crowds and the duties of the day. When the lights go out and solitude is the rule of the day is when Christ arrives for a night of love. This is why the best time for devotion and communion with the Lord is during the night season. And He is there all night- He is not driven away after a certain time nor does He wish to depart from His beloved.

Do we have the patience and spiritual endurance to spend all night with Christ in prayer and communion? When was the last time you attended an all-night prayer meeting, or when you ever heard of one? I hear about plenty of "All Night Sings" in where some Southern Gospel music groups will entertain "Christians" all night and they are usually very popular and sold-out but try calling for an all-night prayer meeting in your church and you'll be one of the loneliest people in town. But that is no excuse as to why we cannot do this personally in our prayer closets.

"The scene changes to that of a night season and instead of the open manifestation of spikenard at the Table, she retires to her bed with the continued abiding bundle of myrrh in the bosom of her heart- in the affection of her heart. There is a difference and the abiding love of Christ. It is human to desire the manifesting love above the abiding love. However, in the former it might be more personal, yet in the latter, it is more precious. Sometimes the wife, in a temporary separation from her husband, begins to enter the aloneness (not loneliness) of her abiding love. She had constantly been with her beloved groom with every moment filled with the various manifestations of love. But now, an extended yet temporary separation has come and she is left alone, without the personal presence of her beloved. After this aloneness sets in, she is brought past the immediate heartache of longing and on into the chamber of abiding love. She is surprised to be brought to the wonderful realization of abiding love. In this soul-sickness of the absence of her groom, she is suddenly shaken to the consciousness of such a great abiding love. The quality of love suddenly steps forward to fill her entire soul...Prayers are

prayed for her husband, letters are written, poetry is espoused and wonder draws the thoughts into precincts of devotion unprecedented when only her manifesting love is present. Thus, on her bed, at night...the Shulamite's affectionate heart is stirred by the otherwise dry and enclosed bundle of myrrh. This myrrh is love's memory when the love is absent. This seemingly dry bundle of pressed flowers and leaves, previously compressed in the book of her remembrance, brings forth thoughts heretofore unknown in the days of the manifestation of love."⁵²

1:14 My beloved *is* unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi.

Now Christ is compared to a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi. Both these vineyards and the "cluster of camphire" must have been extremely beautiful and of great value for the Shulamite to make this comparison of Solomon. The Hebrew word for "camphire" is "kopher", meaning "a cover", used in the Old Testament sense for atonement. It is an archaic name for "henna". "It is the al-henna of the Arabs, a native of Egypt, producing clusters of small white and yellow odoriferous flowers, whence is made the Oleum Cyprineum. From its leaves is made the peculiar auburn dye with which Eastern women stain their nails and the palms of their hands. It is found only at Engedi, on the shore of the Dead Sea. It is known to botanists by the name Lawsonia alba or inermis, a kind of privet, which grows 6 or 8 feet high. The margin of the Authorized Version in these verses has "or cypress," not with reference to the conifer so called, but to the circumstance that one of the most highly appreciated species of this plant grew in the island of Cyprus (from Dictionary.com)." Naturally Christ is our atonement and our covering, our redemption price from the slave markets of sin. Christ then could be referred to as a cluster of redemption.

Let's take a look at the Biblical references to Engedi.

1. David dwelt here (1 Samuel 23:29; 24:1).
2. Associated with millennial fishers in Ezekiel 47:10, **And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.**

There is not much here in the way of typology except as a place of dwelling for David and an association for a place of provision in the millennium. There is a vineyard here which the Shulamite was familiar with- the same one of Song 1:5? Engedi was famous for its vineyards. We do know that it was a pleasant and well-watered place in Judah, which is important. Since it is pleasant and well-watered, it would serve well to lead the flock of the Lord into for to graze and dwell. And the location in Judah fits in with Christ being from the tribe of Judah.

As for camphire, there are only two references to it, both in the Song of Songs:

1. Song 1:14, **My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi.**
2. Song 4:13, **Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard.**
3. It may have been a very pleasant and fragrant plant which grew in vineyards. It may have been a type of vine which yielded grapes.

⁵² O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, pages 47-48.

Solomon 1:15

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

Solomon now turns his attention back to the Shulamite. He calls her "**fair**" (or beautiful) twice and makes mention of her "**dove's eyes**". The eyes are usually the first thing we look at when looking at a person and they can tell a lot about a person. The eyes are indeed the windows to the soul.

But what of the dove? This speaks of the beauty of the bride. Doves are clean, pure, meek and harmless birds. Her eyes must have been that big, round, "puppy dog" type of eyes that projected a softness, warmth and love that Solomon couldn't get over. Can dove's eyes gaze upon evil, lust, sin or adultery? It is hard to associate a dove with these sins, so the Christian should likewise separate himself from such temptations of the flesh if he would have dove's eyes.

The Shulamite 1:16-17

1:16 Behold, thou *art* fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed *is* green.

The Shulamite returns the compliment. It is like the two of them going back and forth saying "You are fair", "No, you are!", "No, you are!" This can sound like two teenagers with a crush on each other. But the Shulamite sees Solomon not only as fair but pleasant, delightful. Christ is indeed beautiful in His deity and pleasant in His humanity.

The Shulamite will mention three items in Solomon's house in Song 1:16,17: the bed, the beams and rafters of the house. Look at this place that Solomon has prepared for fellowship with His bride! He has built a house for them to dwell together. Christ naturally has gone to prepare us a place in John 14:1-3 where we may dwell forever. But now we have no certain dwelling place on earth, but the next best thing is the church house. This is God's house on earth where Christ and His Church do fellowship.

What of it? First the bed. This could be a bed or a couch on which they would recline for meals, which is a natural time for fellowship. It is green- ripe, fruitful, prosperous and in bloom. These two have experienced very full and pleasant times of fellowship on this bed in this house. It is "green" for its beauty, attractiveness and fruitfulness.

1:17 The beams of our house *are* cedar, *and* our rafters of fir.

The beam and the rafters support the roof of the house but they are not made of just any ordinary lumber. They are made of two very fragrant woods- cedar and fir. Cedar is a durable wood that is pleasant to both the eye and the nose. This speaks of the durability of this house, the Church, which Christ has built. It shall last and endure and the very gates of hell shall not, cannot, prevail against it. The Church may at times be weak and carnal, but she is also immortal. The rafters support the roof, or the covering of a house, so the materials used must be strong.

The fir is defined by the Hebrew word "berowth", which could mean a cypress tree or some other type of elastic tree. If so, the Church is seen to bend but never break. The storms will blow and the heathen will lift up their ax to it, but the fir tree of Christ's church can handle any

opposition and enemy. If Satan cannot destroy the church, what can mere man do? It is also a fragrant tree, that would contribute a very pleasant smell to the house.

The house of God (a local church building?), as does the name of Jesus, puts off a very pleasant odor to all those who are in the house. It is not possible to be in the house engaged in fellowship with Christ without noticing the lovely fragrance of the ceiling beams and rafters.

The bride, in Song 1:16,17 says "**our bed, our beams, our rafters**". This house that Solomon has built for them is every bit as much her house as it is his. The Christian is a joint-heir with Christ- all He has the Christian also has. After all, Solomon built the house for her- he didn't need it. It was a place for them to be together, a place for fellowship. The Shulamite has a stake and an interest in this place.

Song of Solomon Chapter 2

Solomon

2:1 I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.

Solomon pins two titles on himself, that of a rose and of a lily, two of the finer flowers there are. He uses the "I AM" formula here, just as Christ often did. Seven times in the Gospel of John, the Lord used the expression to introduce some aspect of His being.

1. "I am the bread of life...I am the living bread" (John 6:35, 51).
2. "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12, 9:5).
3. "I am the door of the sheep" (John 10:7).
4. "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11).
5. "I am the resurrection, and the life" (John 11:25).
6. "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).
7. "I am the true vine...I am the vine" (John 15:1, 5).

The Lord does the same thing in Revelation.

1. **"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending...I am the first and the last"** (Revelation 1:8,11,17; 22:13).
2. **"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold I am alive for evermore"** (Revelation 1:18).
3. **"I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star"** (Revelation 22:16).

The first title Solomon uses for himself is "the rose of Sharon". Sharon was a plain in northern Palestine, between Mt Tabor and Lake Tiberias (1 Chronicles 5:16). In the level place, in the open, unhidden, Christ grows. The rose is not hidden away in a private garden but is in the open in the plain where whosoever will may come to partake of it.

The only other use of "rose" (as a flower) in Scripture is in Isaiah 35:1, **The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.** It would then be associated with blossoming in desert, solitary places. Christians can flourish in such areas with the blessing of God.

Then comes the lily of the valleys. The hymn "Lily of the Valley" is incorrect in its wording. It should be plural- valleys. Valleys are usually seen as places of spiritual test and trial, places of sorrow and grief which all must pass through if they expect to grow. They are also places of humiliation. The valley of the shadow of death in Psalm 23 is a prime example. One cannot grow crops on the mountaintop- the soil is too rocky. But the best soil for growth is in the valley. Here are the farms and orchards. Christ is there too. When all is well on the plain, Christ is there are He is lovely. But when we go into the valley and enter into a crucible, Christ is also there and is every bit as lovely and precious, if not even more so, in these dark locations.

Psalm 84 (which is my favorite psalm) also ties into this with the Valley of Baca. The godly man goes through the valley of despair and discouragement and profits by the experience by making pools where he can refresh himself and others who will come behind him.

The "valleys" are plural, meaning that the Christian must deal with a multitude of down times in his life, oftentimes more than one at the same time. The Lord never promised any Christian that his life would be always spent on the mountain-top, with constant victories and advances. That is Charismatic-type fluff-preaching but the Scripture gives no such hope. It is while in the valleys that character and spiritual strength are developed. The professing

Christian who spends all of his time reading books by Joel Osteen and watching TBN (and other Christian television) will develop a very shallow and frail testimony, devoid of spiritual strength or character. Better to spend time in a dungeon for the faith than to be sending in “seed faith offerings” to Kenneth Copeland and his ilk.

The “lily” appears fifteen times in Scripture. All except one of those references (Hosea 14:5) is associated with Solomon in some way. Solomon had lilies engraved on different parts of the Temple (1 Kings 7:19, 22, 26; 2 Chronicles 4:5). It is used 8 times in the Song of Solomon. Christ said, **Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these** in Luke 12:27.

In 1 Kings 20, the Syrians fought against Israel and got whipped (1 Kings 20:1-20). Before they came up against them the second time, they said, **And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they** (1 Kings 20:23). Because they said that, the Lord let them get beat a second time. **And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD** (1 Kings 20:28). When Ben-hadad missed that plural, it cost the lives of 127,000 of his men (1 Kings 20:29–30). Charismatics and other prosperity gospel apostates like to deny that a Christian should ever need to go into a valley. If a Christian is down or suffering, it is because of a lack of faith. They just need to send in more money (in faith!) and God will return that a hundred-fold. But anyone who denies that Christ is as much a God of the Valleys as He is the God of the Mountain (or even the Plain) makes the same sin as the Syrians did, and they may expect a similar judgment.

The rose is noted for its beauty while the lily is noted for its majesty.

2:2 As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

The Church and the Christian, as the lily, is sometimes found among the thorns. One may have to be hurt in order to possess Christ, but the hurt is always with the goal of healing. All relationships include the danger of being hurt. In our relationship with Christ, we hurt Him often without sin, neglect and apathy but He may occasionally wound us in His love and for our benefit. A rocky and thorny love is often a stronger love than a gentle and peaceful one for it has been tempered in the fires of adversity. If it survives, it will be strong. Christ does have thorns that can prick- His holiness, His demands of discipleship, His hatred of sin. But if one can handle those thorns, then Christ may be possessed.

You may be passing through some desolate area full of weeds and thorns. If you say a lily growing in that area, it would stand out. It would stand out more than usual because of the desolation of its surroundings. A lily in a beautiful garden, surrounded by other lovely flowers, would not stand out as much. This is why God places His saints and churches in desolate areas, so their beauty will stand out and catch the eye of the world for a witness.

You will either be seen as a thorn or a lily in the eyes of Christ. The believer is seen as a lily while God sees the unconverted man as a thorn, fit only for the fire.

Such love is manifested among the daughters, usually understood to be those who are without the Church, even the lost. Christ's love is painful for them since it condemns their sin and lifestyle. They will have none of Christ since He is painful to their touch. Christ wounds them but

they will not allow Christ to then heal. As He is offensive to them, they reject Him. The Christian may also be hurt by such love but these are wounds of love which strengthen that love.

How does Christ feel about the believer? He sees the believer as a lily among the thorns. We dwell in sin, in a sinful world, with all of its trials and tribulations. How can he consider us who spiritually resemble weeds rather than lilies to be so precious? This is the love of grace which can view the defiled believer through the blood of Calvary to see the believer not as he is but as he can be through the grace of God. The lily is white as is the Christian dressed in the robes of the righteousness of Christ.

What are the thorns? They could be several things:

1. The Christian in the world, with his dealings and struggles with the world, the flesh and the devil.
2. The Christian in the church, as he mingles with some believers who are carnal, backslidden, bitter, jealous, ambitious, etc.
3. The Christian in his own personal struggles with himself and his old sin nature as he struggles to grow in grace and in sanctification.

Observations regarding the lily:

1. They were part of the decoration on Solomon's temple just as we are used as living stones in the temple of our God (1 Kings 7:19,22).
2. The lilies were on the pillars which supported the entire structure, just as we do in the heavenly structure of the Church.
 - A. Ephesians 2:20-22, **And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.**
3. This lily is often found in the valley where it blooms best, as the Christian grows his best not on the mountaintop in the sunshine but rather in the valley of sorrow and trial. You will notice that farms are usually not found on mountain tops. It is great to be on the mountain, but the air is thin and cold and the soil is bare. Crops do not grow well on mountains. But if you go down into the valley, then you will see the farms and the crops. You cannot be a Charismatic and try to live "on the Hallelujah side" all your life. You cannot grow spiritually if you do. The growing Shulamite soul is best watered by tears of trial and adversity.
4. Christ feeds among the lilies, where he loves to spend his time, meditate, have communion and receive His strength.
 - A. Song 2:16, **My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.**
 - B. Song 6:2,3, **My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.**
5. Christ provides for the needs of the lily but not through their own efforts of merits but rather through His.
 - A. Matthew 6:28/Luke 12:27, **And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin.**

The Shulamite

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.

"A Tree is interposed. We knew it would come. The Tree of Life in the first garden of delights (Eden) was lost, but not forever. There would be another Tree to lead us to His life, ultimately revealed in the Tree at Calvary."⁵³ Christ, as the Apple Tree, stands halfway between the Tree of Eden and the Tree of the New Jerusalem.

How does the believer feel about Christ? The Believer refers to Christ as an apple tree. Apple trees are among a unique breed of tree that not only gives shelter from the elements but also food. The fir, the pine, the evergreen may be more attractive than the apple tree and may not go through seasons of drought or winter hibernation, but they give no fruit. The mighty redwoods and sequoias may be larger and more impressive than the apple tree, but they too give no fruit. The oak and maple may be more popular to put in the front yard, but they do not give fruit. These trees are like false religious systems- more impressive than the rather unimpressive apple tree but only the true religion of Christ, found under the humble apple tree, can give both shelter from the elements of a hostile world of sin as well as spiritual fruit to nourish the believer.

The weary traveler seeking such refuge looks for the tree that can offer the desired protection as Christ does to the sinner fleeing the wrath to come. This traveler must also be strengthened with the fruit of this tree.

The apple tree is among the other many trees of the woods. Yet something about it makes it stand out. Christ is among many other (false) gods out there and the truth can easily get lost among the many religions of the wood. Yet the believer can spot Christ among the other gods with no problem and will be attracted to him as we would be attracted to the apple tree among the other trees of the wood. Christ is special to the believer:

1. Because of who He is- He is God and none else is
2. Because of what He did- saved us where no one else could
3. Because of what He will do- bring us home to glory where no one else can

"Awakened souls, remember you must not sit down under every tree that offers itself. "Take heed that no one deceive you; for many shall come in Christ's name, saying, I am Christ, and deceive many." There are many ways of saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. You will be tempted to find peace in the world, in self-repentance, in self-reformation. Remember, choose you a tree that will yield fruit as well as shade. "As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons." Pray for a choosing faith. Pray for an eye to discern the apple-tree. Oh! there is no rest for the soul except under that Branch which God has made strong. My heart's desire and prayer for you is, that you may all find rest there."⁵⁴

The apple tree is by no means the most attractive of trees. it is rather plain, short and "gnarly". Christ does not appear to be attractive to the eyes of the world. Isaiah 53:2 says, **For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form, nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire**

⁵³ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 57.

⁵⁴ Robert Murray McCheyne, Sermon III in *Memoirs and Remains of Robert Murray McCheyne* by Andrew Bonar.

him. The apple tree may be plain and even ugly but you get fruit out of it and that is what is important.

Under the apple tree is a great place for communion and fellowship with Christ. In order to commune with Christ, we must sit under His tree out of delight and not duty. And it usually is not very busy under that tree! Many will work for Christ but not many will commune with Him.

We now see how the Shulamite again feels about Solomon, comparing him to an apple tree. Observations regarding the apples:

1. God refers to His people as the apple of His eye.
 - A. Deuteronomy 32:10, **He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.**
 - B. Psalm 17:8, **Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings.**
 - C. Zechariah 2:8, **For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.**
2. The Word of God is referred to as apples in its nourishment value.
 - A. Proverbs 25:11, **A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.**
3. We are spiritually raised up and nourished under the apple tree.
 - A. Song 8:5, **Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee.**
4. When carnality, sin and backslidings come into the life, it dries up the apples and hence our source of nourishment and communion.
 - A. Joel 1:12, **The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.**

"If an unconverted man were taken away into heaven, where Christ sits in glory, and if he overheard Christ's words of admiring love towards the believer, he could not understand them,—he could not comprehend how Christ should see a loveliness in poor religious people whom he in the bottom of his heart despised. O again, if an unconverted man were to overhear a Christian at his devotions when he is really within the veil, and were to listen to his words of admiring, adoring love towards Christ, he could not possibly understand them,—he could not comprehend how the believer should have such a burning affection toward one unseen, in whom he himself saw no form nor comeliness. So true it is that the natural man knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him...The believer is unspeakably precious in the eyes of Christ, and Christ is unspeakably precious in the eyes of the believer."⁵⁵

She sat down under the shadow of that apple tree. Sitting down implies several things:

1. Rest, when you are tired
2. Fellowship
3. Dwelling- you plan to stay for a while. We just don't visit under the apple tree- we live there.

⁵⁵ Robert Murray McCheyne, Sermon III in *Memoirs and Remains of Robert Murray McCheyne* by Andrew Bonar.

4. And she sat down with great delight. She loved being there and with Whom she was having fellowship with.

“Many of you have been sorely wearied with going your way to find peace. Some of you tried ceremonies, and trusted in them, and the priest came to your help; but he mocked your heart’s distress. Others of you sought by various systems of thought to come to an anchorage; but, tossed from billow to billow, you found no rest upon the seething sea of speculation. More of you tried by your good works to gain rest to your consciences. You multiplied your prayers, you poured out floods of tears, you hoped, by almsgiving and by the like, that some merit might accrue to you, and that your heart might feel acceptance with God, and so have rest. You toiled and toiled, like the men that were in the vessel with Jonah when they rowed hard to bring their ship to land, but could not, for the sea wrought and was tempestuous. There was no escape for you that way, and so you were driven to another way, even to rest in Jesus. My heart looks back to the time when I was under a sense of sin, and sought with all my soul to find peace, but could not discover it, high or low, in any place beneath the sky; yet when “I saw one hanging on a tree,” as the Substitute for sin, then my heart sat down under His shadow with great delight. My heart reasoned thus with herself,—Did Jesus suffer in my stead? Then I shall not suffer. Did He bear my sin? Then I do not bear it. Did God accept His Son as my Substitute? Then He will never smite me. Was Jesus acceptable with God as my Sacrifice? Then what contents the Lord may well enough content me, and so I will go no farther, but: “sit down under His shadow,” and enjoy a delightful rest.”⁵⁶

That tree also provides shade, which is something everyone needs for rest, relaxation and protection from the heat of the glaring sun of this generation. Every saint needs to get out of the glare of this world system and rest under the protection and shade of the apple tree.

“Now, when the spouse was sitting down, restful and delighted, she was overshadowed. She says, “I sat down under His shadow.” I do not know a more delightful state of mind than to feel quite overshadowed by our beloved Lord. Here is my black sin, but there is His precious blood overshadowing my sin and hiding it forever. Here is my condition by nature, an enemy to God; but He who reconciled me to God by His blood has overshadowed that also, so that I forget that I was once an enemy in the joy of being now a friend. I am very weak; but He is strong, and His strength overshadows my feebleness. I am very poor; but He hath all riches, and His riches overshadow my poverty. I am most unworthy; but He is so worthy that if I use His name I shall receive as much as if I were worthy: His worthiness doth overshadow my unworthiness. It is very precious to put the truth the other way, and say, If there be anything good in me, it is not good when I compare myself with Him, for His goodness quite eclipses and overshadows it. Can I say I love Him? So I do, but I hardly dare call it love, for His love overshadows it. Did I suppose that I served Him? So I would; but my poor service is not worth mentioning in comparison with what He has done for me. Did I think I had any degree of holiness? I must not deny what His Spirit works in me; but when I think of His immaculate life, and all His divine perfections, where am I? What am I? Have you not sometimes felt this? Have you not been so overshadowed and hidden under your Lord that you became as nothing? I know myself what it is to feel that if I die in a workhouse it does not matter so long as my Lord is glorified. Mortals may cast out my name as evil, if they like; but what matters it since His dear name shall one day be printed in stars athwart the sky? Let Him overshadow me; I delight that it should be so.”⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Charles Spurgeon, *Till He Come*, page 20.

⁵⁷ Ibid, pages 21-22.

“great delight” Many believe that there is no joy in religion. It is a gloomy thing with no fun. It is nothing more than doing prayers and going to church all the time. The world thinks there is no delight in the Christian life. You must give up sin and pleasures of the flesh. The Christian must exchange these worldly pleasures for reading of the Bible and dry religious duties. This is what the world says. What does the Bible say? “I sat down under his shadow with great delight.” Ah! let God be true, and every man a liar. Yet no one can believe this except those who have tried it.

Some people are afraid of anything like joy in religion. They have none themselves, and they do not love to see it in others. The Daughters of Jerusalem, whom we will meet later, are like this. If anyone has any fun or enjoyment in their life in Christ, they will do what they can to discourage it.

Do you have great delight in Christ? Do you love going to church, hearing the preaching and teaching of the Scripture, singing the good old hymns, and fellowshiping with the saints? Do you have great delight in prayer, meditation, and Bible reading? Or is your delight in sports, money, the transitory things of this world? What a man delights in is where his heart is.

“his fruit was sweet to my taste” The world does not have the appetite for the fruit of holiness and the nourishment that Christ provides. The Christian finds it sweet and the world would find it bitter. The reverse is true for the fruit of the world, as the world would find the fruit of sin delightful, but the Christian finds it most bitter.

What might some of these fruits of Christ be (no doubt this is a partial list!)?

1. Forgiveness of sins
2. Fellowship with the Savior
3. Assurance of salvation
4. Enjoyment of salvation
5. Peace of heart and peace with God

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

The banqueting house is the place for fellowship and delight. Fellowship and Christ's love are both a continual feast, with its provision, its delight and its satisfaction. Solomon brought the Shulamite to his banqueting house for an extended season of communion. You bring friends to such feasts as enemies or even casual acquaintances are not invited. It can be thought of as a house of wine, as Samuel Rutherford liked to call it. The wine is a Biblical symbol for joy. It is in this place where the communion flows as wine. Is the place of true joy, which only the believer in Christ has access to. The world has many cheap imitations of joy, but they are vain, hollow and oh so temporary.

What house is this? It could be applied to the local church as it is a place where Christ meets the Christian, but it would be better as a reference to anywhere where the Christian enjoys communion and fellowship with Christ, like in the prayer closet. After all, fellowship and worship are not confined (nor should they be) to the local church. You ought to have more fellowship and do more worship away from church than you do in it.

It is Solomon who brings the Shulamite into this house. She is not able to enter it herself. But we have the right and ability to do so in Christ as He brings us to Himself in these times of fellowship.

Solomon also set a banner or a standard over his beloved and it was love. Think of a troop flying its colors as this is a military term. A platoon or troop takes great pride in its colors,

displaying them in battle and using it as a rallying point and as a source of pride. The Christian's banner given by Christ is love for that is what rallies us to Christ. It was love that moved Solomon to bring the Shulamite into his banqueting house and it was love that maintained the relationship. Christ is the captain of our salvation (Hebrews 2:10) and His insignia is that of love. We march into the battle motivated by the love of Christ. When a city is taken in battle, the conqueror sets up his standard in it. Christ has taken us by His love and keeps us by His love.

He loves us! As wretched and vile and filthy and sinful as we are, He loves us! He has no reason to love us yet He does anyway. This is because of His grace. And Christ is not ashamed to display His love to all of the creation, flying His banner from the highest point so that all can see.

2:5 Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love.

The Shulamite is overcome with the delights of the banqueting house. Who wouldn't be? Who could help but be?

She needs to be supported in her fellowship as she cannot maintain her strength in her fellowship. She needs support as well as comfort. The pressed cakes of raisins are used for subsistence while the apple is used for comfort. The reviving power of raisins can be seen in 1 Samuel 30:12, **And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights.**

She also mentions that she is "sick of love" or lovesick. She is stricken with and overpowered by love toward Solomon and with the love manifested to her by Solomon. It has left her weak, hence the need for the staying and the comfort. What can cure this sickness? Nothing, although the symptoms can be treated! Love can cure the same sickness that it causes. Better sick with the love of Christ than with the love toward the world.

"flagons" This word comes from the French "flacon", "a small vessel" and is related to our word "flask". A flagon is a container for holding liquids or a measure of as much as a flagon would hold.⁵⁸

2:6 His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.

Christ provides the needed support for the Christian Himself, with both His left and right hands. The left hand in Scripture has the idea of weakness while the right hand is the hand of strength and might. Christ supports the head with the left hand. He does so gently and tenderly as to not damage this precious part of the body. The stronger right hand is reserved for embracing the whole body in a hug of love. Christ knows how and when to be tender but He can also be strong with His beloved when He needs to be. He knows what we need and how we need to have it applied- with either the right or the left hand. All this is restated in Song 8:3, **His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.**

The left-handed provision is the more hidden side of Christ's provision. You don't see this because the left hand is the hand of weakness. It is Christ working in secret, behind the scenes, His constant, day-by-day provision that we are seldom aware of or think about. His left hand is under the head, unseen but there in support. There are things Christ does for us that we do not see but which are very important. Christ does more for you moment by moment in secret

⁵⁸ Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 144.

and in the dark that you never know about. But there are times that He uses the right hand of power to answer prayer in a mighty way that all can see and marvel at. We then see the left hand is the constant, moment-by-moment support of our needs that is done "under our heads" that we may take for granted and not think of, while the right and is the deliberate and obvious public answers to prayer that we can see and rejoice in. We need both hands in our pilgrimage. We need Christ to uphold our heads with the left hand while providing our needs with the right.

A Biblical unfolding of the left and right hands, starting with the left hand.

1. Lot, when he separated from Abraham, went to the left hand toward Sodom.
A. Genesis 13:9, **Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.**
2. Ehud, who was left-handed, was able to surprise Eglon since he was not expecting an attack from the "weak side".
A. Judges 3:21, **And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly.**
3. We cannot behold the work of God that He does on the left hand.
A. Job 23:9, **On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.**
4. Riches and honor are on the left hand of wisdom.
A. Proverbs 3:16, **Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour."**
5. The left hand is used to support and cradle the head.
A Song 2:6/8:3, **His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.**
6. The position of the left hand is reserved for the cursed in the judgment of the nations,
A. Matthew 25:41, **Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.**
7. A fool's heart is at the left hand,
A. Ecclesiastes 10:2, **A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left.**

What about the right hand?

1. Abraham went to the right hand when Lot separated from him.
A. Genesis 13:9, **Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.**
2. The right hand position is the place of blessing.
A. Genesis 48:13,14, **And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.**
3. The right hand symbolizes power and strength.
4. Priests were consecrated with oil applied to the right ear (to hear the word of God), right thumb (to do the will of God) and right big toe (to walk in the way of God) for service.
A. Exodus 29:20, **Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of**

his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about.

B. Leviticus 8:23, **And he slew it; and Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot.**

5. The law was given by the right hand of God.

A. Deuteronomy 33:2, **And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.**

6. Judgment may come from the right hand.

A. Judges 5:26, **She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples.**

B. Psalm 21:8, **Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.**

C. Psalm 110:5. **The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.**

7. The right hand is the position, the hand of honor.

8. Salvation and deliverance come from the right hand.

9. Joy and pleasures are on the right hand.

A. Psalm 16:11, **Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.**

10. The right hand is the hand of support.

11. The right hand teaches.

A. Psalm 45:4, **And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.**

12. The right hand is full of righteousness.

A. Psalm 48:10, **According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.**

13. The right hand is the hand of redemption.

A. Psalm 78:54, **And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased.**

14. Wisdom has riches and honor in her right hand.

A. Proverbs 3:16, **Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.**

B. Ecclesiastes 10:2, **A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left.**

15. The right hand is the hand for embracing.

A. Song 2:6/8:3, **His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.**

16. The right arm is the arm of glory.

A. Isaiah 63:12, **That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name?**

17. The place for the sheep at the judgment is on the right hand.

A. Matthew 25:33,34, **And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**

18. Exaltation comes from the right hand.

A. Acts 2:33, **Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.**

B. Acts 5:31, **Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.**

19. The right hand is the hand of fellowship.

A. Galatians 2:9, **And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship.**

20. The mark of the beast will be placed on the right hand by the Antichrist.

A. Revelation 13:16, **And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads.**

i. This is an obvious copying of the glory of the right hand as God presents it, especially in Ezekiel 9.

"It is human to desire the right-hand blessings of God more than His left-hand providences. There are many in our time who say they 'expect a miracle every minute'. The charismatism of the time magnifies the miracle and does not see the moment-by-moment faithfulness of God's providence. It is a mistake of selfishness to beg God for a kind of miracle we love while standing in a multiplicity of providences all around us. The right hand of God is the unusual working of God; the left hand of God is the most usual. Unfortunately, we too often shun the usual, the ordinary, the natural ways of God. This is to our discredit and often to our ingratitude towards God."⁵⁹ I once heard Spence put it another way, "It is a sin to ask for a miracle when you are standing in the middle of a thousand providences".

2:7 I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.

We go back to the daughters of Jerusalem as the Shulamite gives them a charge that they not disturb Solomon nor wake him up. The feast at the banqueting house seems to have been exhausting and Solomon was resting. The daughters may have been likely to awaken him for some reason, but the Shulamite charges them not to do so but rather to let him sleep. She expresses a concern for his welfare. They make no reply.

Applied to Christ, we must plead to the carnal ones in the church that they do nothing to interfere in the fellowship between Christ and the spiritual ones. Don't pester Christ with your petty complaints and concerns and carnalities that would distract both Christ and the spiritual Christians from continuing in the communion.

Carnal Christians tend to disrupt the peace of the church by their carnal concerns ("On which side of the church should we put the new piano? What color should the new carpet be? Mrs. So-and-so is not doing her turn in the nursery!") Leave Christ and His beloved ones alone and let them continue in the more important tasks of fellowship and communion. The Shulamite was determined not to thus disturb Christ and she wants to make sure that no one else does either. We must be strong and firm against the Daughters of Jerusalem in our churches. It is these carnal ones who can do more damage to a church than any sinner can. The world can only do so much harm. They may throw the pastor in jail and padlock the church doors, but they can only attack the external. The Daughters of Jerusalem, who are within the church and members

⁵⁹ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 62.

of it, do their work from the inside, like a cancer. Saints often do more harm to a Shulamite soul than any sinner can ever do. Your worst opposition will not come from the world but from the "brethren". After all, Jesus was betrayed not by a Pharisee but by one of his disciples, Judas. "Every Shulamite soul then must be determined that no carnal, worldly or nominal way will cause the spiritual ways of God to cease in the life (O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 63)."

In Isaiah 3:16-26, the prophet gives the following description of these "Daughters of Jerusalem": **"Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore the LORD will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, The rings, and nose jewels, The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils. And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well-set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty. Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground."** This is not at all flattering.

What of the reference to the roes and the hinds of the field? Have you ever tried to sneak up on a deer in a field? It is nigh impossible. Make the slightest noise to disturb the quiet and away they run. They are very sensitive to noise and distraction. Fellowship with Christ is as fragile. When the daughters of Jerusalem blunder into the field of communion, tromping like a herd of elephants with their worldliness and carnality, away Christ runs for He wants nothing to do with such disturbances. Christ cares little about whether to have ham or turkey at the Christmas social or whether lilies or roses should be put on the altar on Easter morning. This is the rattling of chains that scare away the hinds and the roes of the field. Carnality is like fingernails on a blackboard or the blaring of heavy metal music- it is distracting and disgusting and is not conducive for fellowship. Genuine love and affection are shy and fragile things which are easily disrupted. They dread intrusion and public scrutiny.

"charge" Strong's #7650 shaba`; swear (as if by repeating a declaration seven times), pledge allegiance to God through an oath, bind by oath, to adjure. It is related to the word "sheva" or "shiv'ah" (Strong's #7651), meaning "seven". This number was special. Oaths were confirmed by seven sacrifices (Genesis 21:28), seven witnesses or seven pledges. "To seven oneself" perhaps meant to bind oneself with seven things (Judges 16:7,13).

2:8 The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.

Now we come to an interesting section of the Song as we see a possible hint of the time of the year in which the rapture will occur (but certainly not the exact date) and some insight on revival.

The Shulamite rejoices as she hears the voice of her beloved. She hears his call and she responds. We know that the first sign that the rapture will take place will be the voice of the archangel sounding, probably saying "Come up hither".

1. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 **"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:"**
2. Revelation 4:1 **"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter."**

"The voice of my beloved!" That's what we're waiting for. We are not waiting for the Antichrist to show up. We are not waiting for the temple to be rebuilt. We are not waiting for the revived Roman Empire to be reestablished in Europe. It may be that those things will happen before the Rapture. If they do, we will certainly take note of them and mark them down as the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. But that is not what we are anticipating. We are listening for a sound, not looking for a sign. We are listening for "a shout" and "the voice of the archangel" and "the trump of God." We are listening for our Lord to call us each by name (John 10:3). We are listening for a command that will change our bodies "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (Rev. 4:1; 1 Cor. 15:52). We are waiting for the "Come up hither." We are looking for the Uppertaker, not the undertaker.⁶⁰

When she hears his voice, she then sees him skipping on the hills and leaping upon the mountains, like a deer or a gazelle bouncing through the underbrush. But first she hears the voice, then sees her beloved coming rapidly upon the high places. Can we apply this to the rapture?

When Christ comes, He will be preceded by the voice of the archangel and then the Bride shall see Him. We hear the trumpet and hear His voice before we see Him. He comes from upon the mountains, from on high from heaven, but He will not touch the earth. He will stay "on the mountains" and not come down into the valley or into the plain where the Bride is. And He comes with speed, as the thief going into and out of the house quickly before he is discovered.

Some thoughts on the Rapture:

1. The rapture is a mystery, not revealed until after Pentecost by Paul. The truth of the Second Coming or the resurrection are not mysteries for both are clearly mentioned in the Old Testament.
2. The mainline, professing Church is lukewarm at the time of the rapture.
3. Christ does not touch the earth at the rapture as He will at the Second Coming. He comes in the air at the rapture and we meet Him in the air.
4. Satan's position and situation do not change at the rapture as it will at the Second Coming.
5. No Jew or unsaved person is judged at the rapture. The bema seat judgment for the Christian takes place immediately after the rapture.
6. It is not the same event as the Second Coming. The Second Coming and the rapture are two totally separate events.

This would be a good place to summarize the doctrine of the pre-tribulation rapture of the church.

1. The term is never used in the Bible, but the definition of the doctrine is obvious.

⁶⁰ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on The Song of Solomon*, page 93.

2. Genesis 5:24 "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."
 - A. Enoch's translation is also a type of the rapture. One minute Enoch was on earth, the next, he was gone, taken by God to heaven, delivered from the violent and wicked world that he stood against and rebuked by his walking with God, and delivered from the upcoming worldwide judgment of the Flood (by about 669 years). The rapture of the church will be similar. There will be a remnant of genuinely born-again saints who are walking with God in the midst of days like unto the Days of Noah. We will be taken by God from off the earth suddenly and without warning in much the same way Enoch was. And that means we will miss the worldwide tribulation judgments that will destroy the earth in much the same way the Flood did.
3. Psalm 50:4,5 "He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."
 - A. This is a post-tribulation rapture.
4. Song 2:10-13 "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."
 - A. Rapture language in 2:10
 - i. Rise up, spoken by Solomon, a type of Christ
 - ii. My love- obviously the Shulamite, a type of the Church
 - iii. Come away
 - B. The winter is past- a springtime rapture.
 - C. The rain is over and gone- a rapture in the "dry season" in Israel.
 - D. When the fig tree puts forth her green figs
 - i. Literally to the time of the blossoming of figs
 - ii. Historically, when Israel is starting to bloom in the land.
5. 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."
 - A. It is a mystery, something unrevealed up until Paul received it
 - B. Not all Christians will experience death but some would escape it
 - C. We shall all be changed
 - D. It happens in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye
 - E. It takes place at "the last trump".
 - F. The dead (in Christ) shall be raised (resurrected) incorruptible.
 - G. We will receive our incorruptible bodies
 - H. Death is swallowed up in victory
6. Philippians 3:20,21 "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
 - A. Our bodies will be changed from vile to incorruptible.
7. First Thessalonians 4:13-17 "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God:

and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

- A. It is something we are not to be ignorant about
- B. It should prevent sorrow regarding the fate of the dead in Christ
- C. The Lord will descend from heaven with a shout
- D. There will be the voice of the archangel
- E. There will be the trump of God
- F. The dead in Christ will rise first
- G. We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together in the clouds to be with the Lord
- H. We shall ever be with the Lord
- I. Comfort each other with this doctrine

8. First Thessalonians 5:9 "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"

- A. The Church will not go through the tribulation so the church must be raptured out before it starts.

9. First John 3:2 "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

- A. We'll be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is

10. Revelation 3:10 "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

- A. The Church will be raptured before the tribulation period begins.

11. Revelation 4:1 "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter."

- A. Takes place after the Laodicean church period
- B. John sees a door opened in heaven
- C. He hears a voice like a trumpet, saying "Come up hither"
- D. He is immediately in the spirit
- E. The next thing he sees is a throne, the bema judgment

12. Revelation 11:12 "And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them."

- A. A tribulation rapture of Moses and Elijah.

Christ is making a very quick swing through the atmospheric heavens to snatch His Bride away (in an elopement!), skipping and leaping. So far, we can make an application to the rapture, not the Second Coming, where He lands on the earth, not skipping around. Naturally, we who believe our Bibles and interpret them literally (the correct way) have no problems in believing this doctrine. Amillennialists, postmillennialists and non-dispensationalists may not like it, but we insist on the Bible doctrine of the rapture and make no apologies for it.

This is not the only, or maybe even the primary application. This is also a call for fellowship. Christ calls the believer (often at inopportune times) to come away with Him for a time of solitude and communion. These periods of devotion are very important for the Christian life and must not be neglected.

2:9 My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice.

Solomon is compared to a roe or a young hart, or a deer. This would refer to his strength, grace, beauty and stamina as these characteristics are telling of Christ. But it also speaks of his reluctance to come into crowds as was mentioned under 2:7. He is sensitive to those noises or situations that would disrupt His desired secret communion and fellowship with His beloved. He only comes in the quiet and to those in private. Crowds and noise scare Him away as they would any deer.

When Christ does come for communion, He does quietly and unannounced. He does not have a flourish of trumpets to announce Him as He approaches for a season of fellowship. He rather sneaks into the compound and peeks through the lattice to spy out what His beloved is doing. Is she alone? Is now a good time for a visit? If so, in He comes. Otherwise, He withdraws until another time. If the circumstance is not "just right" for fellowship, Jesus will return at a later, and better, season.

The lattice would also speak of the occasional difficulties the Shulamite would have in getting a clear view of Solomon. He does not show himself openly but rather peeks and sneaks about quietly. He beholds us while we may have trouble seeing Him for He does occasionally hide His face to see how the Christian will react- does he even care or does the break in communion bother him and move him to seek to renew it? We have trouble seeing the full face of our Beloved on these occasions until he comes into our garden. He may be out of sight and lingering in the shadows, but He is never far off. As soon as He gets the sign that the way is clear and that His company is desired, in He comes. When He looks in through the window or through the lattice (like a slotted fence), we get but a partial glimpse of Him. Is such a glimpse enough to stir our hearts for a fuller view of Him and communion with Him?

This "peering through the lattice" which affords only a partial view of a hidden Christ speaks well of the view the Old Testament saint had of Christ. There is no plain, open view of Christ as to His offices, work, sufferings, death and resurrection in the Old Testament. We have plenty of "partial views" in types, shadows, rituals, ordinances and sacrifices (Colossians 2:17).

These lattices interfere with a full view of Christ but they could see some things. Few, if any, Old Testament saints understood the full extent of the earthly ministry and work of Christ. It is only in the New Testament do we get the "full face view" of Christ. Yet even now we "see through a glass darkly" while in our earthly pilgrimage. It is only when we receive our glorified bodies, when the interfering fog and haze of sin, carnality and worldliness are removed will we get the full-faced gaze upon our Saviour, but not until. This is our hope for the day when we shall be like Him for we shall one day see Him as He is.

These partial views of the face of Christ are beautiful as they should stir a desire in the heart of a Christian for the full faced view. Never be content with getting a view of Christ view through the lattice, but seek for a full, unobstructed view of His face.

2:10 My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

"come away" "To each denomination of his Church he sends this message, 'Come away'. He seems to speak to Episcopacy and say 'Come away; cut out of the liturgy that which is not

according to my mind, leave the State, be free.' He speaks to the Calvinist and says 'Come away; be no more dead and cold as thou hast been; let not thy sons hold the truth in unrighteousness.' He speaks to each denomination according to its need, but to the same import, 'Rise and come away; leave deadness and coldness and wrong-doing and hardness and harshness, and bitterness of spirit; leave idleness and slothfulness and lukewarmness; rise up and come away. Come away to preach the gospel among the heathen; come away to reform the masses of this wicked city; come away from your little heartedness; from your coldness of spirit, come away: the land is before you; go up and possess it.'⁶¹

Clear rapture language is present here, with Christ taking the Shulamite away.

2:11 For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;

This describes the spring of the year in Israel.

2:12 The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;

The "turtle" is not the reptile but a reference to a turtledove, a bird,

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

This is more rapture language as Solomon invites the Shulamite to come away with Him. He wants her fellowship and presence and offers the chance to come away with Him so they may be together. She seems to consent, for who wouldn't? Come away from the world, from all its sins, worries, cares and come be with me! There is a definite urgency to His invitation as He gives it twice.

We then see this as a type of the rapture and gives a clue as to the time of year it may occur. If this is the rapture, then it would occur when the "winter is past", when "the rain(y season) is over", when "the flowers appear on the earth" during the "time of the singing of the birds", when the fig tree is in bloom and the grapes on the vines are giving off a smell. The dark and dreary weather of the winter is gone as are the times of the rains- now is the time for fellowship! This would be May or June on our calendar. We believe then that the rapture would occur in the (late) Spring of the year, after the rains have departed Israel while the Second Advent would probably take place in September or October. Of course, this doesn't tell us the exact date or even the year of the rapture or advent, only the time of the year in which they will occur.

But this timetable conflicts with the theory that the Rapture takes place "at the last trump" of the Feast of Trumpets, which occurs in September or October.

The fig tree is another clue as it is a type of Israel. When you see Israel starting to bear fruit and put forth her unripe figs, then the time of this elopement is near. Israel today is yet in blindness but there is a stir in Messianic interest and there is much talk and anticipation of the rebuilding of the temple. Israel's spiritual figs are yet green but they are there. They will not ripen until after the tribulation but we can begin to see the fruit even today.

⁶¹ Charles Spurgeon, "A Sermon For Spring" in *The Most Holy Place*, page 176.

Let's take a closer look at this rapture language:

1. **"My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away** (Song 2:10). Compare with **"come up hither"** in Revelation 4:2, which is another type and picture of the rapture."
2. **"Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away** (Song 2:13)."

The rapture is to be properly defined as that secret snatching away of the Church by Christ to be taken to heaven in order to escape the tribulation period. It is an elopement, when the groom comes unexpectedly and in secret in the middle of the night, to sweep his bride away from her house, to get married. Christ is one day coming to sweep us, His Bride, out of this world to take us to heaven to be with Him and to be married. Before we can be married, we have to get to where our Bridegroom is, hence the purpose of the rapture.

We are often ridiculed by those who fail to accept the Bible truth of the rapture. Let it be stated that we who hold to a pre-millennial rapture of the church, which will occur before the tribulation period. We see no scripture that suggests that the Church will not go through any portion of the tribulation.

O. Talmadge Spence sees this passage a little differently (page 68), making an application to revival in the life of the Shulamite. He identifies the elements of Song 2:10-13 in the following manner:

1. The winter of all our sinful life is past.
2. The rain of Holy Ghost conviction that brought godly sorrow and repentance is past.
3. The flowers of the New Birth experience which brought salvation are past.
4. The time of the singing victory over the dominion of sin through sanctification is past.
5. The voice of the turtledove, so appropriate for our infillings of the Holy Spirit, are past.
6. The fig tree of the prophetic expectancy for our Lord's Return is past.
7. The vines with their continued fruitfulness in our lives are past.

Solomon

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

Where is the Shulamite to be found? In the clefts of the rock, in the secret places. This is the natural dwelling place for doves. She is in a tight spot of distress in dwelling in the rocky places. The Church is in constant tribulation in the world and finds herself between the proverbial "rock and hard place". This is where Christ is looking for His Bride- in the rocks. He looks not in the palaces of kings where the women lie around in ease all day long. Christ is not looking for Christians who are in churches that are at peace with the world, the flesh and the devil for these are not true Christians, if they are even born again at all. Rather, Christ seeks among the despised, the hunted, the poor, the persecuted churches. It is there that the true Bride resides.

But this is a good place to dwell, within the cleft of the rock, protected and sheltered from the elements and from the persecutors. It is also in a wilderness place, away from the hubbub and scrutiny of the world. Remember what we have said about how Christ desires to have private fellowship with His beloved just as a husband desires to be alone with his new bride.

The "secret places of the stairs" are those inaccessible places that cannot be easily reached. The world, or even the carnal professors cannot easily reach the place of communion where the Shulamite spends time with her Beloved. This is a high place in the wilderness. You must go "without the camp" to get there (away from acceptable, mainline, dead denominations and churches) and you must climb high (spiritually) to reach this secret place of communion. Few find it because few Christians are willing to totally turn their backs upon the world and are willing to go into the desolate places. Even fewer are quite unwilling to put forth the work of climbing up these stairs to reach the high place of communion. It is quite a climb, and you just might fall and hurt yourself. The air is rare up there but look what you get once you reach the summit- Christ is there waiting for fellowship! This is spiritual growth, going through crises experiences and crucibles and going all the way with the Lord. It is climbing away from the lowlands of sin and worldliness and minding yourself to climb, claw and mount up to reach the mountain peaks of spirituality and holiness for the sole reason of being with your Beloved.

Solomon, once he finds the Shulamite, desires to look upon her face (which is comely) and to hear her voice (which is sweet). The world certainly does not think so, else they would not have exiled and hunted her to the dwelling within the rocks. But Christ thinks otherwise- He delights at the very sight of the believer and rejoices when He hears their voice (in prayer!). There is no music in the world like the voice of one of His beloved ones speaking to Him.

If this is language of the rapture and second coming, we also can see where Israel, typified here by the Shulamite, is hiding in the clefts, cliffs and in the city of Petra during the tribulation, in their hiding from the Antichrist in the last half of the tribulation.

2:15 Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.

Much has been said in sermons regarding these little foxes that spoil the vines. Preachers who otherwise ignore and neglect Song of Solomon will usually preach from Song 2:15 even if they never preach another sermon from the Song. The verse is usually interpreted to mean those seemingly harmless, inoffensive habits that quickly degenerate into sins that can do great harm to the life of the believer. Little foxes are cute and may seem as if they can do no harm but just one hungry fox, regardless of its size, can devour the entire vineyard of a believer's life.

Remember from back in chapter 1 that a vineyard is referred to as representing the Christian life of a believer. Our lives do contain tender areas that either we have not fortified or that are difficult to guard against the wiles of Satan working through these little foxes of "little" sins. Foxes have a reputation for being wily and crafty and so is Satan, as he mounts his attacks against the tender grapes of the believer.

How do the little foxes spoil the vines? The Hebrew word "chabal" suggests three ways:

1. To wind tightly (as a rope), to bind. This would be to choke off the vine so that it would die. Fruitful areas of our lives are choked from the life-giving sap of the indwelling and infilling Holy Spirit, Who nourishes every area of our vineyard.
2. To pervert. Satan will take those good things in our lives and turn them into evil by getting us to take those good things too far, to an extreme. It is like taking personal Bible standards, which every Christian should have, and getting us to turn them into legalism. Thus, Biblical-based convictions are perverted into a Pharisee-like legalism.
3. Destroy. Satan just plain attacks with the thought of rendering useless (which is what "destroy" means) the fruits of our vineyard.

Thus the Shulamite should always be on the lookout for those little things are people that are out to destroy her spiritual fruitfulness. To be fruitful unto her Solomon is the greatest desire of the true Shulamite heart.

James Durham, on page 149 of his commentary, gives his list as to how little foxes can spoil the vine of the Shulamite:

1. Corrupting the purity of doctrine
2. Obscuring the simplicity of worship
3. Overturning the beauty or order and bringing in confusion
4. Spoiling her bond of unity, thus dissipating the flock
5. By ruining souls, carrying them headlong into the pit.

What might some of these foxes that spoil the tender grapes of the young Christian life? Charles Spurgeon,⁶² in a sermon entitled "The Tender Grapes", offers some suggestions:

1. **The hard censurer.** He will find fault with everything that you do and specialize in sniffing out the faults and sins in your life.
2. **The flatterer.** He gives outward approval of your conversion and new life but suggests that you are a bit too precise and that you may have gone overboard with religion. He says "You might be a little more worldly, you cannot get through life in your way. Why do you have to be so singular?" But he really wants to get you back to a life of sin among the ungodly. Satan misses you and sends the flatterer on his errand to wheedle you back to your former bondage.
3. **Mr. Worldly-Wiseman.** He says "Be a Christian but not a fool. Carry your religion as far as you can make it pay." Use your religion to make your life more comfortable and your business more profitable. Of course, he is all materialism with no spirituality, as he sees religion as a thing to be used rather than something to live by.
4. **The doubter,** who wonders if there is even such a thing or doctrine as conversion.
5. Evil doctrine and false teachers, who attempt to seduce the young Christian away from the truth into error and condemnation.

So how do we defend against the foxes? By seizing them, taking them, and expelling them from the vineyard so they can do no more damage. Take the sin that you know is eating away at your fruitfulness and cast it out- or better yet, crucify it (Romans 6-8). If you don't kill it, it will be back and will usually bring some friends with him. If you don't crucify that little sin, it will be back and next time, it won't be so little. It also may not be alone but may come with some of his friends on that next visit. Little foxes grow into big foxes if allowed to do so, just as "little" sins, which are mere annoyances today, if left unchecked, can grow into monsters that can destroy the soul. Since it's your vineyard and you let the foxes get into it in the first place (by carelessness in not watching the gates where they burrowed under), it is up to you to cast them out. It is hard since foxes loves grapes just as our corruptions love to nibble at our tender spiritual fruits, but if you don't cast them out, your vineyard is doomed, and your fruitfulness is at an end.

Some may object, saying that a cherished sin in their heart isn't doing any damage and thus there is no need to dispatch it. But Christ says take the "little" foxes. The big ones we can easily see the need of killing, but even the little, seemingly harmless sins must also be cast out, for a little fox can do every bit as much damage as a large one. Don't be deceived or lulled into a false sense of security in allowing a "little" sin to run roughshod through your gardens, for your tender grapes will eventually be attacked. A little fox can do great mischief.

⁶² Pages 193-195 of *The Most Holy Place*,

"A humorist said one time, "You can dodge an elephant, but you can't dodge a fly." The truth of that statement is that we have more problems with little things than we do with big things. A small nail can produce lockjaw if you step on it. A small insect like a mosquito can spread a disease like yellow fever or malaria. It was fleas and rats that actually spread the Black Plague during the Middle Ages. There is a famous illustration used by preachers of a five-hundred-year-old redwood out in California that toppled over one day. That redwood had withstood five hundred summers and five hundred winters. It had survived forest fires, avalanches, lightning strikes, earthquakes, and mudslides. When the park rangers investigated the reason for its collapse, they found it was eaten out by bugs on the inside. The greatest dangers you will ever face, Christian, will not be from the outside. Christians get to the place in their lives where they have cleaned up on the outside, but they let the inside "go to pot." They give up drinking, smoking, dancing, going to the movies, wrong companions, etc.; but they stop loving the word of God, they lose their burden for souls, and they cease to enjoy communion with the Lord. Those are "the little foxes" that will kill your grapes."⁶³

2:16 My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.

There are three kinds, or levels of revival in the Song of Solomon:

1. Song 2:16 **"My beloved is mine, and I am his; he feedeth among the lilies."** This is the first revival of the new birth conversion experience. The new convert claims Christ and realizes that Christ has also claimed him and that he is now His. He also comes to realize that Christ only feeds among the "lilies" of other Christians and in New Testament churches, not in the world. If he is going to know more of Christ, he must spend time in His house and among His people. The disciplining has begun.
2. Song 6:3 **"I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine; he feedeth among the lilies."** Notice the shift in emphasis from Song 2:16- "My beloved is mine" to "I am my beloved's". The Christian now comes to realize the very special place in Christ's heart that he now occupies. Yes he loves Christ, but more importantly, Christ loves him! That is a transforming truth that often takes us years to realize, if we ever do. The saint realizes the need for him to possess the Saviour, but here, he realizes the importance that the Saviour also must possess him. Here is the revival that leads to growth, where we are taken possession of by the Saviour for service and for the Christian life. So the second level of personal revival and growth comes with this shift in emphasis.
3. Song 7:10 **"I am my beloved's and his desire is toward me"**. This is a realization of Christ's love. We all know that Christ loves us, but when we really and fully realize it, it will do something deep and strong in our hearts. From possession to love. Now we begin to finally understand something about the love of Christ toward us.

Also notice the maturity of the Song 6:3 response of the Shulamite as compared to the one in 2:16. We can tell who is the head of a home by noticing how a wife introduces her husband. If she says "He is my husband", then she has usurped the authority of her husband and has illegally claimed the headship of her family. But if she says "I am his wife", then she understands her proper relationship with her husband. In Song 2:16, the Shulamite is yet immature and places the emphasis upon herself in the relationship. But by Song 6:3, she has greatly matured and now places her husband, her head, first and publicly acknowledges her submission to him. It is important for us to realize that it is more important for us to be His than for Him to be ours.

⁶³ Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer's Commentary on The Song of Solomon*, pages 117-118.

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

Until the night season of fellowship and communion is over, stay and let us commune. The duties of the day will eventually overtake us and the close, intimate level of communion must end, only to be renewed later. The only good thing about having to break a season of prayer is the promise and hope that we will be able to re-establish it later. Christ is certainly willing to do so, if we are. The Shulamite says that when the time comes for a new season of fellowship, return as swiftly as a roe or the young hart. Don't delay!

What about the "**mountains of Bether**?" O. Talmadge Spence identifies it as "mountains of separation" from the Hebrew, since the area is a series of separating mountains. Spurgeon has it as the "mountains of division". This clearly speaks of the need of Biblical separation in our lives. But as to the geographical location of these mountains, we do not know. We are also not told what they are separating or dividing from.

Song of Solomon Chapter 3

3:1 By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.

Now trouble comes into the relationship. What relationship (even a divine one) has ever been without some valleys and troubles? But it is these deep periods that relationships are made stronger. The periods where fellowship is broken with Christ makes our desire for Him all the stronger.

In a night season, the Shulamite was lying on her bed when she arose to find Solomon, but he could not be found. Communion is available to the Christian during all hours of the day and night and she was taking advantage of it. We don't know exactly what happened, only that she realized that fellowship had been severed. We don't always know why these things happen. Sometimes it is our fault through carnality, but sometimes the Lord withdraws for a season and is silent to "test" the relationship on our end. Her reaction to this is important. She didn't roll back over and go back to sleep, saying that she would start searching in the morning when it was more convenient. When she realized that her beloved was gone, she immediately arose to seek him out. She would not rest content until she knew where Solomon had gone and until fellowship had been reestablished.

This happened in a night season (Psalm 16:7 "**I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.**" and Psalm 17:3 "**Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.**"). We tend to be more spiritually sensitive in the night, when all is quiet and we can commune with our own hearts better. Fellowship may have been lost before this, during the day, but it is only now that she becomes aware of it.

The Shulamite was on her bed, asleep. She had gotten the victory over the legalism of chapter 1 and the criticisms of chapter 2. Now a new enemy arises- spiritual sloth. Spiritually, she had dozed off and lost the fellowship and presence of Christ in the process. Fellowship is broken and backsliding occurs when we grow spiritually sleepy and doze off. We become spiritually insensible and begin to loosen up our grip on Christ and divine truth. Sleep in the Bible is presented, in a negative spiritual sense, as a sign of apathy, indifference, inactivity, laziness. We let the guard down and watchfulness suffers. Sleep can be spiritually fatal. We can fight and fight and fight and win every battle, only to lose all of our gains when we sleep.

There will be those periods in our life when we will realize that Christ has withdrawn Himself and has hidden Himself. This occurs for two reasons: either we break the fellowship ourselves or Christ withdraws Himself for a period of time. It is easy to see how we would break fellowship with our Beloved- we do it because of our sin and carnality. Despite our professed love for Christ, we occasionally leave Him.

But why does Christ leave? Why does He withdraw? It is not always because of our carnality. Why does He then leave on His own accord? We cannot always be sure as to why except it may be to see if we love Him enough to seek after Him. Christ withdraws from some people and they never miss Him and they are not bothered by it. But if you sense that Christ has hidden His face, would it bother you? Does it grieve you when you can't find your Beloved? Will you arise even in the middle of the night to search Him out, not being content until you discover Him?

That is the test of true love- how do you feel when you are separated from the One you are supposed to love with all your heart, mind and strength? Consider the following verses:

1. God does hide His face from us because He may be angry with because of our sins.
 - 1.1. Deuteronomy 31:17,18,20 **"Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods. And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith."**
 - 1.2. Psalm 27:9 **"Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation."**
 - 1.3. Psalm 89:46 **"How long, LORD? wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire?"**
2. Sometimes, when we are in trouble, God seems to hide Himself.
 - 2.1. Psalm 69:17 **"And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily."**
 - 2.2. Psalm 102:2 **"Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily."**
 - 2.3. Psalm 13:1 **"How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?"**
 - 2.4. Psalm 30:7 **"LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled."**
 - 2.5. Psalm 55:1 **"Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication."**
 - 2.6. Psalm 143:7 **"Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit."**

One thing the Christian must learn to do is to trust in a silent God, even in the midst of trial. God never seems to be closer to us in these situations as when He farthest away. But even these periods of silence can be sweet because it forces us to lean even harder upon Christ. When a father is silent to the petitions of his child, it does not discourage the child but rather urges him on to greater levels of supplication. The child knows that sooner or later, the father will hear him. Why is that parent silent? One reason may be to see just how earnest the child is in his petitions. If he really wants it bad enough, he will not be discouraged by silence. It can also test the strength of our fellowship. Do we love Christ only because of the things He does for us and the answers to prayer He provides, or do we love Him simply for the fact of who He is? If we love Christ for Christ's sake alone, then we will not be discouraged by periods of silence and temporary breaks in fellowship. We will not enjoy them, and we seek to come back into a close and deep relationship with Christ, but these times will not discourage the mature believer.

"I found him not" Compare with Hosea 5:6 where the Lord is talking about Israel and Judah **"They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them."** "That is the state Israel is in right now. Back in the Gospels, those Jews rejected their Messiah. They told Pilate, **"We have no king but Caesar"** (John 19:15), and **"His blood [Christ's blood] be on us, and on our children"** (Matt. 27:25).

God gave them another chance under Peter and Paul in the book of Acts, and they turned the Lord down, as a nation, then too. Paul ends his witness to the Jews in Rome with: **“Be it know therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it”** (Acts 28:28).

Since A.D. 70, those Jews have been seeking the Lord, as a people, and they can't find Him. He went back to Heaven, and He didn't deal with them as a nation again until 1948. Even then it was merely on a physical level to preserve them in their return to the land.

Brethren, don't you know those Rabbis in Treblinka, Auschwitz, Belsen-Belsen, and the rest of those concentration camps during World War II were reading the Psalms and praying and claiming the promises the whole time? But God didn't do anything: He didn't answer their prayers. He let six million of them die before He sent in American troops to liberate them. That is why most Jews in Israel today are atheists.

The problem wasn't in the promises or power of God, though. The problem was that they rejected Jesus Christ, and the Lord was giving them what they asked for: Caesar as a King (Hitler was a Roman Catholic ruler) and the blood-guilt of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The Lord had withdrawn Himself at their own request (John 19:15; Matt. 27:25).⁶⁴

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 Shulamite is not content with losing Solomon. She arose in the middle of the night and goes into the city streets to search for him. She sought but was unsuccessful. But notice- the first thing the mature believer, who is in love with Christ, does once she realizes that fellowship and communion has been broken, is she seeks Christ out and is not content until she finds Him!

She went into the city to search for Christ. The city is a type of the church for the watchmen are there who assist the Shulamite. This is a good place to look for Christ. So many people look in the wrong place and never find Christ. They look in Greek philosophy or modern philosophy. They search the history books. They look in politics. They go through religious rite and ritual. They will seek in public opinion and in society. But few will look in the hated, despised church, but that is where He is to be found- in His church, among His people and in His Word.

3:3 The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?

While on her mission, the watchman of the city spotted her and naturally inquired why a lady is out roaming the streets at this time of night. They seemed to be seeking her, sensing something was wrong. This is a good pastor. When he senses something is wrong with a member of his flock, he takes the initiative and seeks him out to see what the problem is. He does not wait for the church member to come to him. They go about the city, which is the church, for they are on patrol, as a good watchman must be. They were very diligent in their duty. The Shulamite told them of her errand and inquired of the watchman if they knew where her beloved was. Did you perhaps see him leave the city? It seems they did not.

The Christian in such a predicament will also make inquiries of anyone in the church who may be able to help them locate the Christ they loved and have temporarily lost.

⁶⁴ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Song of Solomon*, pages 134-135.

Can we assign the watchman to anyone particular in the church? How about the pastors and elders? They are often considered as pastors in the Old Testament in their duties of watching and warning the flocks. These watchmen are men appointed by God to watch over the city (spiritually, the local church, the flock of God), warning of the enemy when he spots him and relaying news when it comes. They are on constant patrol, even in the night seasons when the enemy is most likely to attack. He has a grave responsibility before God for if he is unfaithful in his duty, the blood of thousands could be on his hands.

"As usual, the Street Watcher, so much like the local pastor-teacher, if he indeed is a godly man, does not project himself but rather the Word of God. That is why we really do not see him or hear his exact words here because, in this incident and need, his main concern and contribution is that he is watching over the Shulamite soul. Great publicity is not made of the preacher here, but emphasis is upon his work, he is a watchman! He is presented in an unpretentious manner and is therefore respected."⁶⁵

What is the definition of a local church? It is likened to a city that is in constant danger of attack from her many enemies. God has appointed a watchman to continually patrol her walls of defense to scan the horizon for the enemy in order to warn the precious sheep that are within the walls, and to inform the people of news from far countries that they need to know. This is a high and great responsibility for the man whom God selects for these positions, for the very lives of thousands are in his hands. We will see more of these watchmen and their relation to the Shulamite in Song 5:7.

"watchmen" This speaks well of the pastoral ministry as he is involved in both watching over the souls entrusted to him and watching out for the wolf who would destroy his flock. The pastor is to guide, teach, watch, warn, protect and fight off the wolf.

But here, her pastor was not able to help her in this day. There are a lot of things a pastor can do to help his people, but he cannot do everything. He can help you cultivate and maintain your relationship with the Lord but ultimately, only you can do the things that need to be done to keep it. When you enter these valleys and times of trials, no one will be able to help you. You must tread these valleys alone and go through these crucibles alone. Are you mature enough to do it? Can you re-establish your fellowship with Christ on your own? Your pastor can't help you and neither can anyone else. You must become spiritually strong enough to establish and maintain your own personal fellowship without anyone else's help for these periods will come. If you are not strong enough to meet these times, then your Christian life will suffer.

But these watchmen were dumb. They couldn't help her, possibly because they couldn't. Not all preachers are in communion. When confronted by an upset Shulamite seeking to re-establish fellowship, they know not what to say because they themselves may also be out of communion. A preacher cannot help others find Christ if he knows not where to look himself, or if he is in a similar (or worse) situation than the Shulamite. Woe to the Christian who has a dumb pastor, who has no communion and no practical experience with Christ to offer any theological or practical assistance when needed.

The Shulamite will be like the importunate widow of Luke 18:1-8. That woman kept coming to the judge over and over and over until the judge got so sick of her that he gave her the request she desired just to get rid of her. Do we storm the throne of grace like this when we are out of communion of God for any reason?

⁶⁵ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 82.

“Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?” This is similar to the language in Song 3:1.

1. She loved Solomon that transcended any earthly love. The Christian loves Christ with a love that the world does not understand and cannot appreciate.
2. She sought for Solomon and cried out for him. She must have him or all is lost! This is the cry of the remnant in our day. We do not need theological systems or churches or denominations, we need Him! And we must invest all that we are and have into finding Him and once we have found Him, we must determine to never let Him go.

3:4 It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

Happily, she found him, and the fellowship was restored, and everyone was happy. All is once again right with the world, at least until the next crises comes. Christ will not hide Himself from the seeking soul for long, whether that seeker be searching for Christ for salvation or for fellowship. But very soon after she went to her watchman-pastor, she then found Him. She knew where to look for the pastor, being the man of God that he was, would be in the same vicinity as Christ. Once she found Him, she absolutely refused to let Him go, lest she be separated from Him again and that she couldn't stand.

The fellowship grows deeper. Before, Solomon had taken her into his chambers but now she insists upon taking him into her chambers, into the house of her mother and into the very room where she was conceived. Solomon showed her his house, now she wants to show him hers. It is one thing to want to go to Christ's house, but it is something altogether different when you want Christ to come to your house. Have you invited Christ into your house? Is He welcomed? Is His presence real in your home? How about your life? Have you invited Christ into the most intimate areas of your life? Or are you simply content with visiting His house for an hour on Sunday morning yet never inviting Him to visit yours? Or do you ever visit His house in worship? If you do not visit the House of the Lord for worship, do not expect Him to visit your house in fellowship. If you really love someone, then you want to show them your house, your possessions and your life. You want them to share in every aspect of your life and you will hide none of your heart from that person.

The carnal Daughter of Jerusalem may be saved but she has never taken Christ home with her. It would upset too many things in her life and she has not the time to spend on visitors. She would probably be too ashamed and embarrassed if Christ ever did visit her house. He would come in and see questionable magazines on the coffee table. He would see worldly music on the CD player. He would go into Junior's room and see pictures of worldly sports stars plastered on the walls. He would see the cable television tuner set to HBO and Cinemax. No wonder carnal Christians never invite Christ home with them- they are too ashamed to! Their Christianity is relegated to the church house of Sunday morning but does not extend to their house on Monday morning.

"Note that we must search to the very utmost till we find our Beloved. The Christian must leave no stone unturned till he gets back his fellowship with Christ. If any sin obstructs the way, it must be rigorously given up; if there be any neglected duty, it must be earnestly discharged; if there be any higher walk of grace, which is necessary to continuous fellowship, we must ascend it, fearing no hill of difficulty. We must not say 'there is a lion in the way'- if there be lions we must slay them; if the way be rough we must tread it; we must go on hands and knees if we cannot

run; but we must reach to fellowship with Jesus; we must have Christ or pine till we do. Sacrifices we must make and penalties we must endure, but to Christ we must come.”⁶⁶

We must also realize that Jesus will leave if we lose our grip on Him. If we do not take firm hold of Him, we stand in real danger of losing Him. Christ does not stay in fellowship in a place where He is not desired. The Angel whom Jacob wrestled would have left Jacob if it were not for Jacob's firm hold of him. Jacob constrained the Angel to remain until he got the blessing. When Christ walked to Emmaus with the two disciples, He made as if He would continue walking onward but the disciples constrained Him and urged Him to turn in with them for a meal. But if Christ is not desired, even in the house or fellowship of a Christian, He will depart, not to return again until summoned and pined for. Thus, we must make it our business to take firm hold on Him and be determined not to let Him go, not to let Him slip away from us. He is very willing to be held, to be constrained. But how is our grip? Are we as desirous of His company as He is of ours?

The Shulamite was able to hold Christ, her Solomon. She lived in the Old Testament economy, without a Bible, hymnal, Psalter or church. Her store of revelation regarding spiritual things was very limited. She did not enjoy the spiritual advantages that we do today. Yet she was able to hold onto her Beloved. Why can't we? We have so many more advantages, but it seems that we less gripping power than she did. All of our technology and spiritual advantage does not seem to be benefiting us when it comes to holding Christ fast in fellowship and communion. Each generation of Christianity gets spiritually weaker and the remnant gets smaller.

Notice her resolve in holding on to Solomon. **“I...would not let him go”**. She lost him once and that was a spiritual disaster for her. She is determined not to let it happen again, although it did happen again in chapter 5. That time, it was her fault by her spiritual neglect. But her resolve is a good one. She must have Solomon, or all is lost. She has no intention of backsliding and getting out of communion.

Most Christians have made no such declaration because communion is not the most important thing with them. They live most of their lives out of communion and do not react strongly when they realize that they are carnal, backslidden and out of communion. Their pulpits do not preach on the importance of necessity of communion. They hear sermons on “soulwinning”, church growth or other shallow themes but their pastors and preachers are not preaching Shulamite doctrines. This is because many preachers know nothing of this. Their sermons center around church growth and evangelism, not on sanctification, holiness or communion as they have little or no understanding and appreciation of such doctrines. You can't preach on what you don't know, and you won't preach on that which is not important to you. Regardless of the lack of encouragement from the Daughters of Jerusalem within her local church, the Shulamite is determined to avoid backsliding at all costs. She understood the problems associated with backsliding although most Christians seem to think it is a natural, even a necessary, part of the Christian life. You have to backslide! Yet the Scripture gives no such doctrine.

We cannot physically grab on to Christ and hold Him fast as the Shulamite did to Solomon, but we can do so by faith and resolve. I will cleave to Him, His person, works, attainments, doctrines and promises and will not surrender them to apostasy, modern Christianity, worldly pleasures or expediency. The world will always try to drive a wedge in our communion with Christ through a thousand different agencies. We must resolve to never allow that to happen.

⁶⁶ Charles Spurgeon, "The Real Presence" in *The Most Holy Place*, pages 258, 259.

The Christian who is out of communion has the hope that if they seek for restoration hard enough, they will find Him Whom their soul loveth in Jeremiah 29:13. That verse is for apostate Israel in the prophet's urging them to repent of their national sins but it can also be applied to a sinner earnestly seeking salvation or a Christian who is out of communion wanting to get back into fellowship. Backsliding is not fatal nor is it the unpardonable sin. It can be remedied but the Christian has to take the first steps in his desire for restoration.

"The Christian is born again, typically speaking, in a "mother's chamber" (Song 3:4). The Christian Life, however, is matured and finalized in the "King's Chambers", in the plural, wherewith Solomon's mother crowned him "in the day of his espousals" (Song 3:11)."⁶⁷

3:5 I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.

A new charge to the Daughters which is almost identical to the charge she gave them in Song 2:7. Now that fellowship and communion have been restored, she demands that the carnal ones of the church (who understood nothing of the grief her soul endured during this terrible time of separation) do nothing to harm the renewed love. Would some church members actually try to sabotage and undermine this love affair? You would know the answer to that if you have been saved any length of time and have observed the attitude of some professors and how they act.

What would be some sins that would send these sensitive hinds and roes away? Any sin would do it. We could give a list of sins, but we would stand in danger of neglecting an important one. Let us say that anything that would qualify as sin, coldness of heart, carnality or lack of love are as banging a pan in order to scare away the roe and hind. The least little noise will send them off, just as the least little sin can drive the Lord away from fellowship. Noise is as offensive to the roe and hind as sin, carnality and coldness are to Christ.

Oft I Seek My Lord By Night, Isaac Watts, L.M., Song of Solomon 3:1-5

1 Often I seek my Lord by night,
Jesus, my love, my soul's delight;
With warm desire and restless thought
I seek him oft, but find him not.

2 Then I arise, and search the street
Till I my Lord, my Saviour meet;
I ask the watchmen of the night,
"Where did you see my soul's delight?"

3 Sometimes I find him in the way,
Directed by a heavenly ray;
I leap for joy to see his face,
And hold him fast in mine embrace.

4 I bring him to my mother's home,
Nor does my Lord refuse to come,
To Sion's sacred chambers, where
My soul first drew the vital air.

5 He gives me there his bleeding heart,
Pierc'd for my sake with deadly smart;
I give my soul to him, and there
Our loves their mutual tokens share.

6 I charge you all, ye earthly toys,
Approach not to disturb my joys;
Nor sin, nor hell come near my heart,
Nor cause my Saviour to depart

⁶⁷ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 86.

The Daughters of Jerusalem

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

The Daughters speak! And when they do, it is in contempt of the Shulamite, who is a constant spiritual rebuke to their carnality. She charges them again with the same language she employed in Song 2:7, as if they didn't get the message the first time. They are about to try to throw the monkey wrench into this relationship again. Now they rise up in a fluster. The very thought of this nobody Shulamite charging us! They observe her and ask "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness...?" She is a hick, a hillbilly. She didn't go to the right schools (if she went to any school at all). She is a simple girl without the glamour, the pull, the connections that they have. Yet Christ seems to taken with her and *vice versa*. She thinks she is better than we are! Why, we've been in this church 30 years! We bought that fancy pipe organ! Who does she think she is? After all, the wilderness is usually a place of contempt and isolation where God's people are often forced to go. John the Baptist preached in the wilderness.

"Who is this?" "Now in the first progress of the Christian Church, in her very earliest days, there were persons who marveled greatly; and though they set down the wonders of the day of Pentecost to drunkenness, yet they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying to one another, 'What meaneth this?' In after years, many a heathen philosopher has said 'What is this new power which is breaking idols in pieces, changing old customs, making even thrones unsafe- what is this?' Bye-and-bye, in the age of the Reformation, there were cowed monks, cardinals in their red hats, and bishops and princes and emperors, who all said 'What is this? What strange new doctrine has come to light?' In the times of the modern reformation...when God was pleased to revive His Church through the instrumentality of Whitefield and his brethren, there were many who said 'What is this new enthusiasm, this Methodism? Whence came it and what power is this which it wields?' And doubtless, whenever God shall be pleased to bring forth his Church in power and to make her mighty among the sons of men, the ignorance of men will be discovered breaking forth in wonder, for they will say 'Who is this?' Spiritual religion is as much a novelty now as in the day when Grecian sages scoffed at it on Mars Hill."⁶⁸

Notice how the Shulamite comes out of the wilderness:

1. Like pillars of smoke. Not ordinary smoke (cigarette smoke that some "Christians" offer, especially down South!). This is the incense of prayer, to be compared with the Golden Altar of Incense in the tabernacle. The smoke that arose off that altar was a type of the prayers of the saints ascending. Time spent in the wilderness, either in spiritual desolation due to a break in communion, or because of spiritual exile by the Daughters of Jerusalem, forces the Christian to prayer, even to an increased prayer life.
2. Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense. Her fragrance is pleasant, which speaks of her Christian testimony. You can smell her love for Christ a mile away.
3. With all the powders of the merchant, everything she could buy she applied to herself.

And why is she coming out of the wilderness? Because she is not welcomed in the centers of religion and education. She is a Christian who is loyal and dedicated to her Solomon first and foremost, not to denominational structures. This is why John the Baptist preached in the wilderness- he would have been most unwelcomed in Jerusalem. This is why Paul went into the

⁶⁸ Charles Spurgeon, "The Royal Pair in Their Glorious Chariot" in *The Most Holy Place*, 269).

deserts of Arabia to receive his theological education, because there was no one on earth at that day qualified to teach him what he needed to know regarding the mysteries of the Church and justification by faith. We often find ourselves being forced to go outside the camp (Hebrews 13:13) because there is nothing for us in Jerusalem. Biblical Fundamentalists are being driven out of mainline fellowships and organizations because of their strong stand for the right. We are in the wilderness but it is a good place to be since Jesus is also there! Better in the wilderness with Jesus than at the Temple in Jerusalem without Him!

Eventually the Shulamite will come in from the spiritual wilderness she has dwelt in and when she does, she will be criticized by the Daughters of Jerusalem. They will criticize her appearance (clothing and hair style). They will criticize her fragrance (her testimony) and her wares. They can find little if anything good to say about her. They can barely tolerate her. Her life is a rebuke to them. Her close fellowship with Christ also is a rebuke to them. She condemns their coldness by her testimony. Their main problem is their jealousy. But this does not drive them to repair their own spirituality but rather to hate and lash out at the one who is putting them under conviction.

Her experience in Song 3:1-5 was also a spiritual wilderness as a place of no water or bread. The Shulamite had lost communion with Solomon and was spiritually agitated by it. It was a lean time for her soul and a period of high spiritual anxiety, as it should be. Who can rest and be content when fellowship and communion with our Beloved has been broken? But once the relationship had been restored, she removes from her lonely and barren place and returns to the spiritual mainstream.

The Shulamite

3:7 Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.

The Shulamite draws attention to Solomon's bed. This is not a bed to sleep on, but a reclining bed to eat and relax on. She does not respond to the criticism of the Daughters of Jerusalem but immediately turns the focus back to Solomon. This is a good response for the Shulamite Christian when he is coming under attack by the carnal ones for his love for Christ or his relation to Christ or for his stand for the truth. Don't waste time defending yourself but rather continue to speak of Christ. The more they carp, whine and complain, speak all the louder of your Beloved!

The bed is guarded by 60 valiant men who are warriors, men of war. They are armed, ready for war. This military language is a description of the Christian who should also be a man of spiritual war, ready at any time to take up his sword (the word of God) and defend the bed (church?) of Solomon. I do not know if there is any spiritual or typical significance in the number of "sixty".

3:8 They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.

The sword is an obvious reference to the word of God (Ephesians 6:17, **And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:**), which is the only offensive part of the Christian's armor. Their swords are drawn, which shows that they expect trouble and want to be ready when it comes. Satan will attack. The only question is how, when and through what means. But the attack is as sure as the sun rising in the east tomorrow.

The 60 valiant men are armed because of the fear of the night, the terrors of the night seasons. Night does bring fear. God often visits His saints in the night seasons, so it can be a time of spiritual blessing and profit. But the night is also prime attack time for the enemy, as he lurks in the bushes, looking for an opening. The watchman and the valiant men need to be at their peak level of alertness in the night. When they sleep, they sleep lightly and with a cautious attitude. In a sense, they "sleep with one eye open".

The night season is also is a type of spiritual darkness and error. We need to defend against the outward, physical assaults of the enemy but we also need to be on guard against the more dangerous attacks via false doctrine, teaching and error, the attack of the night using the techniques and weapons of the night. We must fight both physically as well as spiritually and theologically.

They have their swords drawn, ready to fight. They expect an attack of the enemy upon the Solomon. They know there is an enemy and that he may attack at any moment. The sword in the sheath is useless because you can't fight with a drawn sword. It is of no use to have a sword if you do not intend to use it, do not know how to use it or cannot use it. Unsheathe the sword! Cry aloud God's Word! The Battle is the Lord's! Use that sword, which is the Word of God. A sword is to be used and the Word of God is to be applied. These men are always alert, always on call, because they know that the enemy never takes a holiday but may attack at any time. Solomon, as Christ, may be the King of Peace but His men are always prepared for war.

They are guarding Solomon's bed, which may be a picture of the Church, since it is the place where Christ communes with His saints on a corporate level. The local church, as well as the Church Universal, must be guarded by faithful and dedicated Christians who will not shy away from an honorable polemic or from a bloody and bruising battle with the enemy if necessary. There is no such thing as a nonmilitant Christian. There are no noncombatants in the Lord's Army. If you are not on the front lines then you must be engaged in a support ministry. When God saves a man, He also drafts him to duty against Satan and the world system.

Their enemies include anyone who is an enemy to their King. This helps us to identify our enemies. Any man, movement, system, church or religion that expresses its hatred of the Lord Jesus Christ in any form is also our enemy. They are enemies of our King and we would be found traitors of the deepest dye if we tried to dialogue or build bridges with men who despise our Great King. They must either be killed or converted. No peace is to be made with Rome, the Charismatics, Islam, Humanism or any other anti-Christian "ism".

"There are always enough men chosen of God to guard the Church. Poor Unbelief holds up her hands and cries- 'Ah! the good men are all dead; Zion is under a cloud; the Lord hath taken away the great men; we have no valiant defenders of the faith, none such as this crises may require!' Ah! Unbelief, let the Lord say unto thee as he did unto Elias: 'Yet have I left me 7,000 in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal.' There shall be just as many warriors as the crises shall require. We do not know where the men are to come from but the Lord will provide. There may be sitting in the Sunday school today a child who shall one day shake this nation from one end to the other; there may be even here, unknown, obscure and unobserved, the man whom God will make strong to rebuke the infamous infidelity of our age. We do not where the anointing rests. We, in our folly, would anoint Eliab or Abinadab, but God hath chosen

David...Tremble not, neither be ye afraid; God who makes man and makes man's mouth, will find the 60 men when the 60 men shall be needed."⁶⁹

The bed is also a place of fellowship, communion and love. The husband and wife consummate their love on their bed, just as the Christian and Christ do, albeit on a different, more spiritual bed. But even this holy place of love and communion must be guarded against from the attacks of Satan. He would attempt to destroy a Christian home through a perversion of the marriage bed through adultery, sodomy or some other form of perversion. He would seek to mar Solomon's bed through a spiritual adultery on the part of the Shulamite in enticing her to forsake or neglect her Beloved. Such indirect attacks are to be guarded against as well as the frontal one.

3:9 King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.

3:10 He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.

Now from the bed to the chariot of Solomon. The "chariot" is an Oriental mode of transportation known as a palanquin, which is a royal litter with a bed or chair on it with a canopy over it to keep the sun out. It usually had curtains between the pillars holding up the canopy so the occupants can have some degree of privacy. Normally, it was borne by four men.

1. It is a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. This is the finest and most precious wood you can find. Nothing but the best for King Solomon. It is also a very durable wood that will not warp or rot. The Kingdom of God and Heaven, as well as His Church, are both very durable and cannot be overthrown by the gates of hell, although they may be hurt by the indifference and apathy of the saints.
2. The pillars were of silver. The support structure of Solomon's chariot is based on the redemption of Christ, which the silver signifies. The chariot then has pillars, or a support structure, of redemption. James Durham says that these pillars signify "Decoration, orderliness, stateliness."⁷⁰
3. The bottom was of gold. The foundation of the chariot is based on the deity of Christ, which is also the foundation of all doctrines and spiritual truths. Remove it and everything collapses. If Jesus was only a "good man" or only a "great teacher" or only the "humble carpenter of Galilee", then your religion is impotent, based on error and will lead you to perdition. Your religion has a bottom of plastic, not gold. This must be the basis for all divine workings in our lives- the atoning work of Christ on the cross.
4. The covering was of purple. This is the royal color, being a combination of red or scarlet (the blood of Christ) and royal blue (heaven). The kingship of Christ as well as His Lordship are necessary ingredients of the chariot. We must make much of the Kingship of Christ and apply this fact to our lives daily. He is both Lord and King in our lives, denoting His sovereignty in our lives, should move us to full and complete obedience to His will and law in our lives. The covering also shields the royal couple in the chariot from both the brightness of the sun, the heat of the day, the cool winds of night, and the prying eyes of the multitude. The Christian needs such protection from the elements of the world as well as privacy. We have already spoken of the necessity of privacy in our relationship and communion with Christ. It is very difficult to be intimate

⁶⁹ Charles Spurgeon, "The Royal Pair in Their Glorious Chariot" in *The Most Holy Place*, page 272.

⁷⁰ Pages 186 187.

and loving with a thousand eyes witnessing it. Our intimate moments with our spouse only come out in private. Our intimate moments with Christ also come behind the veil of purple, in the privacy of our own prayer closets, where no man may witness it.

5. It is paved with love for the Daughters of Jerusalem. The infinite love of God toward the carnal ones in the Church! They may indeed be saved and thus are the objects of divine love. They have severe spiritual problems which cannot and must not be overlooked, but the chariot is paved with love for them. They may also ride with Solomon and visit the same spiritual highlands as the Shulamite, if they desire to climb aboard. Solomon designed and built this chariot and rolled it out in love for the Daughters to impress them with his love and glory in the hopes of reclaiming them and curing them of their backslidings and carnality. The Lord would do this for the backsliders in the Church! How much more will He reveal His glory to the spiritual ones in the Church of He puts all time, money and effort in an attempt to reclaim backsliders!

3:9 "**Lebanon**" "We have now come to our sixth proper noun given for a place in the Song, 'Lebanon'. A sample list will note the progress of these words:

1. Jerusalem (1:5); City of Peace
2. Kedar (1:5); powerful
3. Engedi (1:14; fountain
4. Sharon (2:1); a plain
5. Bether (2:17); separation
6. Lebanon (3:9); snowy, white
7. Zion (3:11); fortress

All of these words reveal a progress in the spiritual journey of the drawings of God upon the Shulamite's life. "The very "God of peace" who is drawing the Shulamite Soul, has led her on from that City of Peace and Salvation in the power of the Holy Spirit, Kedar; on into the glorious fountain of waters in the Spirit-filled life, Engedi; beyond the plains, Sharon; granting separation from sin and danger, Bether; and now to the life "whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:7), Lebanon. This spiritual progress is constantly kept close to the Cross of Calvary, Zion, and demands the constant acknowledgment of the Shulamite Soul to Jerusalem and its provisions of divine grace."⁷¹

A chariot is designed for travel. The Shulamite no doubt rode in Solomon's chariot as Solomon spirited her away from one destination to another. Christ also moves us from place to place in the Christian life, from spiritual milestone to spiritual milestone within the bounds of our spiritual lot or inheritance.

The gospel spreads in a similar manner. God has prepared it a chariot (through preachers, missionaries, "average" Christians and the distribution of the Bible through the earth by the Remnant Church). The spread of the gospel has been glorious as a King being pulled by the strongest of horses and guarded by armed men.

We can see this in history. In the New Testament, Solomon's Chariot first appeared in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost and 3,000 were saved. The chariot would appear from time to time in the Book of Acts, such as in the desert when Phillip witnessed to the Ethiopian eunuch and when the Philippian Jailor was saved in Acts 16. The chariot rolled through the cities of Galatia, and Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi and eventually on to Rome. Wherever Solomon rolled out his chariot, people were saved and churches established. Even after the apostolic age, the chariot would appear among the non-Roman Catholic groups and churches, such as the Donatists and the Waldensians.⁷² The chariot made frequent excursions through the Alps in the

⁷¹ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, pages 95 96.

⁷² On a personal note, I have Waldensian ancestors.

Dark Ages. It rolled through Oxford and John Wycliffe led the charge to translate the Scripture into English, against the Satanic opposition of the Church of Rome. The Lollards followed the chariot as it rolled through Europe, seeing people saved, churches were established and the truth was established. It rolled through Bohemia and John Hus responded and followed the chariot to a cruel martyr's death.⁷³ A century later, the chariot would roll through Wittenburg, Germany and an Augustinian monk by the name of Martin Luther would spark the Protestant Reformation. Solomon would rollout his chariot over Germany and England in those days, especially in Herrnhut and Nicholas von Zinzendorf and the Moravian movement, which sent missionaries all over the world and maintained a constant prayer vigil for over a century. Solomon's Chariot would roll into England, Wales and Scotland and great revivals broke out under the Wesleys, Whitefield and Spurgeon. The chariot also made frequent visits to the New World, visiting New England twice in the first and second great awakenings. Solomon's Chariot also rolled through the Union and Confederate armies during the American Civil War. Afterwards, Moody and Sunday would follow the chariot through the major cities of the United States. Today, we are seeing fewer and fewer visits by Solomon in his chariot in Europe and North America as our day is done. Solomon's Chariot is still making frequent visits to Africa, Asia, and other so-called "Third World" countries today, where we hear of great numbers being saved and revivals taking place.

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 a marriage coming up, when Solomon (Christ) will wed his bride. There will also be a Marriage of the Lamb when the Lord Jesus Christ takes onto Himself the Church which He purchased with His own blood. That wedding will no doubt take place after the rapture with a 1000-year wedding supper and honeymoon during the Millennium.

The Daughters of Zion are told to go out and to behold their King, crowned with the crown that his mother gave him on his wedding day. Adore Him! Maybe if you did, you would fall in love with Him as has the Shulamite. More consideration of Christ and meditation on Him would lead to a stronger and deeper love of Him in our lives. "The problem with all who identify themselves with Christianity, when they live below their privileges in Christ Jesus, can be credited to their refusal to go and behold the glory of the King of Kings, the Lord Jesus."⁷⁴ What will these Daughters do about their spiritual ignorance and coldness of heart?

These friends of the bridegroom would be the Old Testament saints who will participate in the Wedding of the Lamb to the Church as friends. What sort of wedding is it with no friends in attendance to share in the joy of the couple being wed? They are to go and behold the beauty of Solomon, as should we. We live below our spiritual privileges as Christians when we deny ourselves the privilege to look upon the King in His beauty through prayer, communion, fellowship and study of the Scripture.

"his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals" Catholics would try to make this Mary crowning Christ to be King when He returns. But we never see Mary crowning anyone at any for any reason. Mary was a sinner saved by grace like anyone else. There is nothing special about

⁷³ Of course, Hus was one of possibly millions of martyrs killed by Rome. *The Book of Martyrs* by John Foxe and *Martyr's Mirror* (a standard book in Mennonite, Amish and other Baptist households) chronicles these events.

⁷⁴ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 99.

her except that God chose her to give birth to Jesus. Literally, the “mother” her would be Bathsheba. She may have had a role in the coronation ceremony of Solomon, but this is in the day of his “espousals” not his coronation. Solomon had 300 wives so which one would this be? This is probably a reference to Christ at the Second Coming, when He takes His Bride, the Church. But again, who is the “mother”? The same woman we saw in Revelation 12:1-5? Israel crowning Christ? Jesus was a Jew after all. A good cross-reference to this would also be Psalm 45.

Song of Solomon Chapter 4

Solomon

4:1 Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead.

4:2 Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them.

4:3 Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.

4:4 Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.

4:5 Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.

We'll take these five verses together since Solomon is again praising the beauty of the Shulamite, just as Christ also would describe the beauty of the individual believer as well as the church as a whole. This should be compared with Solomon's earlier description in 1:9-13. What does he say of her?

1. **She is fair** (repeated twice). See Song 1:15.

2. **He call her "my love"**. See Song 1:15.

3. **She has dove's eyes**. Refer to Song 1:15.

4. **Her hair is like a flock of goats from Mt. Gilead**. Her hair was as black as these goats. Their hair was used in the making of fabrics and tents. It was black, hardy and strong. Her hair, as a Shulamite, was probably black and very attractive as such. Hair is a decoration and a covering for women and her decoration and covering is comely.

5. **Her teeth are like a flock of sheep that have been shorn that bear twins**. Her teeth were white, clean and perfect. People notice teeth as they are part of the support structure of the face. A strong face requires healthy teeth. Defective teeth or no teeth at all causes an unattractive shriveling of the mouth and face. Teeth are also needed in proper speaking and pronunciation which was another virtue of the Shulamite. If you want your speech to be always seasoned with salt, take care of your spiritual teeth. Teeth are also necessary for chewing food. When chewing your spiritual food (which is the word of God) you need healthy teeth which aids in the proper digestion of those truths. Strong, healthy and attractive teeth make for a strong, healthy and attractive Shulamite who is able to eat all the spiritual food that she hears and properly digest it.

"In the matter of teeth with such a characteristic, we can see these 32 sheep all united together in feeding upon the Word of God together, cooperating, each in its proper place, awaiting the time in the eating of food to do its part to masticate properly. Like sheep, the teeth, when not feeding, simply appear as a beautiful flock giving to the countenance of the landscape an honorable scene of loveliness...The teeth of the Shulamite are also evenly shorn; they have grown to a proper level together without one being more prominently seen than the other. She needed no work by the orthodontist. Sometimes irregular teeth have been known to even get in the way of proper eating or even cause injury to the tongue or lip by biting outside the path of

biting the food itself. Even shorn teeth are a great asset to both the pleasure of eating and the appearance and comfort of this delight of life."⁷⁵

If the spiritual teeth are not arranged properly, you could hurt yourself as you chew the word of God and wind bitter (with spiritual indigestion), broken or in apostasy.

"Each one of the teeth bears a twin. Every upper tooth has a corresponding lower tooth, given to be compatible and complementary to the whole process to beauty and efficiency. How unsightly are snaggle-tooth Christians; how ineffective is their time of feeding on the needed food."⁷⁶

6. Her lips are like a thread of scarlet. Bright red in color. The red naturally reminds us of the blood of Christ. This thread of scarlet harkens us back to Joshua 2:18 and the salvation of Rahab. This red speaks of redemption, made possible only through the blood of Christ. Her lips, which forms her words and are the gates of her speech, remind us of the redemption of Christ and His blood atonement. Pity the fool of a modernist or liberal or cultist who has no room for the blood of Christ in his theology!

The red lips are so famous in advertising and in Hollywood and we know why. The Shulamite has these red lips because she is pure and because such lips are attractive. The immoral women of advertising and in Hollywood want to duplicate this look (without the attendant need for holiness and purity), hence, they use the rouge, make-up and lipstick to give themselves the outward appearance of the Shulamite, but without her character or spirituality. These women are a farce through and through.

This is also a picture of a godly mouth, with red lips (reminding us that our speech must be cleansed by the blood of Christ) and comely speech (that is always seasoned with grace and salt, that honors and glorifies the Lord).

7. Her speech is comely. This ought to be said of all Christians. What she says is lovely. She looks attractive and her speech is attractive. We ought not speak unless we glorify God in the process. Her speech magnifies her beloved and that is comely speech. Someone in love will always be speaking well of his or her beloved. If you are truly in love with Christ with a Shulamite-love, your speech will also be comely as it will be centered around the person of Christ.

8. Her temples are like a piece of pomegranate. The sides of her head remind Solomon of a red, ripe piece of pomegranate. The "within thy locks" (of hair) suggests a humility the Shulamite possesses. She can blush! She was modest! Woe to the heart that is so hard that it cannot blush. Brides tend to blush with humility and that is a beauty all in itself.

9. Her neck is like the tower that David built that is well stocked with instruments of war. Her neck, which supports the head, is strong, straight and stately. She does not droop her head but holds it high as a tower. It also signifies a quiet and serene mind, not drooped and hung in confusion or depression. He who has his mind stayed on Christ is kept in perfect peace.

10. Her breasts are like two young roes that feed among the lilies. Her breasts speak of her femininity, fertility and ability to nourish. There is an idea of the Shulamite being able to reproduce in evangelism and nurse in discipleship. Healthy Christians can reproduce themselves in evangelism and producing Christians "after their kind". Something is certainly wrong with a person unable to reproduce.

The breasts also speak of being able to nourish babies. If we do spiritually reproduce, the spiritual and healthy Shulamite will be able to spiritually nourish that new baby Christian in discipleship. There is no sense in having a baby if you can't bring it up and feed it! There is no

⁷⁵ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 110.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

sense in doing evangelism if you are unable to disciple the babies you bring to (new) birth, for they will starve and die without the nourishment of the spiritual breast.

The breast also shows warmth and affection, which are trademarks of the Shulamite heart. Laying on the breast is a picture of fellowship since that area is Near the heart, the seat of emotion.

The Shulamite?

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

The Shulamite responds by making reference to a mountain of myrrh and a hill of frankincense. What are these places? Mountains speak of heights. Spiritually, they are places in our Christian lives of victory, a place for revival. This token of Solomon's love in Song 4:1-5 causes the Shulamite to climb that spiritual mountain to rejoice.

First there is a mountain of myrrh which is higher than a hill of frankincense. Myrrh is that bitter herb that is so often associated with the suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is associated with suffering. Suffering is a necessary part of revival and spiritual growth. No growth without suffering. That "Something Good is Going to Happen to You" nonsense of Oral Roberts and other apostate Charismatics may produce a lot of happy emotions but it will produce no spiritual growth. A full practicing Charismatic is one of the spiritually shallowest and weakest people you will ever meet. Do you want to grow? Submit to those times of sufferings and trials and look of God's hand in it. Christians who have suffered for their faith possess a depth of Christianity that the nominal, two-o'clock-in-the-morning Christian knows nothing about nor can obtain. The Shulamite says that she is willing to go into the hottest crucible if necessary if it will draw her closer to Solomon. Are you willing to go through the fire in order to grow and get closer to Christ? There is no other way.

The hill of frankincense is smaller and not as high but it is a spiritual high place nonetheless. This is revival and growth in other means rather than the suffering of the myrrh. You can grow and get closer to God by doing your spiritual duty- church attendance, prayer, Bible reading, service, but suffering and trial are not included here. But there is profit in all this. Living a burnt-offering life will cause growth and willingly suffering in it will cause rapid growth. The Shulamite will do both- she will serve and be willing to suffer in order to be with Solomon.

Solomon

4:7 Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.

We've seen this with the observation by Solomon that the Shulamite is fair. But for him to say there is no spot in her is incredible! There were plenty of flaws in her, to which the Shulamite would readily admit. But love is blind, deaf, dumb (and sometimes stupid!). Solomon couldn't and wouldn't see her faults. He loved her too much. Love indeed covers a multitude of sins. Christ also says this about us- "There is no spot in thee!" But what of my sin? "There is no spot in thee!" But what of my carnality? "There is no spot in thee!" But Lord... "There is no spot in thee!" We are perfect in Christ. Our position in Christ through the blood atonement is absolutely perfect. Christ sees us not as the sinner we are but as the object of His infinite love. There is sin there of course in a practical sense with our daily defilements and carnalities but Christ, describing His love toward the Christian, simply refuses to see it. Love does not major on the

sin, the flaws, the defects, but on the good things. If we are in Christ, if our sins have been taken away by the blood of Christ, if we have been born again by the grace of God, then Christ gazes at us in infinite love and bursts out "There is no spot in thee!" This is only possible through the blood of Christ on that heavenly mercy seat- no other way.

A carnal one might then say "If Christ sees me as thus then it doesn't matter how I live. I can live like the devil and Christ will refuse to see it!" Where on earth (or in hell- its true origin) did that half-baked notion come from? Such carnal ones turn this license into liberty. A noble soul would not take advantage of this love in turning it into licentiousness but rather would strive to be worthy of such a love. Christ does not ignore the sin as evidenced by Calvary. The blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin. Our practical sin is dealt with day by day in our lives. Sin and carnality is not ignored by Christ but He simply desires to major on other things about the Christian. If the person you loved had some physical defect, would you constantly be harping on that or emphasizing the positive things about the other person? Or would you even notice or care about that defect, if you really loved them with a Shulamite love?

4:8 Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

Another invitation for the Shulamite to come away with Solomon, this time from Lebanon to three named mountain tops: Amana, Shenir and Hermon, from the lion's dens and the mountain of the leopards.

First come from Lebanon. Lebanon, famous for its trees and beauty, was one of the more beautiful areas of the Middle East. Solomon says come away from even that beautiful area and be with him on the mountaintop. Leave even the most beautiful and enjoyable parts of this earthly existence and come away with Christ. He will take you someplace greater and more beautiful than anywhere you can think of here on earth.

The invitation is to come up on the peaks of these three named mountains. Not just any high place with Christ, but a specific one, named and known by Christ. Where is Christ going to take us? He will let us know as it is a definite locale that we can identify. We have already said much about the mountaintop experiences of the Christian. We may be sure that these three locations are beautiful, stately and well-nourished, for where else would Christ be?

Solomon also mentions coming away from the lion's den and away from the mount of the leopards. The lion's den shouldn't be too difficult to figure out- the place of test and trial! Daniel 6 tells us of these times when the kings of this world will persecute us for the faith. But these times of persecution are not forever- they do end.

O. Talmadge Spence, on page 121 of his commentary gives an interesting Hebrew word study on the "lion":

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. aryeh- the lion | 7. leon- the great lion |
| 2. kephir- the young lion | 8. shachal- the fierce lion |
| 3. labi- the bold lion | 9. lebiya- bold lioness |
| 4. layish- the old lion | 10. lebaoth- the bolder lioness |
| 5. shachal- the roaring lion | 11. ariel- the lion-like men |
| 6. shachats- the proud lion | |

There are also two Hebrew words for the "leopard":

1. namer- the cunning leopard
2. pardalis- the vicious panther

Although Satan is not referred to directly as a leopard, we see him under these two forms of attack- either by stealth or by outward attack. Satan employs both in his attacks upon the church.

Christ raptures the believer out of these dens and takes His beloved onto the high places, the mountaintops where fellowship can be sweet and uninterrupted. But the mountains of the leopards? This is a bit more obscure. Leopards can be dangerous as they do attack men, but they are also very graceful animals. The Christian may find himself on the mount with the leopards and the context here suggests that it is not the best place to be and the Christian needs to come away from it as well. Lions and leopards are beautiful cats but they do attack with violence.

"Shenir and Hermon " These are two names for the same place (Deuteronomy 3:9).

4:9 Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.

Solomon has been ravished by the Shulamite. She literally "unhearted" Solomon. She loosed his heart or even unhinged his heart by her love and now his heart soars free in joy and delight. Love does this as men speak of "soaring as an eagle" (or something like that) when they fall in love. Love conquered Solomon. Simple, humble love did that which no religious ceremony could do- ravish the heart of Christ! What language is this that Christ expresses toward a church in whom He finds no spot. She has completely captivated him and now dominates his heart and mind.

Is not true love thus? If you are really in love with someone, then they will dominate your thoughts constantly. This truth causes us to wonder about our love toward Christ. Are we in love with Him? Then does He dominate our thoughts constantly or do we only think of Him for an hour on Sunday morning? This is the acid test of a true love- if Christ has ravished our hearts. We have done so with His (although we certainly cannot understand how we managed to do so, but we have!). He is totally smitten with us. Are we with Him? If not, then how can we make the claim that we love Him?

How did the Shulamite ravish Solomon's heart? With her eyes and with "one chain of" her neck. Those dove's eyes did Solomon in. The loveliness and gracefulness of those chains which were around her neck also did it.

Notice the two titles for the Shulamite:

1. **My sister**- the close blood-tie relationship. "For you remember how Jesus stretched his hand toward his disciples and said 'Behold my mother and my brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of my Father, the same is my brother and my sister and my mother.'⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Robert Murray McCheyne, "I Sleep But My Heart Waketh" in *From the Preacher's Heart*, page 233.

2. My spouse- a wedding! Solomon refers to the Shulamite as his spouse. We believe that they did eventually marry. This naturally reminds us of our soon-coming wedding day when we, who make up the bride of Christ, will be wedded to Him.

"Notice that the Bride is called "my sister, my spouse." The idea is that when a man and woman come together and their bodies are joined in marriage (Eph. 5:31), they are not only man and wife, but in a sense, brother and sister. That is because the first man and woman who came together both had the same Father. Adam's Father was God; Eve's Father was God. When they came together, although they were husband and wife, they were also brother and sister.

That is spiritually true in a Christian marriage. When a Christian man and a Christian woman come together, you have a "brother in Christ" marrying a "sister in Christ." Both have the same spiritual Father: God. So the Apostle Paul says, "Have we not power to lead about A SISTER, A WIFE" (1 Cor. 9:5)."⁷⁸

"The chain around the neck indicates authority. Consecration, with authority, now marks the Shulamite in her life dedicated against the apostasy, because of being motivated by the glory of her Lord, King Solomon."⁷⁹

4:10 How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!

Solomon again repeats the "sister-spouse" title for the Shulamite and comments on that love of hers that so completely conquered him. It is better than wine (see Song 1:2). Her ointment (that exuding testimony of hers) was better than any and all spices (see comments under Song 1:12).

Regarding the smell of her ointments, "the bad smell of a Christian indicates either the need of a cleansing bath or a change of diet."⁸⁰ Either she needs to be cleansed from her own pollutions through sanctification, or from the stench of this world system that we all pick up as we travel through it, again through sanctification. But the diet? That can cause odors as well. If our clothes are clean, we must check to see what we have been feeding on. An impure diet will result in poor odor and other health problems. If you feed on the contemporary Christianity of our day, it will make you smell bad, spiritually. But if you feed on the Bible and genuine Remnant Christianity, it will give you a good and pleasing odor.

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.

The lips are the gate of the mouth from which pour forth either goodly or profane language. From the mouth of the Shulamite came forth only that which was godly and edifying, full of grace. No gossiping for her. No backbiting or carnal, worldly talk. Honey dropped from her lips and milk and honey were under her tongue. Compare to the Gentiles of Romans 1 who had the poison of asps under their tongues. What's under your tongue- milk and honey, poison or baloney?

⁷⁸ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on the Song of Solomon*, page 180.

⁷⁹ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 124.

⁸⁰ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 125.

What we say in prayer, praise, preaching and witnessing is equally sweet. The Hebrew suggests that even when she isn't talking and her lips are closed that they ooze and drip the honey. Even when the Shulamite is silent, she is being a blessing.

Her garments smell as the trees of Lebanon, like those pine air fresheners that dangle from many rear-view mirrors. It fills the air with one of the most pleasant fragrances that exist. Her garments, provided by Solomon, give off that same odor. Christ gives us our spiritual clothing, replacing our filthy rags of Isaiah 64:6, with fine linen, clean and white. If Christ provide your garment through faith and grace, it will smell as Lebanon. To provide your own spiritual garment will smell like anything but the cedars of Lebanon and it will not be pleasing unto God. "You are what you eat" is also a spiritual truth. Feed in liberal or contemporary nonsense and that is the aroma you will give off. Feed off the cults or Catholicism and that is what you will reek of. Feed of the good truths from the Lord's pasture and your aroma will be a pleasing one.

4:12 A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

Fountains were sealed with stones over their mouths to prevent contamination.

4:13 Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard,

4:14 Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:

4:15 A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

The Shulamite is now likened to a garden. In what ways is the picture of a garden fitting toward the Christian?

1. She is shut up like a fountain sealed (Song 4:12). There is a lot of water in this garden. Water is a type of spiritual refreshment and nourishment. The Shulamite is a source of continual refreshment to Solomon just by being who and what she is. I don't think we realize just how much of a blessing we are to Christ when we take time to pray and take time to fellowship with Him in the secret place.

2. The plants include pomegranates, camphire and spikenard (Song 4:13), saffron, calamus, cinnamon, trees of frankincense, myrrh, aloes and chief spices (Song 4:14). All manners of fragrant fruits fill this garden. Go anywhere in the garden and the eye and nose will be overwhelmed by such fruits. Spiritual fruit! The Christian should be overflowing with such tasty and delightful fruits. No matter where Christ may wander in the garden of our lives, He should be able to see these fruits hanging off our trees.

3. There are fountains and streams from Lebanon (Song 4:15). More waters, as discussed under Song 4:12. They are living waters, and they are associated with the Shulamite. Remember that Christ said in John 7:38 that if we believed on Him, out of our bellies (the inner source of our being) would flow rivers of living waters. We believe on Him, therefore we should be a source of blessing by our lives, service and testimony both unto others and unto Christ.

"Is she a spring? Are her secret thoughts and loves and desires like cool streams of water? Then the Bridegroom calls her a 'spring shut up'. Otherwise, every beast that passed by might foul her waters and ever stranger (sic?) might quaff her streams."⁸¹ "

This garden is a fenced in area from the Hebrew. There was a high wall which encircled it. The wall provided privacy from prying eyes from without who were not welcomed into the garden. The garden was a place of fellowship and intimacy and it was no place for outsiders to be peering in. It also provided protection from the wolves and anything else on the outside which posed a threat. Hence there was only way into the garden since the wall would have been too high to climb and buried too far into the ground to dig under- you had to come in by the door (which is, of course, Christ) or you didn't get in.

"Our hearts are drawn here, as the Shulamite, to 'a garden enclosed', 'a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.' This trilogy marks a separated life, with an inner secret spring and a glorious fountain sealed of the Holy Spirit. Separation, sanctification and the Spirit-filled life are marked here with care."⁸²

These plants in Song 4:13,14 are shoots or very young plants. The fruit is there but it is still young and tender. It takes a lifetime to develop strong, healthy fruit in the Christian life just as it takes years to grow a tree. But as long as there is something visible for Christ to see, mark and inspect, He is pleased. No fruit at all, not even any shoots, is what grieves Him. He wants to see the beginnings of spiritual growth and maturity in our lives, and even a young shoot will fit that bill. But these fruits must be pleasant (Song 4:13). No wild fruits or rotted fruits or strange fruits are allowable. Christ is looking for special types of fruits in this garden. Like what?

1. "pomegranates"

A. They were depicted in the decorations of the tabernacle

i. **Exodus 28:33 And beneath upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about:**

B. They were depicted on the robe of the high priest.

i. **Exodus 39:24 And they made upon the hems of the robe pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen.**

a. They came in a variety of colors

(i). Blue, usually depicting heaven.

(ii). Purple, royalty

(iii). Scarlet, the color of redemption

ii. **Exodus 39:25 And they made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates upon the hem of the robe, round about between the pomegranates;**

C. General references

i. **Numbers 13:23 And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs.**

ii. **Numbers 20:5 And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.**

⁸¹ Charles Spurgeon, "The Lord's Own View of His Church" in *The Most Holy Place*, page 312.

⁸² O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 127.

- iii. Deuteronomy 8:8 A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey;
- iv. Song 4:13 Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard,
- v. Song 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.
- vi. Song 7:12 Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.

D. Used in decorations in the temple

- i. 1 Kings 7:18 And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapiters that were upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapter.
- ii. 1 Kings 7:20 And the chapiters upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against the belly which was by the network: and the pomegranates were two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapter.
- iii. 1 Kings 7:42 And four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, even two rows of pomegranates for one network, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters that were upon the pillars;
- iv. 2 Kings 25:17 The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it was brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work.
- v. 2 Chronicles 3:16 And he made chains, as in the oracle, and put them on the heads of the pillars; and made an hundred pomegranates, and put them on the chains.
- vi. 2 Chronicles 4:13 And four hundred pomegranates on the two wreaths; two rows of pomegranates on each wreath, to cover the two pommels of the chapiters which were upon the pillars.
- vii. Jeremiah 52:22,23 And a chapter of brass was upon it; and the height of one chapter was five cubits, with network and pomegranates upon the chapiters round about, all of brass. The second pillar also and the pomegranates were like unto these. And there were ninety and six pomegranates on a side; and all the pomegranates upon the network were an hundred round about.

2. The fruits of atonement or salvation must be evident here from the mention of **camphire**. The Hebrew of this words is Strong's #3724 "kopher"; a cover, a village (as covered in); bitumen (as used for coating), and the henna plant (as used for dyeing); a redemption-price. The "kopher" is the Old Testament covering which is applied to the covering of sins under the Mosaic sacrificial system. No pleasant fruits in this garden unless the camphire of atonement and redemption be prominent.

A. "Camphire" is only mentioned in Song 1:14 and here.

B. It may have been a very pleasant and fragrant plant which grew in vineyards. It may have been a type of vine which yielded grapes.

3. "**Calamus**" Strong's #7070 qaneh; a reed; by resemblance a rod (especially for measuring), shaft, tube, stem, the radius (of the arm), beam (of a steelyard). A measuring rod is meant here. There must be fruits that grow as a result of constant self-examination by the Word of God. The gardener daily goes into the field to inspect for

weeds. It must be done daily because he knows that if he lets such inspections go for a few days, the weeds will take over the garden and choke the fruit. You must be daily measuring your life according to the measuring rod of the Scripture. That will produce most fruit since it will prevent the weeds from destroying it.

4. **"Cinnamon"** Uprightness is a fragrant spice. Moral purity and strength of character are good and delightful fruits that Christ is always looking for.

5. **"Frankincense"** The incense of the frankincense speaks of sacrifices and worship. There should be the ascending of the "olah" ("that which ascends") of the burnt offering life of the Christian that Christ should see as He inspects our gardens. A godly burnt offering life of dedication, worship and sacrifice are pleasing to our Solomon.

A. Frankincense relates to the priesthood (Exodus 30:34-38). Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

B. This is a bitter vegetable resin.

C. It was used for fumigation at sacrifices (Exodus 30:7) and as a perfume (Song 3:6).

D. It was one of the gifts presented to Christ as His birth in Matthew 2.

6. **"Myrrh"**

A. Here is the bitter suffering.

i. There is no spiritual fruit without suffering.

ii. There is no Christian life without suffering.

iii. There is no spiritual growth without the discipline, duty and delight of suffering.

B. This bitter herb myrrh would signify the suffering that Christ would endure in His life and on the cross. It would appear again in Mark 15:23, offered to Jesus again, this time by his enemies while He was on the cross.

C. It is a bitter gum resin.

D. It was used as a perfume (Psalm 45:8).

E. It was used in the purification of women (Esther 2:12).

F. It was used in the holy anointing oil (Exodus 30:23).

G. It was used for embalming the dead (John 19:19)

H. The word "Smyrna" comes from this. This would refer to the sufferings of the faithful church at Smyrna in Revelation 2:8-11.

The Shulamite

4:16 Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

The Shulamite goes with the picture of her being a garden. But she is not content with simply dwelling behind her wall and enjoying fellowship with Solomon. She desires to disperse her gifts and graces upon the winds so that others may receive the benefits of them, hence her call unto the north and south winds. The direction of these winds is important. Their duties are to carry the spices of her garden and disperse them abroad. But what of the north wind? That is the cold wind of winter which we may liken to the unpleasant winds of testing, trial and valley which enter our lives on occasion. Tribulation and persecution do much to spread the gospel, as seen in the early church in the Book of Acts. It took persecution to finally drive them out of Jerusalem and to carry them throughout the world. If you suffer as a Christian and glorify God in the furnace, your spices will be carried upon the north wind to multitudes. The south wind is just the opposite- the favorable warm winds of summer. In good times and bad, our testimony should be constantly

flowing out of the garden of our lives, testimony and ministry so that others may see and smell of them and come to know of our Solomon as we do. A healthy sign in the life of a Christian is a desire not to hoard gospel graces as storing manna, but rather to make known the wonderful gospel truths to as many as possible through the witness of our lives and the ministry of our service. Matthew Henry referred to it as the north winds of conviction and the south wind of comfort. Both are needed, else some people wouldn't get any of the spices. If it was all south winds blowing into the gardens, then what of the people on the south of the garden who need the spices? It is then selfish to ask only for pleasures and to shun trials for in so doing, we deny an entire class of people of the benefits of receiving our spices.

How does the wind spread these spices? By stirring them up and agitating them. An occasional breaking up or stirring up of our lives by the Holy Spirit by the introduction of difficult or unusual circumstances is designed to shake enough spice loose from our garden in preparation for the north and south winds to carry them afar in testimony.

The ultimate agent of this dispersing is the Holy Spirit since one of His emblems is that of wind. If we have any fruit at all that can be spread abroad upon the winds, it will be done so by the work and influence of the Spirit of God flowing from our lives and into others.

The chapter ends with a desire by the Shulamite for Solomon to come into her garden and to partake of her fruits. We also ought to invite Christ into the gardens of our hearts so that he might feed. But there are some problems with thus:

1. He must be invited and few Christians ever have invited Christ into the very inner chamber of their lives. Oh yes, they want Christ to save them and to answer an occasional prayer, but under no circumstances do they want Him in their lives! And these ones profess to be Christian? We don't believe it.
2. Assuming He even gets into the garden, is there any fruit for Him to partake of or does He need to bring His own bag lunch? If Christ depended upon the fruits of our lives to feed on, how long would He last before He starved?

Is there any pleasant fruit in our gardens that would give the Lord any pleasure? "I have often felt myself overcome with the bare idea that anything I have ever done should give my Lord pleasure. Can it be that any offering I ever gave him should be thought worthy of his acceptance; or that anything I ever felt or said should be a joy to him?"⁸³ All too often, we only have bitter fruits of carnality and worldliness to offer the Lord when He comes into the garden of our heart. Spirituality and love to God would produce good and pleasant fruit for the Lord.

⁸³ Charles Spurgeon, "Grace For Communion" in *The Most Holy Place*, page 337.

Song of Solomon Chapter 5

Solomon

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

"No sooner does the spouse say 'Let my Beloved come into his garden', than her Lord answers 'I am come into my garden.' 'Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.' When we desire our Lord Jesus to come to us, he has already come in a measure; our desire is the result of his coming. He meets us in all our desires, for he waiteth to be gracious. Our 'come' is no sooner uttered than it is lost in his 'Behold, I come quickly!'"⁸⁴

The Shulamite was compared to a garden in Song 4:16 and Solomon now says he has come into that garden for a direct time of fellowship. When he comes, he brings his myrrh, spices, honey and wine. When Christ comes for fellowship, He comes not empty-handed but as a thoughtful guest, He brings much for the evening entertainment. All you have to do is to provide the place, Christ will do the rest.

"But, why is the church compared to a garden?

1. Because a garden is taken out of the common waste ground, to be appropriated to a more particular use. So the church of Christ is taken out of the wilderness of this waste world, to a particular use.

2. In a garden nothing comes up naturally of itself, but as it is planted and set. So nothing is good in the heart, but as it is planted and set by the heavenly husbandman, John 15:4; and Mat. 15:3. We need not sow the wilderness, for the seeds of weeds prosper naturally. The earth is a mother to weeds, but a stepmother to herbs. So weeds and passions grow too rank naturally, but nothing grows in the church of itself, but as it is set by the hand of Christ, who is the author, dresser, and pruner of his garden.

3. Again, in a garden nothing uses to be planted but what is useful and delightful. So there is no grace in the heart of a Christian, but it is useful, as occasion serves, both to God and man.

4. Further, in a garden there are variety of flowers and spices, especially in those hot countries. So in a Christian, there is somewhat of every grace. As some cannot hear of a curious flower, but they will have it in their garden, so a Christian cannot hear of any grace but he labours to obtain it. They labour for graces for all seasons, and occasions. They have for prosperity, temperance and sobriety; for adversity, patience and hope to sustain them. For those that are above them, they have respect and obedience; and for those under them, suitable usage in all conditions of Christianity. For the Spirit of God in them is a seminary of spiritual good things. As in the corruption of nature, before the Spirit of God came to us, there was the seminary of all ill weeds in us, so when there is a new quality and new principles put in us, therewith comes the seeds of all graces.

5. Again, of all other places, we most delight in our gardens to walk there and take our pleasure, and take care thereof, for fencing, weeding, watering, and planting. So Christ's chief care and delight is for his church. He walks in the midst of the 'seven golden candlesticks,' Rev. 2:1; and if he defend and protect States, it is that they may be a harbour to his church.

⁸⁴ Charles Spurgeon, "Love Joying in Love" in *The Most Holy Place*, page 361.

6. And then again, as in gardens there had wont to have fountains and streams which run through their gardens, (as paradise had four streams which ran through it); so the church is Christ's paradise; and his Spirit is a spring in the midst of it, to refresh the souls of his upon all their faintings, and so the soul of a Christian becomes as a watered garden.

7. So also, 'their fountains were sealed up,' Cant. 4:12; so the joys of the church and particular Christians are, as it were, sealed, up. A stranger, it is said, 'shall not meddle with this joy of the church,' Prov. 14:10.

8. Lastly, a garden stands always in need of weeding and dressing. Continual labour and cost must be bestowed upon it; sometimes planting, pruning, and weeding, &c. So in the church and hearts of Christians, Christ hath always somewhat to do. We would else soon be overgrown and turn wild. In all which, and the like respects, Christ calleth upon the winds 'to blow upon his garden.'

9. And this also should move us to be fruitful. For men will endure a fruitless tree in the waste wilderness, but in their garden who will endure it? Dignity should mind us of duty. It is strange to be fruitless and barren in this place that we live in, being watered with the dew of heaven, under the sweet influence of the means. This fruitless estate being often watered from heaven, how fearfully is it threatened by the Holy Ghost, that 'it is near unto cursing and burning,' Heb. 6:8. For in this case, visible churches, if they prosper not, God will remove the hedge, and lay them waste, having a garden elsewhere. Sometimes God's plants prosper better in Babylon, than in Judea. It is to be feared God may complain of us, as he doth of his people, 'I have planted thee a noble vine; how art thou then come to be degenerated?' Jer. 2:21. If in this case we regard iniquity in our heart, the Lord will not regard the best thing that comes from us, as our prayers, Heb. 12:17. We must then learn of himself, how and wherein to please him. Obedience from a broken heart is the best sacrifice. Mark in [the] Scriptures what he abhors, what he delights in. We use to say of our friends, Would God I knew how to please them. Christ teacheth us, that 'without faith it is impossible to please him,' Heb. 11:6. Let us then strive and labour to be fruitful in our places and callings. For it is the greatest honour in this world, for God to dignify us with such a condition, as to make us fruitful. 'We must not bring forth fruit to ourselves,' as God complains of Ephraim, [Israel], Hos. 10:1. Honour, riches, and the like, are but secondary things, arbitrary at God's pleasure to cast in; but, to have an active heart fruitful from this ground, that God hath planted us for this purpose, that we may do good to mankind, this is an excellent consideration not to profane our calling. The blessed man is said to be, 'a tree planted by the water side, that brings forth fruit in due season,' Ps. 1:3. But it is not every fruit; not that fruit which Moses complains of, Deut. 32:32, the wine of dragons, and the gall of asps: but good fruit, as John speaks; 'Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire,' Mat. 3:10.

10. Lastly, in that the church is called Christ's garden, this may strengthen our faith in God's care and protection. The church may seem to lie open to all incursions, but it hath an invisible hedge about it, a wall without it, and a well within it, Zech. 2:5. God himself is a wall of fire about it, and his Spirit a well of living waters running through it to refresh and comfort it. As it was said of Canaan, so it may be said of the church, 'The eye of the Lord is upon it all the year long,' Deut. 11:12, and he waters it continually. From which especial care of God over it, this is a good plea for us to God, 'I am thine, save me;' I am a plant of thine own setting; nothing is in me but what is thine, therefore cherish what is thine. So, for the whole church the plea is good: 'The church is thine; fence it, water it, defend it, keep the wild boar out of it.' Therefore the enemies thereof shall one day know what it is to make a breach upon God's vineyard. In the mean time, let us labour to keep our hearts as a garden, that nothing that defileth may enter. In which respects the church is compared to a garden, upon which Christ commands the north and south wind, all the means of grace, to blow.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Richard Sibbes, *Union With Christ*.

The communion will be broken once again. In chapter 4, it was Solomon who withdrew for a season, but this time, it will be the spiritual laziness of the Shulamite that will cause the break. Sometimes breaks in fellowship are initiated by God but most times we cause them by our own carnality.

"Note well that the Bridegroom kindly takes to himself as his own all that is in the garden. His spouse spoke of 'his pleasant fruits' and he acknowledges the least and most homely of them to be his own. He repeats the possessive article- 'my': 'my myrrh, my spice, my honeycomb, my honey, my wine, my milk.' He disdains nothing which the garden of his bride produces."⁸⁶ Christ accepts our "myrrh" of bitterness and suffering as He does our honeycomb of delight.

The Shulamite

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

While asleep one night, Solomon showed up at the door of the Shulamite's house desiring entrance for fellowship and communion. Notice he came at night for a period of night-season fellowship, which is His favorite time for such things. But the Shulamite was tired and in bed and too lazy to get up and unlock the door. She was asleep and groggy and periods of sleep can be dangerous for we tend to miss things and opportunities when in such a state. Watch and be sober, lest you miss Christ! Even the strongest believer must sleep physically but we should never sleep spiritually.

Notice these terms Solomon uses for the Shulamite as he seeks communion and fellowship:

1. My sister. Christ said that they who do the will of the Father are His Family
2. My love, as God is love and He loved the world
3. My dove, as the cleanness of her heart as being undefiled
4. My undefiled as God sees her

This describes a person whom you would want to have fellowship with and spend time with. Christ sees us like this, which is why He wants to spend time with us in communion. Do we see Him like this? If we do, then why do we not want to spend more time with Him in communion?

Regarding sleep and the spiritual benefits of it, O. Talmadge Spence quotes G.D. Watson on page 141 of his commentary: "God has a good opportunity to talk to our inner nature during our sleep, for in such a state there is no resistance in our mind, no noise of self-exertion, no process of argument, or self-will, but all our faculties are relaxed, and in a state of repose and susceptibility, like the surface of a little lake hid away in the mountains, on a still night, with not the stir of a breath to break the placid quietness." So the heart of the Shulamite was talking with her even as she slept. It is in these times that God may indeed talk to us in night visions and dreams. It is during these periods that we may be the most open and receptive to what God has to say to us.

"I sleep..." Weakness of the flesh brings spiritual sloth, laziness and missed opportunities for communion with Christ. Our devotional period is our time we can spent with Christ in which He

⁸⁶ Charles Spurgeon, "Love Joying in Love" in *The Most Holy Place*, pages 361-362.

seeks, knocks, speaks and waits, yet how slothful we are and what vain excuses we make! We notice in Song 5:

1. Christ seeks us- 5:1
2. Christ knocks- 5:2a
3. Christ speaks- 5:2b
4. Christ waits- 5:2c

And what reaction does He get? The Shulamite can't get herself out of bed! This is because the Spirit is often willing but the flesh is weak (Matthew 26:41 and Mark 14:38 **"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."**).

"but my hearth waketh" We may sleep, we may backslide, we may grow cold and insensible but thank God we have the possibility of waking up! We do not have to stay asleep. Sleep is not fatal but we can be awakened, come back to our senses and resume our communion with God.

Romans 13:11 exhorts us that it is **high time to wake out of sleep**. We cannot afford the luxury of going to sleep on the Lord or in our communion with God as "time is short".

Sleep has its hazards. When we are asleep physically, we are insensible to external dangers. A thief may break into our house, and we would not be aware of it. Our house may catch on fire and we would sleep through it until it was too late to escape. Spiritually, we would not be as alert regarding the attacks of by the world, the flesh and the devil if we are asleep.

"my heart waketh" Even if we are asleep, we are totally insensible. We may have been **"dead in trespasses and in sins"** in Ephesians 2:1 but the regenerated saint is not dead not is he totally asleep. Although he may be asleep, he is not dead nor is he in a coma. The possibility of awaking is always excellent. This is not the sleep of sin but of backsliding and of falling out of communion.

"open to me" This is the third of three major callings, or invitations of Christ to the Christian in the Song:

1. 2:10,13 **Arise my love, my fair one, and come away.**
2. 4:8 **Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse.**
3. 5:2 **Open to me.**

The Christian life is one of continually calling and drawing by Christ to the Christian, as He attempts to woo us farther and farther away from the world and closer to Him and heaven. This is our progressive sanctification, that we move farther from the world and closer to Christ.

The Shulamite knew of her error and sought out to find Solomon, calling for him in the night but to no avail. Fellowship had been broken yet again and this time, it was all her fault. Her bowels moved for Solomon and she earnestly desired for him to return, but her laziness cost her that chance for fellowship. It is not that the Shulamite did not love Solomon, for she did, but she simply got lazy and careless in that love and it cost her. Christ's presence is easily lost but it is not easily recovered.⁸⁷

5:3 I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?

⁸⁷ James Durham, page 277.

"I stand at the door and knock..." and Solomon was knocking here but got no invitation to come in. He's out in the dark of the night, with the dew dripping off his head. See what he endures so he may have fellowship! He desires fellowship with the Shulamite so much that he is willing to go through the most adverse elements to get it while the Shulamite won't even get out of bed to meet Christ. All he heard were excuses as to why the Shulamite didn't want to get out of her nice, warm bed to let her beloved in: "I've put off my coat" (Song 5:3) and "I've washed my feet" (Song 5:3). In other words, now is not just a good time for fellowship. Oh how the flesh rebelled at this! How inconvenient it would be for Solomon to show up now! Come back at a more convenient season! The problem with that is there never is a more convenient season. Today is the day, now is the hour. The Shulamite didn't feel that way for long for she eventually did get out of bed to let him in, but that delay was costly. She repented of her laziness but she still suffered for it. Repentance takes away the penalty for our sins but we still must endure the results for that sin. We may sin in cutting off our arm and God will forgive us but He will not give us that arm back. Christ asked to come in and she lingered and tarried. He asked for an embrace and got an excuse. He asked for bread and got a stone from his beloved. She did eventually arise to let Him in but that delay was costly. By the time she got to the door, Solomon was gone. Too late! See the need for quick response and obedience to the wooing of Christ lest He withdraw. He waited but he wasn't going to wait all night. If Christ is not wanted then He will not stay. Christ is always a welcomed and honored guest or He will be no guest at all.

"My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door." In ancient times, the latch of a door was on the inside: it was a bar across the inside of a door. In the door was a small hole through which someone on the outside could reach and lift up the bar unless it was secured by a pin. The old pioneer homes in America had a variation of that: it was known as a "latch-string." A piece of buckskin was tied around the bar and strung through a small hole at the top of the door so that it hung outside. If the latch-string was outside the door, a visitor was welcome to pull it to lift the bar and come on in.

In the case here, the woman had secured the bar with a pin so the man could not lift the bar. That would require her to get out of bed to let him in.

Salmon Warner has a famous picture of Jesus knocking at a door. There's no handle on the door. The idea is that Christ can't come in unless you let Him in."⁸⁸

5:4 My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.

Oriental doors did not have doorknobs or handles as we are familiar with. They operated with latches.

"bowels" It is common for a Hebrew to use organs of the body to express emotions. The liver showed joy, the kidneys and heart both showed affection. The abdominal organs meant compassion.

5:5 I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.

5:6 I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.

⁸⁸ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on the Song of Solomon*, page 206.

The season for communion does not last long. It is hard to maintain. There will be times that you will be too busy to spend time with God in the common and necessary obligations of life. Or due to our spiritual sloth, we will fritter the opportunity away. It can also be that we get so distracted with other things that we want to do that we relegate communion to a secondary importance. Whatever the reason (or excuse), if Christ sees that we have no real desire for communion with Him, He will depart. And we hope He will shortly return or that He will not go too far away!

John Gill lists some things that can cause us to leave off communion in this manner of spiritual slumber and sloth:

1. From a 'body of sin' they carry about with them; which fleshly, gross and earthly part in them, induces heaviness, and inclines to sleep: the cold humors of sin benumb the soul, and bring upon it a spiritual lethargy; 'like the poison of asps,' it operates this way; the deceitful charms of sin sometimes lull them asleep.

2. Worldly cares have sometimes this effect upon God's people; an immoderate thirst and pursuit after the things of this world, oftentimes makes persons grow indifferent about the things of another; it runs them into many temptations and snares; it frequently causes them to omit private and family duty, and 'chokes the word' and ordinances, that they become unfruitful; being surfeited and overcharged with it, they fall into this drowsy and sleepy frame.

3. It arises sometimes from a cessation from spiritual exercises; idleness, or a want of exercise induces sleep: when believers grow weary of well-doing, and grow remiss in the duties of meditation, prayer, hearing and reading; grace, as to the exercise of it, declines, and their souls fall into a spiritual slumber.

4. It sometimes springs from, and is increased by an absenting from the ministry, especially an awaking one, which might be useful to rouse them; and from the company of lively Christians by conversing with whom, their souls, through the blessing of divine grace, might be kept awake; but instead of this, they neglect the ministry of the word, leave off the company of those warm and lively souls, and converse with cold and formal professors, which bring them into, and continues them in this sleepy frame.

5. Sometimes it follows upon an enjoyment of ease, peace and liberty; therefore some interpret these words of the state of the church in Constantine's time, when the church not only enjoyed freedom from persecution, but also abounded in riches and prosperity, and upon it grew careless, secure and sleepy; by reason of which many errors, both in doctrine and discipline, crept into the church; and I am afraid, that the long enjoyment of peace and liberty which we have had, has brought us into much the same frame of spirit.

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

We have identified these watchmen as pastors and spiritual leaders in the local church. They again show up in a time of need and trial in the life of the Shulamite. In chapter 3, they appear when Solomon had withdrawn himself from the Shulamite. Here they appear again when the Shulamite chased Solomon away.

Pastors usually do appear whenever anyone in their spiritual charge is in deep spiritual need. Pastors who are not available for their flocks or who are far away, engaged in other duties when they are needed by their congregations are unfaithful ministers. One case in point are pastors who might as well be evangelists since they always seem to be on the road in meetings. Some pastors preach in their own pulpits on Sundays and then leave town on Monday to preach in some far-off town, only returning home when it is time again to preach. What sort of a "pastor" is

this? He is nothing but a preacher. No, pastors should be close at hand to their flocks instead of running all over the country preaching. Let the vocational evangelist handle that for the pastor needs to stay home so he can make himself available to the sheep in need.

Once they found the Shulamite out in the night, hunting for Solomon, they at once inquired for the reason. She poured out what happened and the watchmen then proceeded to smite and wound her. She did wrong and she knew it. But the pastor also issued a sharp rebuke which wounded. God-called pastors will wound their sheep so they might later be healed. Pastors are to rebuke and reprove when necessary and a time like this is certainly one of those necessary times. The wounding and smiting from the watchman would drive the spiritual lesson home with much greater force than if no such rebuke had been made. These pastoral rebukes are very useful to correct erring saints. Private rebukes do not always accomplish the desired goals so often public rebukes are necessary. She seemed not to be able to correct herself in her sin or to learn the needed lessons from her own private heart-searchings so the public rebuke by the watchman and keepers was in order. The pastor who will not issue either public or private rebukes when needed is again an unfaithful under-shepherd who has a defective love for his sheep. A loving pastor cares enough about the sheep to chastise when needed just as the Father does to us.

These pastors are acting differently than in Song 3:3. They did not directly speak to the Shulamite or assist her in tracking down Solomon. Here they are wounding. We see either two differing types of pastoral ministries or two different types of pastors. Pastors respond differently to different people in different situations. Sometimes they may just listen while the Christian pours out his troubles. They just want someone to talk to or to "unload" on. That is the quiet ministry. But sometimes they must take a more active, verbal ministry of reproof and rebuke to the troubled saint. The Holy Spirit will have to lead them of what to do unto whom and when.

But we also have two different types of pastors in chapters 3 and 5. O. Talmadge Spence⁸⁹ identifies three types of Watchmen:

1. **The Street Watchmen.** This is the true, Bible pastor-teacher who watches over the souls of men. The test of a genuine, Bible pastor-teacher is how he builds saints. It is popularly believed today that the best pastor-teacher is seen in how he evangelizes sinners. This is not the true test. The disciplining of sinners to godliness and sainthood is a greater test. I have said it time and time again and will continue to say it that the primary responsibility of the pastoral office is to feed sheep and to watch over the flock, not to deal with the goats. John R. Rice and his followers may sneer at the "pastor-teacher" who doesn't win enough souls or baptize enough converts to satisfy them (as Rice certainly did, for example, in his very damaging book *The Evangelist*), but Paul, in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, has different ideas than these modern-day men.
2. **The Wall Watchmen.** His position on the wall shows his duty to watch for the enemy and to insure the protection of the city from the enemy.
3. **The Street-Wall Watchmen.** Both the second and third groups represent high and middle ecclesiastical leaders in the church who are more interested in the political, financial, social and administrative offices than the actual souls of men. They are the churchmen among us. They are not interested in spiritual and biblical matters; in fact, there is something about these watchmen that is irritated by those who hunger after God...They produce in the earth what is popularly known as the Institutional Church. It was these kinds of watchmen that found the Shulamite here in chapter 5. They were not gentle with her at all. They took away her veil, which was used by women as a covering

⁸⁹ *The Song of Solomon*, page 146.

of modesty. They desecrated her bridal relationship with Solomon and tried to destroy her Biblical modesty and submission. Ultimately, they tried to destroy her bridal identity before Solomon. Churchmen will either try to change, destroy or remove such a Shulamite in their midst.

Such public rebukes from a faithful pastor may result in a public humiliation when the rest of the church discovers our sin. This is the idea of the removing of the veil. In Eastern countries, women often wore veils in public for modesty. To have it removed was an act of attacking the modesty of that woman, thus leaving her to an open and public shame. This is the true value of rebukes. If we do sin and get caught in it are unable to resolve it ourselves, the threat of a public rebuke before the church, which would result in a public humiliation, would motivate us to resolve the situation before that became necessary. This is also a great deterrent to sin. If we refuse that sin, then there is no chance of us being brought before the church publicly.

5:8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love.

The Shulamite is getting desperate now. It seems that the watchmen and keepers could not tell her where Solomon has gone. She even resorts to going to the daughters, with whom she is not on the best of terms, to inquire of them if they knew where he was. Naturally, they didn't. If a spiritual saint can't find Christ, then it is not very likely that a carnal saint will be able to do much better. But when you are desperate to try to re-establish that fellowship and communion that you once had with Christ, you will do almost anything to try to get it back, even if it means asking help of the Daughters of Jerusalem.

The Shulamite leaves the daughters a strong charge on the chance that they might see Solomon before she does- tell him I'm lovesick. She missed him terribly and was willing to do anything to let him know that she was sorry and that she wanted him back. By asking the daughters to pass on such a message shows the Shulamite was covering all her bases and leaving no stone unturned in her search for Solomon.

"I am sick of love" a strange disease and illness but one that should be very desirable for every believer. This is one infirmity that we should never ask Christ to cure! May it only intensify in its severity and ministry unto us!

When you are **"sick of love"**, you can't think of anything else except the object of your affections. You lose your appetite, you are distracted, you are depressed when your love is not there, you do anything you can to spend as much time as possible with your love. We claim we love Christ but certainly do not act like it!

The Daughters of Jerusalem

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 so charge us?

A question no Christian should ever have to ask- "What is so special about Christ that you make such a fuss over Him?" What a loaded question but it shows the ignorance that the carnal daughters have toward the person of Christ. It also revealed that they did not love Him. They knew Him in a superficial sense but they had no relationship with Him. They simply couldn't

understand why the Shulamite was so upset over Him that she should so charge them. Whether the question was asked of sincerity or in contempt makes no difference here as to the guilt of ignorance on the part of the daughters.

The attitude of the world is "You Christians have the Bible, the Moslems have the Koran, and the Hindus and the Buddhists have their 'sacred scriptures'; what's so special about your Book? There are a billion and a half Moslems, there are 900 million Hindus, and there are 400 million people who profess to follow Buddha; all those people can't be wrong, can they? What makes Jesus Christ any different than Mohammed, Buddha, Lao Tse, or Confucius? Isn't another Beloved just as precious? Why not the pope, Allah, Mohammed, the Buddha, Joseph Smith, Mary Eddy, Rev. Moon or someone else? It's a legitimate question and it deserves an honest answer. Aren't they just as good as Christ?" Certainly not. We will brook no competitors for our affections for Christ nor will we accept any substitutes. We would answer "they are but men or false gods and they will not suit us. We demand the One True God, Jesus Christ and we will not rest until we have Him." My Beloved (Christ) is better than any other "beloved" because:

1. He is God
2. He loved me when I was unlovely
3. He loved me when no one else would
4. He loved me enough to die for me
5. When He was killed, He didn't stay dead! Try that one out on Mohammad!

"Now, there are two ways of answering that question. You can answer it from a personal viewpoint, or you can answer it from an objective viewpoint. The truth is that God has given an unsaved man enough evidence that, if he is honest, he will have to admit that no other "sacred scripture" is like the Bible and no other "founder of a religion" is like Jesus Christ.

The thing that sets the Bible apart from such amateur works as the Vedas, the Shastas, and the Puranas (Hinduism), the Tripitaka (Buddhism), the Zend Avesta (Zoroastrianism), and the Koran (Mohammedanism) is prophecy. The Bible is the only Book that can predict 48 particulars of a man's life anywhere from 400 to 1,500 years before He is born and have every single one of them "come through on the money."

A professional mathematician and statistician named Dr. Peter Stoner (in his work *Science Speaks*) proved that the chances of that happening was one out of 10^{157} (that's ten with 157 zeros after it). There are not that many electrons in four universes the size of this one. Moreover, according to the laws of statistical probability, if the chances of an event taking place is one out of 1,050, there is no natural chance of that event ever taking place. Bible prophecy defies human explanation.

You won't find that phenomenon in any other religious book. Take the whole lot combined, and you wouldn't find two prophecies (and I mean real prophecies, not lucky guesses that have a fifty-fifty chance of taking place) of anything that is fulfilled in history (not at the "Last Judgment").

Mohammed, as a "prophet," is a sad joke. A lost sinner in the Old Testament (Balaam) could make more historical prophecies in two chapters (Num. 23–24) than Mohammed could in 114 "Suras." You will find more prophetic material in Obadiah (the shortest book in the Old Testament) than in the Koran and the Hadith combined.

And what makes Jesus Christ "more than another beloved" is the fact that He didn't stay dead—He came up bodily. Mohammed, Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius, et al., stayed down in the ground. In fact, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the chief proof of His Deity.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on the Song of Solomon*, pages 216-218.

The Shulamite

5:10 My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

5:11 His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven.

5:12 His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set.

5:13 His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.

5:14 His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.

5:15 His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

5:16 His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

Since they asked, the Shulamite is only too happy to tell the daughters what is so special about her beloved! What a great open door for witnessing are such questions. When carnal ones or sinners see that we have a genuine love for Christ, they will inquire of it and desire to know why we love Him as we do. Then we have this chance to get in a really precious witness in for Christ. We should be as eager to thus witness and to boast on our Beloved as the Shulamite was.

You can measure the depth of one's love and intimacy with Christ by seeing how they describe Christ. If all they can do is use theological or abstract terms in describing Christ then they know not Him. One must move beyond the cold theological facts about Christ and get onto the deep, personal, intimate descriptions of Him. When someone describes the love of their life, they use terminology that demonstrates that they not only love that person with a very deep love but that they are also very well acquainted with them. Even non-poetical souls (like mine!) will slip into poetry at such opportunities as they search their vocabularies to find the words that reflect the love in their hearts.

Here also is a secret to successful evangelism. We wonder why so few sinners seem to respond to invitations to Christ. Could it be because we have such a low view of Christ? If someone were to ask us to give a description of Christ, what kind of a description would we give? Many Christians could only give a theologically correct description of Christ. "He is God, Second Person of the Trinity, Son of God, Son of David, etc..." and that description would be correct. But there is no heart to it. Anyone could glean such a description of Christ from any theology book. But what is He **like**? Give me a description that goes beyond some cold, sterile technical description and show me that you really know about Him! Can you give a Shulamite description of Christ? Only if you have a Shulamite heart and have a Shulamite view of Christ. The sinner cannot do this, nor can the backslider, the carnal Christian or a Christian will no communion with Christ. If we can give such a description of Christ, then it shows we really know Him, love Him and we might just be able to attract some carnal person to seek Him too

(Song 6:1). Evangelism is not trying to wring some prayer or profession out of a person, but it is trying to woo a bride for Christ, exactly as the Unnamed Servant of Abraham tried to do in Genesis 24.

This passage is the closest thing we have toward a physical description of Christ. Of course, we have no idea how He really looked but we are very suspicious at most of the paintings of Him. Most artists portray Christ as a 98-pound weakling with long, stringy hair and a pale-white complexion. That is the Christ of the Roman Catholic Church. Christ was not an Irishman with a European complexion and chestnut hair but rather was an Oriental Jew with a darker skin and a bushy beard and hair. Remember, He was a carpenter and most carpenters are solid, strong men.

We will then go through this description of Solomon and make the spiritual applications to Christ in Song 5:

1. **He is white** (5:10). Refers to His purity and holiness as white is the color of both, The Hebrew has the idea of "dazzling", showing the brightness of His countenance. Deity's countenance is not dull but shines forth as lightening, brighter than the noon-day sun, as we should expect.

2. **He is ruddy** (5:10). This refers to his redness. This refers to his manliness and His passion. Red also stands for blood, so we are reminded of His passion of His suffering and death and His humanity. It would also speak of His earthiness. Christ is not some mysterious God of the deist Who cannot be approached and Who is not concerned for the individual. He is a personal God who has that deep personal interest in even the most humble of saints.

3. **He is the chiefest among ten thousand** (5:10). Christ is the capstone, the supreme, the best that God has to offer to mankind. There is none in heaven or in earth that can even compare to Christ in any manner. But why only ten thousand? The Hebrew is literally a myriad, even millions. Old Testament thought of a multitude usually did not extend into the millions, so multiples of thousands was used to describe what we would think of as millions, billions or even trillions.

4. **His head is as the most fine gold** (5:11). The head is that controlling part of the body and is the most eminent part of the body. Christ is the head of the church, which means He leads the church, just as our heads control our bodies since our brains are within our heads. But Christ is a head of fine gold, that very valuable of metals that is a symbol of deity. There is the "head of gold" in Nebuchadnezzar's dream image of Daniel 2:32,38. This represented the Babylonian Empire under Nebuchadnezzar. Babylon is the ultimate in anti-God, anti-Christ forces in human history, starting with Nimrod in Genesis 10 and culminating with the Roman Catholic system in the end times and the Tribulation. That it is a "head of gold" shows it to be a counterfeit of the true Golden Head of the human race, Jesus Christ. The human race lost its head in Eden when Adam fell, so Satan has tried numerous "head transplants". Babylon was one of them, as well as Egypt, Assyria, Greece, Persia and Rome. Christ is our head, but Satan will offer his "christ" in the Antichrist who will masquerade as a "head of gold". Anything that attempts to replace Christ as our head spiritually is a fraud and is not a true head of gold. This would include any theological system which attempts to replace Christ. The world offers many heads to usurp the authority over the Christian, such as sports, television, money, sex, drugs, alcohol, and so on. These are heads of cardboard and concrete, not the true gold of deity.

5. **His locks are bushy, and black as a raven** (5:11). This speaks of His youth (He died in the prime of life, at age 33) and vigor. His hair is thick, black and bushy, not long

and stringy as seen in so many paintings of Christ. Those Romanist artists made Christ look more like a cocaine junkie than the Savior of the world.

6. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set (5:12). We have spoken much of the eyes in this study, how they are the windows into the soul. Christ's eyes reveal a pure and holy soul, compared to the cleanness of doves and the purity of milk. They are also fitly set, fixed and eternal in their piercing and penetrating gaze that is able to see into the very heart and soul of every man. Our eyes wander about in our instability and wanderings, but Christ is the most stable and consistent person in creation. He does not change, as seen in the fixedness of His eyes. Habakkuk 1:13 says, **"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity."**

7. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers (5:13). The cheeks are the support structure of the most lovely face in creation. Christ's cheeks and face are so lovely that they give off a fragrance that reminds one of spices and flowers.

8. His lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh (5:13). The lips are the gates of the words, so even the words of Christ, even if they hurt or heal, are sweet. They are sweet in their wooings of love and comfort but they can also drop myrrh in rebuke and chastening. But even these seasons are sweet to the soul for they even more prove His love toward us.

9. His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl (5:14). He has the hands of a carpenter, strong and manly. These hands are not idle but are constantly at work in bringing sinners to himself and in fulfilling the Father's will. And it is by those hands that we are kept in salvation, free from the danger of falling from grace.

10. His belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires (5:14). The belly, or the bowels, were seen in Bible days as the seat of the emotions, the center of affections. This speaks of the preciousness and the beauty of the heart of Christ. His love and affections are as bright, as pure and as precious as ivory overlaid with sapphires. It was common for a Hebrew to use organs of the body to express emotions: the liver showed joy, the kidneys denoted affections, the heart represented affections, mind, and the abdominal organs meant compassion.

11. His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold (5:15). The legs support the entire body. See how strong and sturdy Christ is, able to bear the burdens of millions of His children and never weary. These strong, manly legs are set in sockets of fine gold, showing the undergirding support of deity under us.

12. His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars (5:15). The beauty of the face of Christ- what artist can capture it? How He must have looked! How fortunate were those who were able to see Him in the days of His earthly ministry. But we will one day see His face when we are like Him. This day the Church of God eagerly awaits.

13. His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely (5:16). Compare this again to His lips. This mouth and these lips speak only those words that are fit and godly. There is no impurity here, unlike the mouth of the sinner which contains the poison of asps under the tongue. The mouth is also used to give kisses and these kisses of Christ are the sweetest there is. These kisses, or tokens of His affection and love for us are given both in the shadow as well as the sunshine. What can be more of encouragement, especially when we are in the crucible, than the bestowal of one of these love tokens?

5:16 "Altogether lovely" This is the plenary Shulamite view of Christ. This summarizes all the fine and minute details of Solomon-Christ as viewed by the Shulamite-Christian. Put all these individual portraits of Christ together and the final, overall view is "altogether lovely"- every part and particle of Christ. There is no flaw, no spot, no blemish in Him. The pure, noble and holy

see Him as such. This is how the Shulamite saw Him. But to the filthy and undefiled, they cannot grasp His loveliness and never will until they are born again.

"Altogether" means you cannot find a flaw anywhere in His person, work or attributes, for there are none. If He is "altogether lovely" then that means there are no parts of Him that are unlovely. The holiest man on earth is still but a man, with a fallen nature and a closet full of skeletons. Even the best of men is frail and is dust. But not so with Christ.

In describing Jesus Christ as a human being, Isaiah said, "he hath no form nor comeliness" (Isaiah 53:2). There was nothing particularly attractive about Him. "And when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." He wasn't exceptionally handsome or good looking. If you had seen Him in Nazareth or Jerusalem or in Galilee, you probably wouldn't have taken notice of Him just by looking at Him. From a human standpoint, He was an ordinary, everyday, average Jew.

To the believer, through the eyes of love, He appears differently. Peter said, **"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious"** (1 Peter 2:7). To the Christian, the beauty of Jesus Christ is not viewed with his physical eyes, but through the eyes of faith (1 Peter 1:8 **"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:"**).

Christ is lovely in His:

1. **Person.** The Shulamite summed it up above. Of who else can this be said? The popes have been frauds, liars and bloodthirsty killers. Mohammad raped 9-year old girls while slaughtering anyone who wouldn't accept his religion. None of the gods of the Hindus can even come close to the glories and beauties of Christ. It would take a man like Samuel Rutherford, in his *Letters*, to even start to describe these beauties. Rutherford saw them and could write about them because of his closeness with God.
2. **Prophecies.** He is presented as the Messiah, King, Sovereign and Lord over all creation, to be fulfilled in the Millennium and beyond. Even if we took only 48 of the major prophecies about Jesus Christ, the chances of these 48 prophecies coming to pass, fulfilled on one man, and written four hundred to two thousand years before he was born, are one out of 10^{157} th power. There are not that many electrons in the universe!
3. **Passion** (love). His love for fallen man drove Him to the sufferings of the cross. Who else would love worthless sinners enough to die for them in such a manner (Romans 5:7,8 **"For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."**).
4. **Products** (accomplishments). Look at what He did and all He accomplished! He defeated Satan. He paid our sin debt. He reconciled us to God. He went to prepare a place for us (John 14:3 **"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."**).

"I leave that head just to notice, in the third place, that though this praise is rare praise and perpetual praise, yet also IT IS TOTALLY INSUFFICIENT PRAISE.

Say ye that he is altogether lovely? It is not enough. It is not a thousandth part enough. No tongue of man, no tongue of angel, can ever set forth his unutterable beauties. "Oh," say you, "but it is a great word, though short; very full of meaning though soon spoken—altogether lovely." I tell you it is a poor word. It is a word of despair. It is a word which the spouse uttered, because she had been trying to describe her Lord and she could not do it, and so she put this down in very desperation: as much as to say, "There, the task is too great for me. I will end it. This is all I can say. 'Yea, he is altogether lovely.'" I am sure John Berridge was right when he said—

Living tongues are dumb at best,
We must die to speak of Christ.

Brethren, the praise of the text is insufficient praise, I know, because it is praise given by one who had never seen him in his glory. It is Old Testament praise this, that he is altogether lovely: praise uttered upon report rather than upon actual view of him. Truly I know not how to bring better, but I shall know one day. Till then I will speak his praise as best I can, though it fall far short of his infinite excellence. Our text is cloth of gold, but it is not fit for our Beloved to put the sole of his foot upon. He deserves better than this, for this is only the praise of a church that had not seen him die, and had not seen him rise, and had not seen him in the splendour at the divine right hand. "Well," say you, "try if you can do better." No, I will not, because if I did praise him better, the style would not last long, for he is coming quickly, and the best thing the best speaker could ever say of him will be put out of date by the majesty of his appearing. His chariot is waiting at his door now, and he may soon come forth from his secret chambers and be among us, and oh! the glory—oh! the glory! Paul, you know, stole a glance through the lattices one day when he was caught up into the third heaven. Somebody said to me, "I wonder Paul did not tell us what he saw." Ay, but what he saw he might not tell, and the words he heard were words which it were not lawful for a man to utter, and yet to live among this evil generation. We shall hear those words ourselves soon, and see those sights not many days hence, so let it stand as it does, "He is altogether lovely." But when you have thus summed up all that our poor tongues can express, you must not say, "Now we have described him." Oh no, sirs, ye have but held a candle to this glorious sun, for he is such an one as thoughts cannot compass, much less language describe."⁹¹

"This is my beloved and this is my friend, oh ye Daughters of Jerusalem." This is the One I make such a fuss over. And who wouldn't? Every Christian should be doing this. This should be the testimony of every Christian. Wouldn't such a One as this be worthy of making such a big deal over? Shouldn't we be making more of Christ than we do now in our lives? If we loved Him with a Shulamite love, we would. We would extol Him over all others. We tend to extol fallen man with almost a religious devotion, men such as singers, actors, athletes, politicians. But they are all unworthy compared to Christ. Of course, we cannot speak enough of the loveliness of Christ or of His desirability for we would need an infinite vocabulary to do so. He is altogether lovely. There is no spot, no flaw, no defect in Christ. Everything about Him is desirable and lovely.

Back in 3:10, Solomon tried to impress the Daughters of Jerusalem with the glories and beauties of his chariot. Here, the Shulamite is trying to impress the Daughters with the glories and beauties of Solomon/Christ Himself.

If Christ is your Beloved and Friend, then you ought to do something for Him (John 14:15, 15:14). You shouldn't be ashamed of Him but testify of Him at every opportunity.

Notice the progression of the description of Solomon in Song 5:10-15. We start at the top with the head and then move down to the hair, eyes, cheeks, lips, hands, belly, then the legs. We then bounce back up to the mouth in 5:16. The Shulamite starts at the top and works her way down the body in an orderly fashion, with Biblical law, order and design, before returning to the mouth. The order of description then is:

1. head 5:11
2. locks 5:11

3. eyes 5:12
4. cheeks 5:13

⁹¹ Charles Spurgeon, "Altogether Lovely", Charles Spurgeon on the Song of Solomon.

5. lips 5:13
6. hands 5:14
7. legs 5:15

8. Then to the mouth in 5:16, almost as a
summa

Song of Solomon Chapter 6

The Daughters of Jerusalem

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.

"Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?" The Daughters ask the Shulamite the whereabouts of her Beloved. Was it genuine or asked in a mocking tone? Based on the description the Shulamite gave of Solomon in the end of chapter 5, we think it was a genuine question. The description that the Shulamite gave of Solomon was of such love and spiritual passion that it stirred something within the hearts of these carnal church members. Christians need to be evangelized as much as sinners. Sinners need to be evangelized regarding salvation. Saints need to be evangelized regarding sanctification and falling in love with Christ. One Shulamite witness can do that. Who couldn't help but be interested by such a description of Christ? Who would not desire to know where such an Altogether Lovely One would be, so that they too might come to know Him as did the Shulamite? They knew who to ask and they asked the right question. If the Shulamite did not know where and how to find Solomon, who would?

"whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee." Their request is genuine. They desire to seek Christ along with the Shulamite. They have entered into the life of discipleship along with the Shulamite. They will seek Him along with her. They will seek Him together, with the more experienced Shulamite leading the way.

This is evangelism directed toward the saints. We must evangelize the lost to salvation but we dare not neglect evangelizing the saved for sanctification. Preachers in our day are forever asking "How many souls have you won to Christ?" or "When is the last time you led someone to Christ?" An equally valid question to ask would be "When is the last time you influenced a Daughter of Jerusalem to seek after Christ along with you?" Have you led anyone to love of Christ within the church? Defects in house evangelism are just as grave as defects are in field evangelism. The full consummation of this successful evangelism of the Daughters is seen in 6:9. But we would not just limit this to evangelizing the professing Christian to go deeper with. This can certainly be applied to the evangelization of the sinner.

The best tool for evangelism (humanly speaking) is a good example. The Daughters were converted by the love and the relationship they saw between the Shulamite and Solomon. It made a powerful impression on them and they wanted to seek this One as well. How powerful is a godly example! How many have been influenced to a holy walk by reading *The Memoirs and Remains of Robert Murray McCheyne* by Andrew Bonar? How many missionaries went to the field after reading the *Diary of David Brainerd*, edited by Jonathan Edwards? Who has ever read the *Letters of Samuel Rutherford* and not come away impressed by his love toward Christ? The hyper-evangelists of our day are forever attacking "lifestyle evangelism" (as opposed to what they like to style as "Confrontational Soulwinning") but the Shulamite used it and it worked on the Daughters.

Here then is the test of a Shulamite Christian. It is not "how many professions do you have"? but rather "How many people have you influenced for holiness and the Christian life by your example?"

"turn aside" "To speak of the Lord Solomon as one who 'turned aside' is not the language of a spiritual soul. To turn aside is the language of companions who 'turn aside' (1:17). Companions turn away from the Lord Solomon (O. Talmadge Spence, *Song of Solomon*, page 170)."

"that we may seek him with thee." Just being saved is not sufficient. Just being in church is not enough. Christ must be sought if He is to be known. The Daughters knew about Christ but they did not know Christ as the Shulamite did. She had something that they did not. They had been saved longer than had the Shulamite but she was deeper in grace than they were. Seeing the love the Shulamite had toward Solomon and the relationship she had with him put the desire in their hearts to also become a disciple. A disciple is a learner who follows a master. To follow Christ, He must first be found and to be found He must be sought, for He will not manifest Himself to a carnal and indifferent heart.

The Shulamite

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

She found him at last. Solomon had left her door and had gone into his garden to feed and to gather lilies. If one believer shoos Him away, Christ will go to another to seek fellowship and communion. He is never idle in this respect.

Solomon did three things:

1. **He went into his garden, the bed of spices.**
2. **He went to feed in the gardens.** Christ, as the Good Shepherd, feeds us but also feeds among us.
3. **He went to gather lilies.** Compare Psalm 50:5 "Gather my saints together unto me." This is rapture language, as the Lord will return one day to gather lilies, or saints, unto Him in the air, in the rapture. Christ may also gather saints (lilies) in death or in fellowship about Him. Why would believers be called lilies? James Durham (page 337) gives the following reasons:
 1. For their native beauty, Matthew 6:29 **"And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."**
 2. For their savouriness, Song 5:13
 3. For their growing and making increase, as the lily, Hosea 14:5 **"I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon."**

6:3 I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.

We discussed this verse along with Song 7:10 back under Song 2:16 regarding the three levels of revival, which we will review here.

1. Song 2:16 **"My beloved is mine, and I am his; he feedeth among the lilies."**
 - A. This is the first revival of the new birth conversion experience. The new convert claims Christ and realizes that Christ has also claimed him and that he is now His. He also comes to realize that Christ only feeds among the "lilies" of other Christians and in New Testament churches, not in the world. If he is going to know more of Christ, he must spend time in His house and among His people. The disciplining has begun.
2. Song 6:3 **"I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine; he feedeth among the lilies."**
 - A. Notice the shift in emphasis from Song 2:16- "My beloved is mine" to "I am my beloved's". The Christian now comes to realize the very special place in Christ's

heart that he now occupies. Yes he loves Christ, but more importantly, Christ loves him! That is a transforming truth that often takes us years to realize, if we ever do. The saint realizes the need for him to possess the Savior, but here, he realizes the importance that the Savior also must possess him. Here is the revival that leads to growth, where we are taken possession of by the Savior for service and for the Christian life. So the second level of personal revival and growth comes with this shift in emphasis.

3. Song 7:10 **"I am my beloved's and his desire is toward me".**

A. This is a realization of Christ's love. We all know that Christ loves us, but when we really and fully realize it, it will do something deep and strong in our hearts. From possession to love. Now we begin to finally understand something about the love of Christ toward us.

Also notice the maturity of the Song 6:3 response of the Shulamite as compared to the one in Song 2:16. We can tell who is the head of a home by noticing how a wife introduces her husband. If she says "He is my husband", then she has usurped the authority of her husband and has illegally claimed the headship of her family. But if she says "I am his wife", then she understands her proper relationship with her husband. In Song 2:16, the Shulamite is yet immature and places the emphasis upon herself in the relationship. But by Song 6:3, she has greatly matured and now places her husband, her head, first and publicly acknowledges her submission to him. It is important for us to realize that it is more important for us to be His than for Him to be ours.

Solomon

6:4 Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.

Solomon now speaks and tells of the beauty of His bride, as he already has in previous verses.

1. **She is as beautiful as Tirzah.** This was a place either in Ephraim or Manasseh, maybe halfway between the cities of Dan and Beersheba. It is mentioned 14 times in the Old Testament. It obviously was a very beautiful and delightful place.

2. **She is as comely as Jerusalem.** The Christian is as beautiful as the Holy City, the favorite spot of Christ upon this earth. Jerusalem is the joy of the whole earth, the city of the great king and builded as a city compacted. Christ loves Jerusalem as He does no other city as the future capital city of His millennial kingdom. The kings of Judah reigned there, starting with David. He offered to gather Jerusalem unto Himself as a hen does her chicks but they refused (Matthew 23:37 **"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."**). Of course, Christ was crucified outside the gates of Jerusalem. We are commanded to pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6 **"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee."**). The Songs of Degree (Psalm 121-134) all reflect this love for the Holy City. Christ loves the Christian with this same type of love and devotion that He has for Jerusalem.

3. **She is as terrible as an army with banners.** This is military language. The Church is an army, as she is militant against the apostasy. She is the Church Militant here on earth and the Church Triumphant in heaven. She is terrible, or frightening, in her warfare. Yet she is never lovelier in the eyes of her Beloved as when she is fighting for the truth and earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3 **"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me**

to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”). A non-militant church is a harlot that has made its peace with the world. She is terrible, but in the negative sense, and her Lord has little to compliment her on. As a marching army should strike terror into the heart of the enemy as they see the banners, so should the church, if it is in the proper relationship to the Lord, strike terror into the many enemies of Christ when they see us on the move, displaying our banners high. The banners fly because the battle is not yet over. Satan and his forces still stir and until their rebellion is put down once and for all, the standards of Christ must be continually be flown by the Church of Christ. The banners are displayed because the Church is on the offensive and ready to engage the enemy in battle.

Notice this trilogy of the Shulamite:

1. She is beautiful.
2. She is comely.
3. She is terrible.

She is militant but also magnificent for her Lord (Psalm 149:6-9 **“Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.”**).

6:5 Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.

6:6 Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them.

6:7 As a piece of a pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks.

Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me" We are called to overcome evil with good but the Christian may also overcome Christ with his love for his own good. Solomon has been overcome and overwhelmed by the beauty of the Shulamite and he just cannot take any more of it, he can't take anymore of her beauty in. How lovely the Christian must be in the eyes of Christ to be able to overwhelm Omnipotence like this! Man or Satan, in their strength, cannot overcome God, but love, humility and submission may! The power of the eye! Have you ever noticed how a child or a baby or a puppy can melt you with those big, soft, round eyes? Christ can also be overcome with this same type of love and affection.

Solomon now goes into a description of the Shulamite, which is similar to her description of him back in 5:10-15.

1. Thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.

A. Her long, dark, feminine hair resembled similar hair on goats, which was highly prized to produce curtains and clothing.

2. Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them.

A. We discussed her teeth under Song 4:2, where they were likened to a flock of sheep that have been shorn that bear twins. Her teeth were white, clean and perfect. People notice teeth as they are part of the support structure of the face.

A strong face requires healthy teeth. Defective teeth or no teeth at all causes an unattractive shriveling of the mouth and face.

B. Teeth are also needed in proper speaking and pronunciation, which was another virtue of the Shulamite. If you want your speech to be always seasoned with salt, take care of your spiritual teeth. They are also necessary for chewing food. When chewing your spiritual food (which is the word of God) you need healthy teeth which aids in the proper digestion of those truths. Strong, healthy and attractive teeth make for a strong, healthy and attractive Shulamite who is able to eat all the spiritual food that she hears and properly digest it.

C. "In the matter of teeth with such a characteristic, we can see these 32 sheep all united together in feeding upon the Word of God together, cooperating, each in its proper place, awaiting the time in the eating of food to do its part to masticate properly. Like sheep, the teeth, when not feeding, simply appear as a beautiful flock, giving to the countenance of the landscape an honorable scene of loveliness...The teeth of the Shulamite are also evenly shorn; they have grown to a proper level together without one being more prominently seen than the other. She needed no work by the orthodontist. Sometimes irregular teeth have been known to even get in the way of proper eating or even cause injury to the tongue or lip by biting outside the path of biting the food itself. Even shorn teeth are a great asset to both the pleasure of eating and the appearance and comfort of this delight of life..."Each one of the teeth bears a twin. Every upper tooth has a corresponding lower tooth, given to be compatible and complementary to the whole process to beauty and efficiency. How unsightly are snaggle-tooth Christians; how ineffective is their time of feeding on the needed food."⁹²

D. If the spiritual teeth are not arranged properly, you could hurt yourself as you chew the word of God and wind bitter (with spiritual indigestion), broken or in apostasy.

3. As a piece of a pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks.

A. This is repeated from Song 4:3. The temples of the Shulamite are like a piece of pomegranate. The sides of her head remind Solomon of a red, ripe piece of pomegranate. The "within thy locks" (of hair) suggests a humility the Shulamite possesses. She can blush! She was modest! Woe to the heart that is so hard and sinful that it cannot blush. Brides tend to blush with humility and that is a beauty all in itself.

6:8 There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.

We are not sure who is speaking here, although I would have to say it was Solomon.

Three more characters are introduced here,

1. Threescore (60) queens, the Gracious Ones.⁹³ "Queens set forth those believers of the highest, gracious degree. God honored them with those gifts and a measure of grace to produce them. Their lives tell of the gracious ones, to a higher degree, rank and company than all others."⁹⁴ Do we also see something of a spiritual royalty here of these favored ones? They have the highest positions of honor in the church. But there are not many of them as compared to the concubines and virgins, showing that not many

⁹² O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 110.

⁹³ Ibid, page 180.

⁹⁴ Ibid, page 182.

Christians make it to a position of spiritual royalty in their Christian growth. Why are they not called kings? Because the Church is a Bride and the Christian is a Shulamite. Christ is a King and a king must have a Queen and that would be this class of Christians who were true disciples, who went on to perfection, who went all the way with Christ, and who loved Him with a Shulamite heart.

2. **Fourscore (80) concubines**, the Serving Ones.⁹⁵ Concubines are the servants, the ministers, (the deacons?) of the royal household. They are blessed with the highest degree of service. You need these in the church, for the church has a practical ministry as well as practical daily needs, which the concubines can fulfill.

3. **Virgins without number**, the Pure Ones.⁹⁶ There are 60 queens, 80 concubines but virgins without number. What is the significance in these exact numbers? Virgins are undefiled ones and here, they are without number. These are Christians who have kept themselves pure and unspotted from the world through the proper practice and application of Biblical separation. The adulterer and harlot is the professing Christian who has (spiritually) fornicated with this world and world system.

A. Spence would also apply this to babies who died in infancy, those who died before the age of accountability and to those who were aborted, which we certainly believe to be in heaven.⁹⁷ We would expand it to babies who died in the womb before birth or who died at birth. Their numbers are certainly staggering. We believe the grace of God covers these who die like this. We do not hold to any form of limbo. They are pure, or innocent, because they have not sinned willingly or volitionally. How then can they be punished for sin? The mentally retarded may also qualify under this heading. This is special to my family as my daughter had a miscarriage about six weeks into her pregnancy in 2020, so I have a grandchild in heaven who died before birth. That grandchild would be one of these virgins. I am looking forward to that day to meet the grandchild I never knew. My wife suspects she may have a miscarriage early in a pregnancy, so I may have another child who I never knew, but I will meet them all in glory!

6:9 My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.

"My dove" The Shulamite is referred to as a dove. The dove is a ceremonially clean and pure bird that is used as a symbol for the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16 **"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him"**). This is a fitting symbol for a undefiled and unspotted Christian.

"my undefiled" Because the Christian is separated from sin and apostasy and has not defiled himself with this fallen world system.

"is but one" The unity of the Christian. Despite hundreds of denominations, there is only one body of Christ. The Universal Body and Bride of Christ includes all truly saved Christians from Acts 2 to the rapture, regardless of denomination or theological system. Now I write as a Baptist Christian (not a "Baptist". Let's not turn the "Baptist distinctives" into a manmade

⁹⁵ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 180.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid, page 182.

theological system) and I believe in the universal church, the Body of Christ. Many Baptists hate that doctrine, believing that only Baptists make up the Bride and the Body. They slander the doctrine as either "Protestant" or "Romanist". But their doctrine is nothing more than Roman Catholic doctrine. Romanists teach that outside their church there is no salvation. Landmark Baptists teach a similar doctrine, that you cannot be in the Bride unless you are in a Baptist church (their kind of Baptist church, of course). We reject that as nothing more than spiritual arrogance.

"These be they who separate themselves" (Jude 19)- that is from the Church of Christ; from the great universal body of the elect...We did not separate ourselves- we were turned out. Dissenters did not separate themselves from the Church of England, from the Episcopal Church; but when the Act of Uniformity was passed, they were turned out of their pulpits. Our forefathers were as sound Churchmen as any in the world, but they could not take in all the errors of the Prayer Book, and they were therefore hounded to their graves by the intolerance of the conforming professors. So they did not separate themselves. Moreover, we do not separate ourselves. There is not a Christian beneath the scope of God's heaven from whom I am separated. At the Lord's Table I always invite all Churches to come and sit down and commune with us. If any man were to tell me that I am separate from the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian or the Methodist, I would tell him he did not know me, for I love them with a pure heart fervently, and I am not separate from them. I may hold different views from them, and in that point truly I may be said to be separate; but I am not separate in heart, I will work with them- I will work with them heartily; nay, though my Church of England brother sends me in, as he has gone, a summons to pay a church-rate that I cannot in conscience pay, I will love him still; and if he takes chairs and tables it matters not- I will love him for all that; and if there be a ragged-school or anything else for which I can work with him to promote the glory of God, therein will I unite with him with all my heart. I think this bears rather hard on our friends- the Strict Communion Baptists. I should not like to say anything hard against them, for they are about the best people in the world, but they really do separate themselves from the great body of Christ's people...They separate themselves from the great Universal Church. They say they will not communion with it; and if any one comes to their table who has not been baptized, they turn him away...Oh! I should think myself grossly in fault if at the foot of these stairs I should meet a truly converted child of God, who called himself a Primitive Methodist, or a Wesleyan, or a Churchman, or an Independent, and I should say 'No, sir, you do not agree with me on certain points; I believe you are a child of God, but I will have nothing to do with you.' I should then think that this text would bear very hard on me. 'These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.' But would we do so, beloved? No, we would give them both our hands and say, God speed to you in your journey to heaven; so long as you have got the Spirit we are one family, and we will not be separate from one another. God grant the day may come when every wall of separation shall be beaten down! See how to this day we are separate. There! you will find a Baptist who could not say a good word to a Paedobaptist if you were to give him a world. You find to this day Episcopalians who hate that ugly word, 'Dissent'; and it is enough for them that a Dissenter has done a thing; they will not do it then, be it never so good."⁹⁸

This from a Baptist! Spurgeon would not be popular in some "Baptist-only" or "Independent Fundamental Baptist" circles today. Now we will separate from apostasy and compromise and from those with bad hearts but we will willingly fellowship with anyone of a fundamentalist heart, a heart that beats for purity, love of God and Biblical evangelism. We may disagree over Calvinism or baptism, but we judge by the heart and not necessarily by the doctrinal system of our brother. A man may be wrong doctrinally yet still be a man of God. We

⁹⁸ Charles Spurgeon, "The Holy Spirit and the One Church" in *New Park Street Pulpit*, volume 4, pages 23,24, sermon 167.

seek an honorable irenic, to bring the quarreling factions of fundamentalists together so that we may fight our common enemies with a united front. This is a lesson that fundamental Baptists desperately need to learn, for they will seldom cooperate with anyone who is not a fundamental Baptist, or who is not their flavor of fundamental Baptist. What narrowness and short-sightedness (not to mention arrogance), to think that only fundamental Baptists were in the right! We wonder if they have the Spirit.

"she is the only one of her mother" The mother was before identified as the Institutional church. There is only one mother- one Church, and one daughter- the Christian who is a member of the Universal Bride and Body of Christ.

"she is the choice one of her that bare her." The Christian is the pride and joy of heaven, the singular object of the attention of the Father.

"The daughters saw her, and blessed her" Which daughters? The Daughters of Jerusalem? Of Zion? If so, then even the carnal ones within the church are ultimately forced to realize the blessing of the Shulamite and the grace of God that is upon her. This is done through the outward testimony and witness of the Shulamite. You cannot argue with a godly testimony and in time, it can break down even the most stubborn resistance offered by even the most carnal of believers.

"the queens and the concubines, and they praised her." These groups, mentioned in Song 6:8 join the daughters in the praise of the Shulamite. The evangelism of the Daughters worked and by the power of the example of the love between the Shulamite and Solomon. That example of their relationship converted them to a "Christian" life and a life of seeking Christ. While it is important to talk of soulwinning and evangelism of the lost, it is equally as important to be able to point out examples where your life and walk with God influenced another saint to seek after Solomon with you. Do you have any examples of other Christians who are on the mission field or who are in the ministry or who are seeking God and living the Christian life because of your example of love toward God and the Christian life? I can think of two examples of men in the ministry because of my example because they told me so. And how many godly men (most of whom are dead) have influenced me on to God because of their examples, recorded in their writings, hymns and sermons? The power of such an example! How many people have been influenced for good by the *Memoirs and Remains of Robert Murray McCheyne* by Andrew Bonar? How many missionaries are on the field because Jonathan Edwards edited and published the diary of David Brainerd?

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?

The Christian/Shulamite is further described by Solomon/Christ. Notice the first three have something to do with light:

1. **She forth as the morning**, just as clear, fresh and bright in her testimony and spirituality as the break of day, with all the promise that the morning holds.
2. **She is as fair as the moon.**

A. The moon shines by the reflected light of the sun, so does the Christian shine by the reflected light of the Sun of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2), which is the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. The moon has no light of its own but only the light supplied to it by the sun, because it is dead. The Christian also has no light of his own but can only shine by the light supplied to him by Christ.

i. Job 25:5 says, “**Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not**”.

C. The moon rules the night (Genesis 1:16-18) as does the Christian. We are living in the nighttime of human history, in the darkness of sin, apostasy and indifference. The Christian is to shine in such times. Just because days are bad is no excuse for Christians to live bad. Bad times bring out the best in Christians. What excuses we hear today: “You just can’t live for God today! Young people can’t be holy today!” Only a non-Christian would say that. When night falls, the moon rises and dominates the sky. As the darkness of sin continues to increase, the reflected light of Christ shining off of the Church should dominate the world scene. The darker the night, the brighter the moon shines!

D. If the moon is eclipsed by the shadow of the world, then she cannot shine. Many Christians are so eclipsed by the world system that their light is snuffed out and engulfed due to their worldliness, carnality and coldness.

E. The moon goes through phases in relation to its position relative to the earth and the sun. As the light of the moon waxes and wanes, so does the light of the Christian. Sometimes the Christian gives off a bright, shining light, and sometimes he doesn’t. The testimony of the Church ought to be strong and powerful so that it guides and moves things in the world like the moon moves the tides. But the sad fact is that the testimony of the Church today is so sorry, so lukewarm, so weak, and so worldly that it has little influence on the community around it.

i. There are seasons when the Church is weak. She may only present a small crescent. She is giving off light, but not much.

ii. There are times of revival and renewal when the moon is waxing, growing larger and brighter.

iii. There are days of decline and apostasy, when the moon is waning.

iv. There are periods of a new moon when the moon is blocked by the world from the sun.

v. We see this in times of church history. We had a full moon in the apostolic era, eclipsed by Rome and the State Churches in the Dark Ages. In the Dark Ages, the moon did peek out from behind the clouds occasionally when the Waldensians and Donatists (and similar groups) peeked out. The moon began to wax again in the Reformation and shone brightly in the First and Second Great Awakenings. But in the 21st century, the moon is certainly waning.

F. The moon is a dead planet.

i. Colossians 3:3 says, “**For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.**”

ii. Paul said, “**I am crucified with Christ**” in Galatians 2:2.

iii. When a person gets saved, his old nature that is connected to his body of flesh is crucified with Christ “**that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin**” (Romans 6:6).

iv. When a Christian gets saved, he’s walking around in his old body, but the Bible says it’s dead: it’s a corpse. Paul says, “**Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin**” in Romans 6:11.

G. The moon is an earthbound satellite: it can’t ever be free of the earth. Like the moon, the Church is bound to this world until her Lord comes to take her away.

You may be born again and seated with Christ **“in heavenly places”** (Ephesians 2:6), but you are stuck to this earth until the Lord sets you free.

3. She is as clear as the sun.

A. The sun is pure, bright, unadulterated light. The Christian is as clear as pure, unfiltered sunlight in his godliness, indwelling holiness and testimony. There are no shadows or greys of compromise or worldliness in her.

B. But the Church has no light of her own but reflects the light of the Sun (Christ). What kind of light she reflects and how bright depends on how pure and reflective the moon is. If she dark and polluted, she will not reflect much of the light of Christ. If she is pure and clean, she will reflect more light. We can only see the sun as reflected by the moon.

C. The sun is too bright and brilliant to stare at directly (1 Timothy 6:16 **“Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see.”**). We need the Church to reflect the light of Christ in ways we can see and understand.

4. She is as terrible as an army with banners. We have discussed this under 6:4.

Again, look at this seeming paradox in this description of the Christian:

1. She looks as the morning
2. She is as fair as the moon
3. She is as bright of the sun
4. She is as terrible as an army.

The militant part of the Christian again comes out as the foundation of all that is good and godly in the Christian. You simply cannot be a good and godly Christian if you are not militant, if you are not fighting the world, the flesh and the devil and being magnificent while you do it. The non-militant, conformist Christian is an embarrassment to heaven and is carnal, backslidden, worldly and nominal at best. We are to follow the apostolic advice of Jude to **“earnestly contend for the faith”** (Jude 3). To do otherwise is sin.

“Revelation 1:20 tells us that the local churches are lampstands. Lamps are needed in the nighttime, not in the daytime. Revelation 1:20 proves strongly that the church age is not the daytime, but the nighttime. As a lampstand the church shines in the night. However, the lampstand itself does not shine; the lamp does. The seven lampstands are in Revelation chapter one and the seven lamps are in chapter 4. The church is the lampstand and the Spirit is the lamp held by the stand. If the church lacks the Spirit, the church is a lampstand without light. But, the lampstand with the shining lamp is wonderful. We may have the church as a lampstand, but what about the lamp? Some may say, “I have the Holy Spirit as the lamp. I don’t care about the lampstand.” If you say this, you are wrong, for the lamp is on the lampstand. If today, during the church age, you are going to have the light of the seven Spirits, you must have the churches. The seven lamps are on the seven lampstands.

During the church age it is night, and during the night we cannot get the sunlight, the light of Christ, directly. We need reflection. We need the moon to reflect the sunlight; we need the church to reflect the light of Christ. Without the church it is hard for us to see the light of Christ. When we come to the church and the church is not waning, we will surely receive light.

According to history, there was a long period during which the church was on the wane. While the moon is on the wane, that is the best time for the stars to shine. During the Dark Ages the stars shone. Martin Luther was a star. Before and after Luther, many other great stars were shining because the moon was on the wane. Zinzendorf and the Moravian brothers were practicing the church life. Although their moon was not full, it was at least a crescent moon, reminding people that the church was there. A century later, the Brethren were raised up in England and the crescent was increased to nearly a full moon. Philadelphia, the church, was

there. However, it didn't last very long. There is a proverb which says that when the moon is full it begins to wane. Within a period of seventy years covering the last part of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth, we can see some other stars such as Andrew Murray and A. B. Simpson. During that time, there were stars, but no moon—there was no church life. The moon was on the wane and the stars shone.

Praise the Lord! Today, if we don't have a full moon, we at least have a full crescent. In the churches, we should not expect to see spiritual giants. If there are giants, this means that the moon is waning. As long as the moon is waxing, is growing, the stars should not be so evident. I don't want to be a big star, just a small brother. When we have the moon, we have little need for the stars.

If we go to the sun and ask for light during the nighttime, we are foolish. The sun will tell you, "Don't come to me. Go to my reflection. Go to the church if you want the light which comes from me. The church reflects my light." We must remember this is the night; the day has not come. We need the church. The Spirit speaks to the churches. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 3:22). We must go to the churches and get the light of the sun indirectly.

Many dear Christians say, "I don't care for the churches—I only care for Christ." I can guarantee that whoever says this will not grow. Those who say such a thing may have the first-day light, but they lack the fourth-day lights. If you check with many saints, they will tell you that they did not grow until they came into the church. When we sincerely turn our heart to the church, we receive the proper light of Christ indirectly.

As many can testify, whenever we were bothered by the church and turned our backs to the church, we were in absolute darkness. When you turn your back on the moon during the nighttime, your face will be in darkness. However, when we turn to the church and are one with the church, the shining comes immediately.

Some may say that we stress the church too much and neglect Christ. But how can the moon shine without the light of the sun? Without Christ, the church has no light. The shining of the moon in the nighttime is simply a reflection of sunlight. The light of the church is altogether the reflection of Christ. People who talk so much about Christ without contacting the proper church will find it difficult to obtain the real and practical light for the growth in life. For the growth of life we all need the moonlight, which is a principal part of the fourth-day lights. The more church life we have, the more Christ we gain, the more light we receive, and the more growth in life we experience."⁹⁹

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.

"I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley" The "garden of nuts" is not your local fundamental church, although some of them seem to be either pastored or peopled by spiritual nuts.

Solomon went down into this garden of nuts to see the fruit of the valley. This is the only nut garden mentioned in Scripture. "It is more difficult to get the fruit of nuts than any other kind. There is a hardness to its several shells; they are often unlovely; they are hidden in the shell system like a treasure; they are able to remain undamaged against their environment; they often grow in clusters."¹⁰⁰ Christ is always interested in the spiritual fruit produced by Christians. He goes down into the valley to inspect such fruit because spiritual fruit is grown in the valleys of

⁹⁹ Witness Lee, *The Life Study Commentary on Genesis*.

¹⁰⁰ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, pages 190-191.

life, not in the plains of routine or on the mountaintop of joy. It is in the valley of despair, humiliation and testing that fruit is grown and it is into this valley where the Lord is coming to inspect fruit. Charismatics have no such spiritual fruit because they utterly refuse to go into the valley, even if the Lord thrusts them down there, because they believe it is of the devil if you are down. They are always on the mountaintop, so no fruit is produced, and the Lord cannot go down to inspect their fruit.

"and to see whether the vine flourished" Refer to John 15:1-11 to see that He is the vine and we are the branches but that we, as believing Gentiles, are engrafted into that vine (Romans 11:1-25). We thus are in the vine, organically grafted. Are we flourishing on and in the vine or are we weighing down the vine as deadwood?

"and the pomegranates budded." Any fruit buds? Any future fruit on the way? Any promise of a yet-future harvest in our lives? Solomon sought fruit in the garden of nuts, then from the vine, lastly from the pomegranates.

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

"my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib." What are the chariots of Amminadib? A chariot is used for transportation, often swift and unexpected transport, like the "Chariot of Israel" that took Elijah to heaven (2 Kings 2). We have seen hints of the rapture already in the Song and this is another one. In the midst of this fruit inspection by Jesus, the Shulamite was raptured away in the chariot of Amminadib for the ultimate fruit inspection at the bema seat judgment. Amminadib is the name for several men in the Old Testament (Exodus 6:23; Numbers 1:7; Ruth 4:19,20; 1 Chronicles 2:10; 6:22; 15:10,11).

"Amminadib is the charioteer of heaven, whereas Jehu is the charioteer of earth... Amminadib...was noted for swiftly driving in beautiful chariots...Someone by the name made a mark which became a tradition, in the use of beautiful chariots."¹⁰¹

O. Talmadge Spence¹⁰² also notices three Hebrew words for "chariots" in Song:

1. The company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots (rekeb, the war chariot) 1:9.
2. King Solomon made himself a chariot (appiryon, a couch, sofa, carriage) 3:9.
3. My soul made me like the chariots (merkabah, riding war chariot) 6:12. If this last chariot is a rapture chariot, how fitting it is to be a war chariot, since it will have to plow through Satanic opposition and interference in the skies as the church passes through the domain of Satan enroute to heaven.

The Daughters of Jerusalem?

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

I believe the Daughters of Jerusalem are speaking here.

"Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee." Return to where from where? From a place of broken fellowship (Song chapter 5) back to a position of fellowship and communion with Solomon. And of all people to be exhorting her to return to fellowship- the

¹⁰¹ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 192.

¹⁰² Ibid.

Daughters! The carnal ones are now the ones urging and encouraging the Shulamite to return to that former position of blessedness and fellowship that she once had! A change has indeed come over the Daughters, for the better, through the love of Solomon and the testimony of the Shulamite. Or is this a call by the carnal Daughters for the Shulamite to return with them to a life of carnality? Enough of this spiritual Christianity and the hard demands of discipleship! Our way is easier and pays better! Return with us! Either, or even both, interpretations are possible, as both calls are heard by the Shulamite pilgrim. He hears a call from without to return to the fleshpots of Egypt while the call from within beckons him to continue his ascent to the Holy Jerusalem.

As we will see at the end of this chapter, some writers see a prophetic meaning in this call. After the Church has been raptured, the carnal Daughters in the Church (who were obviously not saved despite being religious) were mourning the exposure of their spiritual state and the fact that they missed the rapture and were yearning for the truly saved saints they belittled to return and to minister unto them and to lead them to true salvation. But too late! Once the Shulamite is gone, she is gone! They miss the Shulamite even if the world does not, They miss (at the end) her genuineness, her love, her compassion, her spirituality and her witnesses. They did not appreciate these graces when the Shulamite was among them but they will miss it when she is gone.

"What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies." The Daughters ask this of the Solomon. What is it in the Shulamite that you see, that you appreciate so much? It was the militancy of the Shulamite, mentioned three times in this chapter, that He loved so much. Christ enjoys it when His bride has a holy jealousy of holy things and of Himself so that she is willing to fight anyone, anywhere, even to the very gates of hell, on behalf of her Beloved. That is our rendering of love toward Christ and He notices it and appreciates it.

In Song 5:9, the Daughters ask the Shulamite what she sees in Solomon. Here, the Daughters ask Solomon what He sees in the Shulamite. This is a better question. Asking a believer what he sees in Christ in a good evangelistic question, but we should be more interested in what Solomon/Christ sees in us that He would save us and want to enter into a personal relationship with us. After all, He is God and what are we? Dust, as best. But Solomon gives an answer when He says that He sees the Shulamite Believers as a **"company of two armies"**. We've already seen such military language in Song 6:10 where the Church is compared to an **"army with banners"**. He sees a strength, a militancy, an order, a heavenly patriotism and a discipline when He sees the Church in those who make it up.

It can be said that there are two armies in every Shulamite soul, self and the Spirit. Both are powerful, entrenched and in the battle to the death. Neither will yield an inch to the other and no peace is possible between them. These internal armies fight 24 hours a day until death or rapture, each seeking to control the human soul. Romans 7 documents this battle within Paul's breast which every true Christian can identify with. Sin may win a battle but it cannot win the war for its general was defeated by our General on the cross. If you have never felt the battle ranging within your own breast, you must ask yourself if there is any battle there at all. Is your divine nature battling your corrupt nature or has an illegitimate peace been declared? We do not hold to any Pentecostal doctrine of sinless perfection or eradication of the sin nature in a "second blessing".

O. Talmadge Spence offers an interesting observation from this passage on page 193 in his commentary on the Song regarding an early observation of the rapture from the pen of John Gill: "We begin this section with a extended quotation from John Gill, and his commentary on the Song of Solomon, who delivered in 122 sermons to his congregation. It is indeed a scholarly

work as is obvious from the list of resources used as mentioned in his own Preface. His other work, *Body of Divinity*, a polemical and critical Divinity, was to bring his heart to full balance in the Song of Solomon, which was needed to complete the perspective of his writings. This last resource, like Jonathan Edwards' *Religious Affections*, was urgently needed to resolve the theological view of these two writers, for Edward's *The Freedom of the Will* left us with that need. Also, the celebrated James Harvey was a very great admirer of Gill's appraisal: "The Song presents us also with such rich and charming displays of the glory of Christ's Person, the freeness of his grace to sinners, and the tenderness of his love to the church, as cannot but administer the most exquisite delight to the believing soul." The sermons were preached in 1724.

"But now, the quotation from John Gill at this juncture of verse 12:

"If we consider them as the words of the Shulamite, then they may be expressive ... Of that rapture which her soul was in, in the views of those heavenly joys, which, some think, she had been taking notice of, and meditating upon in the former verse; which, whilst she was doing, "or ever she was aware" her soul took wing, and fled as swiftly in thought towards those happy regions, as ever the Chariots of Amminadib ran: she seems to be in much such an ecstasy as the Apostle Paul was (2 Corinthians 12:2-4), when he was "**caught up into the third heaven**", and ... so sudden was the snatch, so surprising the rapture, that I cannot tell what better to compare it to, than the swift run of Amminadib's chariots..."

"As a twentieth century writer, we are amazed at the impact of these words from an eighteenth-century writer. John Gill's words are heavily freighted with implications of appropriate words and metaphors of Pre-Millennial eschatology which do not take final form until after 1830.¹⁰³

The words are: "rapture," "her soul took wing," "ecstasy," "snatch," etc. We believe these words indicate a view of almost 300 years, at least of this passage of the interpretation of the Song without us imputing to John Gill a modern view at all. It is the language that received our attention here."

¹⁰³ Spence is not accurate here. Premillennialism was evident in the early church and among some Puritan writers, especially the English Congregationalists. Spence is probably thinking of John Nelson Darby but his teachers were not applied by later generations without a lot of revisions. The content, burden and impact of Darby's writings remain poorly understood even in 2025. To say that premillennialism, and by extension, dispensationalism didn't come into their final form until 1830 is simply not accurate. Later research has demonstrated that. Spence was premillennial but not a dispensationalist.

Good books to read on this matter would include *Dispensationalism Before Darby: Seventeenth-Century and Eighteenth-Century English Apocalypticism* by William Watson, *Evangelical Millennialism in the Trans-Atlantic World, 1500-2000* and *The Roots of Dispensationalism*, both by Crawford Gribben.

Song of Solomon Chapter 7

Solomon

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

7:2 Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies.

7:3 Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.

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

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

7:6 How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!

7:7 This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.

7:8 I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples;

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

Solomon continues to praise the beauty of the Shulamite. The Bridegroom goes into great detail describing the beauty of the Bride. There are things in those descriptions that you don't preach or expound publicly because they are very intimate. Those passages are meant for private reading. It reads like a private love letter or things said in intimate moments.

1. Song 7:1 **"How beautiful are thy feet with shoes"**.

A. This immediately takes us to Romans 10:15 about **"how beautiful are the feet of them which preach the gospel of peace...and bring glad tidings of good things"** which is a quote from Isaiah 52:7. The feet of the preacher and bringer of the good tidings of the gospel are beautiful. We can see the witnessing and evangelistic ministry of the Shulamite Christian here. She is a witness and she believes very strongly in a sanctified and Biblical evangelism that is not built on revivalistic programs or upon humanistic methods.

i. We say this because the bulk of evangelistic activity in the church today is built on programs and procedures rather than upon the power of the Holy Spirit. But those who do their evangelism faithfully and rely solely upon the power of the Holy Spirit for the results have beautiful feet. The feet are probably the ugliest part of the human body, but they become the most beautiful when used in the faithful and obedient service of God.

2. Song 7:1 **"O prince's daughter!"**

A. . She is royalty. Every Christian has royal blood in his veins because his heavenly Father is King as well as his Elder Brother, the Lord Jesus, who is King of Kings. We have a royal birth through the new birth since we are born of heaven, born of God, the King.

B. Our royal standing in heaven ought to so influence our walk on earth and should motivate us not to walk beneath our calling and privileges. Too many Christians are guilty of living beneath their royal Christian privileges when they insist on living a carnal, defeated, backslidden life in sin.

3. Song 7:1 **"The joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman."** Much can be observed about the thigh. This is the area where the legs connect to the waist.

A. This allows movement and walking in an orderly manner, which is so very important in Biblical law, order and design. This allows the Shulamite to have a holy walk upon the earth.

B. It is on the thigh that the sword rests (3:8), ready for combat when called upon.

C. We can see the beauty of a sanctified militancy in the Christian life since this part of the body is referred to as "like jewels".

D. Solid thighs also allows for solid posture, allowing one to "stand on his own two feet". This speaks of solidness, maturity, grounding in the things of God, which is only possible through healthy thighs.

E. The thigh is also a place where the oath is taken (Genesis 24:2,9; 47:29).

F. It is a place of judgment as seen in Numbers 5 in the trial of jealousy, where a guilty woman who drank of the bitter water would have her thigh to rot if she was guilty of impurity.

G. It was at the thigh that Jacob was wounded and humbled by God in Genesis 35.

H. Standing too erect leads to pride so God may have to wound us in the thigh to force us to limp and develop more humility in our lives.

I. Vanity and shame are also associated with the thighs in Numbers 5:21,22,27, Isaiah 3:18 and Ezekiel 24:4.

4. Song 7:2 **"Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor".**

A. This is because the Shulamite fears the Lord, which is health to the navel (Proverbs 3:8).

B. The navel is the part of the body from which the lions and buttocks draw their strength. The umbilical cord is connected here in the baby still in the womb where the baby receives nourishment and life from the mother. The navel thus strengthens us in our walk as it provides the necessary power to the thighs to assist us in our walk.

C. The navel is located on the belly, at the bowels, which is considered to be the seat of the emotions to the Hebrews.

D. The "round goblet" is the bejeweled garment, or possibly a small jewel in the navel.

E. The "round goblet" is well formed, well-proportioned and perfectly round, which is the opposite of the "navel not cut" in Ezekiel 16:4.

5. Song 7:2 **"Thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies."**

A. The belly corresponds to the bowels, which are the seat of emotions. It is likened to a heap of wheat. Here is the fruit of the strength of our walk as it provides the necessary nourishment both to us and to those to whom we minister.

6. Song 7:3 **"Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins."**

A. We have considered the breasts back in 4:5. Her breasts speak of her femininity and fertility. There is an idea of the Shulamite being able to reproduce. Healthy Christians can reproduce themselves in evangelism and producing Christians "after their kind". Something is certainly wrong with a person unable to reproduce.

B. The breasts also speak of being able to nourish babies. If we do spiritually reproduce, the spiritual and healthy Shulamite will be able to spiritually nourish that new baby Christian in discipleship.

C. The breast also shows warmth and affection, which are trademarks of the Shulamite heart.

D. Laying on the breast is a picture of fellowship since that area is near the heart, the seat of emotion.

i. John 13:25 **"He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?"**

ii. John 21:20 **"Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?"**

E. The breasts are like twins for the obvious reason that there are two breasts that both the woman has.

i. They match as twin roes, speaking of balance.

F. One breast is not larger than the other, resulting in a lopsided lack of balance.

7. Song 7:4 **"Thy neck is as a tower of ivory".**

A. We have seen this under Song 4:4. Her neck is like the tower of ivory.

B. Her neck, which supports the head, is strong, straight and stately. She does droop her head but holds it high as a tower.

C. It also signifies a quiet and serene mind, not drooped and hung in confusion or depression. He who has his mind stayed on Christ is kept in perfect peace.

D. Do not confuse this with a stiff neck, which denotes stubbornness. The unsaved have the stiff neck. The saved have a stately neck.

8. Song 7:4 **"Thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim".**

A. First the neck, then the eyes, as we continue to move up the body of the Shulamite from the feet.

B. Much has been said of the eyes of the Shulamite already in the Song. But this time, the eyes of the Shulamite are compared to the fishpools in Heshbon by the gate of Bathrabbim.

i. The city of Hesbon was the seat of Sihon, king of the Amorites in Numbers 21:26.

ii. It was a city of waters (2 Samuel 12:27).

C. Bathrabbim was one of its gates. They are mentioned together in Jeremiah 49:3.

D. There seemed to be some very attractive fishpools near this gate. Her eyes are like pure, pleasant and attractive water.

9. Song 7:4,8 **"Thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus...and the smell of thy nose like apples."**

A. The nose tends to be associated with discernment, the Spirit-given ability to "sniff something out". She has good discernment, which every Christian must have, especially in this day.

B. The tower of Lebanon was a place where a watcher could see and number the houses in Damascus.

C. Verse 8 says her nose smells like an apple. She can not only sniff out the error but can also discern the good. This is important because not everyone is wrong and not everything is bad. There are many good, godly men teaching the truth as well as many churches that are standing true and firm. You also need to have the spiritual discernment to be able to search these people and churches out and fellowship with them.

10. Song 7:5 **"Thine head upon thee is like Carmel".**

A. The head is the most important part of the body since it contains the brain which controls the body.

B. The head of the Shulamite is as attractive as Carmel. This is because we reflect our Head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

i. Christ is the Head of the Body, which is the Church

a. Colossians 1:18 **"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."**

C. Carmel is a wooded mountain range running for about 13 miles in a southeasterly direction from the Mediterranean Sea near Haifa. It is known as "the garden with fruit trees". But it is out of the way from the major avenues of travel and is not easily

D. Biblical information regarding Carmel:

i. Samuel met Saul here in 1 Samuel 15:12 **"And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal."**

ii. Nabal lived here in 1 Samuel 25.

iii. Elijah had his contest with the prophets of Baal here in 1 Kings 18:19.

iv. It is a place of husbandry.

a. 2 Chronicles 26:10 **"Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen also, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved husbandry."**

b. Isaiah 33:9 **"The earth mourneth and languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down: Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits."**

v. There is an excellency associated with it in Isaiah 35:2 **"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."**

vi. Israel shall feed at Carmel, probably a millennial prophecy in Jeremiah 50:19 **"And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead."**

E. "Thus, the head of the Shulamite is described and is situated away from the main roads of life. We would do well to know the Lord Jesus as our head in like manner."¹⁰⁴

F. O. Talmadge Spence would rework this:¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 218.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

- i. The contest of Carmel 1 Kings 18:19-42.
 - ii. The curse before Carmel 2 Kings 2:20-25.
 - iii. The head of Carmel Song 7:5.
 - iv. The excellency of Carmel Isaiah 35:2.
 - v. The forest of Carmel Isaiah 37:24.
 - vi. Carmel by the sea Jeremiah 46:18.
 - vii. The roar of Carmel Amos 1:2.
 - viii. The top of Carmel 1 Kings 18:42; Amos 9:3.
11. Song 7:5 **"The hair of thine head like purple".**
 A. Purple is the color of royalty. Her head is royal, as her Head, the Lord Jesus, is royal, as He is the King of Kings.
12. Song 7:5 **"The king is held in the galleries."**
 A. This relates to the purple hair. Her hair is arranged with love that is attractive to Solomon.
 B. She has a godly hairstyle for a Christian woman- long and flowing, which indicates her submission to her head.
 i. We can see this in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16.
13. Song 7:6 **"How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!"**
 A. This is the summary, where Solomon praises the Shulamite for being fair and pleasant. Notice the delights. She delights him by her beauty, character, personality and love. The Christian is the constant delight of her Christ just for who that Christian is, not necessarily for what the Christian does for Christ.
 B. Solomon praises the Shulamite for what she is, not for what she does. The same it is with the praises of Christ toward us. Work and service are necessary but they are not the basis for our relationship with Christ. Love, not works, is that basis.
14. Song 7:7,8 **"This thy stature is like to a palm tree...I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof".**
 A. The stature of the Shulamite is as straight and tall as the palm tree. Solomon is comparing the Shulamite to a palm tree in the midst of a vineyard with grapes. But what of the palm tree?
 i. Its leaves are always green. We wonder if the blessed man of Psalm 1:1-3 flourishes as a palm tree?
 ii. It produces fruit, mainly dates. The Christian is also to be producing fruit (John 15).
 iii. It is straight, as the Christian should be, with no turns to the right hand or the left. The Christian is to be morally straight and pointing always upward to heaven as does the palm.
 iv. They are associated with an oasis in the midst of the desert in Exodus 15:27 **"And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters."**
 v. Branches of palm trees are used on the day of atonement in Leviticus 23:40 **"And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days."**
 vi. Deborah judged Israel under a palm tree in Judges 4:5.
 vii. Carved palm trees adorned the temple in 1 Kings 6:29-7:36.
 viii. Palm branches were used in the festival of booths in Nehemiah 8:15.

ix. Psalm 92:12 **"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon."**

x. They adorn the millennial temple in Ezekiel 40:16,22,26,31,34,37; 41:18-20,25,26.

xi. They were used in the triumphal entry of Jesus in John 12:13.

15. Song 7:7,8 **"and thy breasts to clusters of grapes... now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine."**

A. The breasts are mentioned again, this time bearing fruit. Nourishment comes from the breast for the baby, so the association with fruit here is then only natural.

16. Song 7:9 **"And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak."**

A. The roof of the mouth involves the taste, for we taste with the tongue that is within our mouth. In this mouth is only the best wine. The Shulamite will not settle for second best when it comes to her Christianity and neither should we. We should never knowingly live below our privileges, nor should we ever be satisfied or content with the "good" in our Christian life, but we should demand the "best". The "good" is always the enemy of the best. Christians become satisfied ("fat and happy") with the measure of grace that they have and see no reason to go "unto perfection" (Hebrews 6:1). But not with the Shulamite heart. Only the best wine for her as the old wine will not satisfy. She demands the best and will only accept a classical Christianity that is not contaminated by contemporary, modern or worldly leaven. The "best wine" is a pure and uncontaminated wine, free from any and all worldly impurities.

We have now the complete picture of the Shulamite mouth:

1. The kisses of his mouth 1:2.
2. The taste in the mouth of the Shulamite 2:3.
3. The lips of the Shulamite and her speech 4:3a.
4. The lips drop as a honeycomb 4:11.
5. Honey and milk are under her tongue 4:11.
6. Her lips are like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh 5:13.
7. His mouth is most sweet 5:16.
8. The roof of the mouth of the Shulamite is like the best wine 7:9a¹⁰⁶

Notice the progression of the description of the Shulamite by Solomon in 7:1-9. Solomon starts with her feet and works his way up her body to her head. The Shulamite does just the opposite in 5:10-15, as she describes Solomon starting at the head and winding up with the legs. Notice this comparison:

The Shulamite's Description of Solomon

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1. head 5:11 | 6. hands 5:14 |
| 2. locks 5:11 | 7. legs 5:15 |
| 3. eyes 5:12 | 8. Then to the mouth in 5:16, almost as a summary. |
| 4. cheeks 5:13 | |
| 5. lips 5:13 | |

Solomon's Description of the Shulamite

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1. feet 7:1 | 2. thighs 7:1 |
|-------------|---------------|

¹⁰⁶ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 216.

3. navel 7:2
4. belly 7:2
5. breasts 7:3
6. neck 7:4

7. nose 7:4
8. head 7:5
9. hair 7:5
10. stature 7:7

They both notice different things about the other and draw attention to other parts of their bodies. The Shulamite starts with Solomon's head, signifying the headship of Jesus Christ. Solomon starts with the feet of the Shulamite, stressing that she, as are we Christians, are on the footstool of God's creation (Isaiah 66:1 **"Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?"**).

"Now the Bible has everything in it—including sex; it doesn't leave out anything. The difference between the Song of Solomon and Playboy, Penthouse, Hustler, etc., when it comes to sex, is that the Song of Solomon puts sex in its proper place—between a married husband and wife. The Song of Solomon has the proper exercise of love between a husband and his wife written out. Because those things are written down where anyone can read them, every sex-obsessed neurotic who has his mind in the sewer likes Song of Solomon more than any other book in the Bible.

You can find references and excerpts to the Song of Solomon in nearly every magazine newsstand in the world. Other religions will copy the book (e.g., the Buddhist Karma Sutra). Long before I was ever saved, I remember seeing paperback after paperback copies of the Song of Solomon; there's a lot of pornographic literature on it. The reason for all of this is because "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:14), so he takes the book and uses it for carnal purposes.

Of course, there's nothing wrong or sinful about the description here. In its context, everything is high and holy and proper. But men like to pervert the word of God and rip such passages as this out of their context and give them a dirty meaning.

There are certain passages in the Bible that just aren't meant for public preaching and teaching anyway. I have never preached a message on Ezekiel 23 or Ezekiel 16. Of course, none of the material in those two chapters or here in Song of Solomon can stack up to the stuff being shown these days right in your own living room. You've got stuff on cable television these days that would have taken an act of Congress to be published when I was growing up. But for the sake of decency and sensitivity, there are just some things that don't need to be discussed in a mixed audience of women and children.

The Bible is like a medical book. There are some parts of a medical book that are for private practice in the office, there are some parts that can be discussed and taught in public, and there are some parts for students. The Bible is the same way. There are some parts that don't need to be brought up before children, there are some parts you wouldn't discuss except behind closed doors, and there are some parts for students studying for the ministry. There are some parts of the Bible that are for private devotion, study, and reading; not for public preaching and teaching."¹⁰⁷

The Shulamite

7:10 I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.

¹⁰⁷ Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer's Commentary on the Song of Solomon*, pages 253-254.

We have made mention of this verse under Song 2:16 and Song 6:3. There are three kinds, or levels of revival in the Song of Solomon:

1. Song 2:16 **"My beloved is mine, and I am his; he feedeth among the lilies."** This is the first revival of the new birth conversion experience. The new convert claims Christ and realizes that Christ has also claimed him and that he is now His. He also comes to realize that Christ only feeds among the "lilies" of other Christians and in New Testament churches, not in the world. If he is going to know more of Christ, he must spend time in His house and among His people. The discipleship has begun.
2. Song 6:3 **"I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine; he feedeth among the lilies."** Notice the shift in emphasis from 2:16- "My beloved is mine" to "I am my beloved's". The Christian now comes to realize the very special place in Christ's heart that he now occupies. Yes he loves Christ, but more importantly, Christ loves him! That is a transforming truth that often takes us years to realize, if we ever do. The saint realizes the need for him to possess the Saviour, but here, he realizes the importance that the Savior also must possess him. Here is the revival that leads to growth, where we are taken possession of by the Savior for service and for the Christian life. So the second level of personal revival and growth comes with this shift in emphasis.
3. Song 7:10 **"I am my beloved's and his desire is toward me"**. This is a realization of Christ's love. We all know that Christ loves us, but when we really and fully realize it, it will do something deep and strong in our hearts. From possession to love. Now we begin to finally understand something about the love of Christ toward us.

Also notice the maturity of the Song 6:3 response of the Shulamite as compared to the one in Song 2:16. We can tell who is the head of a home by noticing how a wife introduces her husband. If she says "He is my husband", then she has usurped the authority of her husband and has illegally claimed the headship of her family. But if she says "I am his wife", then she understands her proper relationship with her husband. In Song 2:16, the Shulamite is yet immature and places the emphasis upon herself in the relationship. But by Song 6:3, she has greatly matured and now places her husband, her head, first and publicly acknowledges her submission to him. It is important for us to realize that it is more important for us to be His than for Him to be ours.

7:11 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages.

"Come, my beloved" Throughout the Song, Solomon had been inviting the Shulamite to accompany him into various places for fellowship. Now she gives an invitation to him to come with her as she now goes out into the world to live her life and do her evangelism. If Christ does not go with us as we go out into the villages, then we ought not to go! He must help us as we go out into the world to live our lives, to fulfill our ministries and to do our evangelism, else all will be a failure.

"let us go forth into the field" The field is the world (Matthew 13:38 **"The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;"**). This is the world that God loved and that Christ died for (John 3:16 **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."**). The Shulamite wants Solomon to go with her as she goes out into the world to do her witnessing and evangelism. Now that the relationship has been firmly established and matured, it is time to go out into the fields and witness to others regarding the love of God. We evangelize both within the church (to the Daughters of Jerusalem) and to the unsaved without the church. Such a desire for evangelism is a part of the

Shulamite heart, as she desires that others also come into the wonderful love and relationship with Solomon as she has.

This also speaks of everyday Christian living. Biblical Christianity needs to be put on display "in the field". It needs to be set forth in our ordinary conversations in the grocery store, at the little league game, standing in line at the Department of Motor Vehicles, in the restaurant and while we mow our lawns. There is an honorable Christian way to do these things and sinners need to see it. You can witness for Christ while shopping for a can of green beans at Wal-Mart if you are dressed well and if you conduct yourself as a Christian.

"let us lodge in the villages." This is a more specific geography than "the field". They were currently not lodging in the villages, but she desires to. This is missions, to go out into the world, where the lost are, and to dwell among them in order to minister unto them while living among them. In order to have a lasting and permanent ministry among the lost, you must sit where they sit and identify yourself with them in order for them to first accept you and then accept your message. Missionaries must live among those to whom they are called, learning their language and culture and gaining their trust. Pastors should live in the town where their ministry is located so that he may move among his people on a daily basis.

7:12 Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.

7:13 The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

This is dealing more with work inside the church. They are looking for fruit and it is a waste of time to look for it in the world. Fruit can only be borne within the church among believers. Is the vine flourishing? Are there any tender grapes on those vines? Are the pomegranates budding?

"get up early to the vineyards" The morning was always the best time to work in the field or in the vineyard. Eventually, the night will come when no man can work (John 9:4) so whatever spiritual work we do must be undertaken now, early, in haste, before the time of persecution comes when such work becomes difficult, if not impossible. Our physical death also means the end to our earthly work, unless we leave something behind, like books or sermons, that can speak and minister after our death (Hebrews 11:4 **"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."**).

"the vine flourish" Let us not be content simply with evangelism, to see sinners saved. That is only the beginning. Let us also look for fruit, to see this vine flourish in these new Christian lives. Discipleship is as important as evangelism. Now that you are saved, then what? We know what you have been saved out of but what have you been saved unto? We want to see saints go on to a full salvation, following after God and embarking on their own quest for Christian purity. Too many preachers are content to get some sort of profession out of prospect and that's it. There is no burden for follow-up. In fact, if you insist on fruit and proof of salvation beyond the profession (after a 9-minute presentation of the Romans Road on their doorstep on Saturday morning visitation), you will be slandered as believing in something called "Lordship Salvation" or in adding works to grace. This is a major issue with the modern "Independent Fundamental Baptist" churches who practice the hyper-evangelism they learned from Charles Finney, Jack Hyles and John R. Rice.

"the tender grape appear" This is the young, tender believer who is starting to manifest some fruit. Shulamite evangelism has this as the goal, not to just get a profession but to see the manifestation of spiritual fruit. Many people care about the sinner but not as many care for the young Christian, the babe in Christ. But they need to be nourished through the Biblical ministry of discipleship.

"the pomegranate bud" This would signify the stronger believer, as the pomegranate is stronger and tougher and more durable than the tender grape. How are the stronger, more mature ones in the church doing? We dare not neglect any segment of believer in the church, for the mature ones also need shepherding and pastoring. They need to hear the strong meat of the word preached so that they too may grow. Stronger believers do not require the milk that the "tender grape" Christian may require. It is the responsibility of the pastor not only to apply the bottle to the young Christians but also set the beefsteak before the more mature believers. It is the responsibility of the pastor to preach to and feed everyone in the church.

"mandrakes" These flowers give off a pleasant smell which engenders love. It appears only one other time in Scripture, in Genesis 30:14-16. This plant was used for healing, to excite sexual passions, for barrenness, for a tranquilizer and as an aid for beauty.

Mandrakes have dark green leaves and a fruit that looks like an orange tomato. But it's not the fruit that's used because that's poisonous; it's the root.

We see mandrakes in Genesis 30. Rachel traded her husband's company with Leah to get them so she could get pregnant, but as it turned out, Leah was the one who got pregnant without them.

"at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old" "This represents the abundance of grace given for an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of God. The mandrakes grew in the field of earth, where the Palm Tree was planted, where Calvary was set. However, these "pleasant fruits" grew at the door of heaven, incentives of grace for the Shulamite Soul to enter heaven, and for all who follow there. Of course, all the doors of access to heaven, whether by prayers or actual entrance, have this access of spiritual pleasantness."¹⁰⁸

Could "new and old" have a dispensational reference to the Old and New Testaments? Both testaments are pleasant. The Christian needs both Old and New Testaments for a full understanding of Scripture. Some dispensationalists (of the "hyper" variety) err when they downplay the Old Testament. These types spend all their times in certain of Paul's epistles and nowhere else in Scripture. Some even only accept Paul's writings to the exclusion of the rest of Scripture. This is a gross misunderstanding and error in the application of dispensational truth. The dispensationalist who has a proper understanding of what the system teaches will hold all Scripture as being inspired of God and equal in authority, even if there are some issues of application.

"which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved." Solomon has laid up all these gifts and graces for the Shulamite. Some are on earth, where she can access what she needs for her Christian life now, and the rest are laid up in heaven, where she can enjoy them for eternity.

We go in the field to evangelize sinners. We go into the garden/vineyard to inspect fruit and to evangelize cold, carnal, backslidden saints. Saints need evangelism just as much as do sinners! Sinners need to be evangelized to salvation while saints are to be evangelized to the Christian

¹⁰⁸ O. Talmadge Spence, *Song of Solomon*, page 227.

life. This is the primary job of the pastor while the evangelization of sinners is the duty of every Christian.

Song of Solomon Chapter 8

The Shulamite

8:1 O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised.

The relationship between the Shulamite and Solomon, though now mature, is still not without its criticism. People, including still-unconverted Daughters of Jerusalem, are still criticizing and finding fault. No matter what you do for or with the Lord, someone, especially someone inside the church, will not like it. The Shulamite prays for a situation where such criticism would be muted. If they were brother and sister instead of lovers, then no one would complain about their love toward each other. She would not be despised by the carnal ones in the church as "super-spiritual" or having some unnatural claim upon Solomon that the carnal ones would not have. We must learn to go beyond these criticisms. If we are right, then we are pleasing God and that is what is important. The carnal ones in the church can never be satisfied or pacified so it is a waste of time to attempt to do so.

"O that thou wert as my brother" The Shulamite wants to go beyond her current relationship with Solomon to a blood relationship. She wishes they were brother and sister, a blood bond that nothing on earth can destroy. Marriages may fail and Christians do fall out of fellowship, but she wants a relationship that is so strong that absolutely nothing can break it. She is thinking earthly but we would consider this in a heavenly context. Christians, through the precious truth of the security of the believer, have a relationship with Christ that is stronger and deeper than any earthly relationship. Our relationship with Christ is stronger than any blood relationship enjoyed on earth. We should rejoice that we, as Christians, have this kind of relationship with Christ through the new birth that the Shulamite desired to have with Solomon.

"O! if thou wert to me so condescending, as a brother is to one born of the same womb with him, that I might have more freedom, boldness and confidence, and sensible out-letting of my affections, converse with thee."¹⁰⁹ She desires that she would have a relationship with Solomon that people would not be able to criticize. If they were brother and sister then they might be able to carry on as they did without criticism. The Believer ought to cultivate such a relationship with Christ that is even stronger than the brother-sister relationship.

"In our own day, the world says our great hymns of the Christian faith are too intimate and precious. They say this as an age with immoralities and lustful, intimate acts. They love nude in art, nudity in public styles and presentments of immodesty. Yet, they hate the naked truth about their nudities."¹¹⁰

"my mother" Compare these verses:

"O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! .. (Song 8:1a)."

"I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me... (Song 8:2a)"

¹⁰⁹ James Durham, *The Song of Solomon*, page 403.

¹¹⁰ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 234.

“Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee (Song 8:5).”

The mother becomes prominent again. This spiritual mother:

1. Conceive the Shulamite.
2. Bore the Shulamite (Song 8:5).
3. Chose the Shulamite.
4. Nourished the Shulamite (Song 8:1).
5. Instructed the Shulamite (Song 8:2).
6. Brought forth the Shulamite (Song 8:5)

This “mother” is not necessarily the “institutional church” (although she could be if that denomination or church were Biblical and uncompromised). This would be the spiritual agency that brought up to the new birth. I was “raised” in the Church of Rome, but my “mother” was a shortwave radio station out of Quito, Ecuador that broadcast a Christian preaching program which I heard, and which lead to my salvation on February 9, 1978.

This “mother” may not be the best mother and she may not always have our best spiritual interests at heart, but she still can do all these things for us (see Micah’s mother in Judges 17 as an example). God uses highly imperfect agencies and people to accomplish His will. People have been saved in cultish churches, in legalistic churches, from listening to flawed and immoral preachers, from corrupt Bible versions. Even in the worst churches, you may hear enough gospel to get saved.

“I should not be despised” The Shulamite wanted to know how she might love her Lord Solomon before others and not be despised by them. This is an unusual concern and is rarely found in many Christians. This deals with culture, ethics, taste, tact, and presenting the Christian life well. This subject, rightly lived, adorns the Christian and is much needed in this day. You can live for Christ publicly without being a jerk. Some people that the only way to live for Christ and to witness for Him is to be as obnoxious as possible. If they preach on the street, their conduct may actually drive more people away from Christ. They hold up garish signs with Scripture verses that proclaim “You are going to hell and burn and pop like a sausage!” They have the attitude of a Jehovah’s Witness, who hope to get arrested so they can develop a martyr’s complex. There is a honorable way to live and witness without offending but also without compromise and that is what the Shulamite is looking for.

8:2 I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.

The “**mother's house**” would be the local church, a place of instruction. The local church is not merely a center for evangelism, a “soul-saving station”¹¹¹ but it is a university, where truth is taught, studied and promoted. It services the saint more than it does the sinner. A non-teaching church that only concentrates on evangelism is a weak and diluted church. The church is to instruct us about doctrine, the age, Biblical culture, practical Christianity, living the Christian life and cultivating the personal relationship with Christ.

¹¹¹ I wonder what percentage of Christians were saved in a church service?

The Shulamite would take Solomon to the house of her mother. We have seen the "mother" and her children back in Song 1:6. The picture of them is not flattering. The "**mother's children**" of 1:6 are relations to the Shulamite since they have the same mother- the Church. But this is an institutional church since Solomon/Christ is obviously not there. She would lead him into such a church. This is the church of her current membership and with a puritan heart, she desires that her mother-church would also fall in love with Solomon as she did and experience a true revival of "normal" Christianity. If she could get Solomon inside her mother's house of the institutional church, then the Daughters of Jerusalem, who made up its membership, just might be changed for the better. Again, this is church evangelism, evangelism of the saved or at least of professing Christians, who are cold, carnal, weak and apathetic.

"who would instruct me" The Shulamite was now a mature Christian with a mature relationship with Christ yet she still saw her need for spiritual instruction. The Shulamite heart is never too old or mature for instruction in righteousness. Woe to the Christian who thinks they are in no need of constant instruction or that simply because he has an earned doctorate that he now is the teacher and not the student. Such spiritual arrogance and pride are not characteristic of a Shulamite heart, who desire more and more instruction regarding the truths of her own dear Christ. We need spiritual instruction from spiritual leaders who know God and who also are on their quest for Christian Purity, who have learned lessons that we need to learn and who have already walked in ways we need to go.

"I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate." The Shulamite would hope for an honorable entertainment for her Solomon in the house of her mother, within the church building. Solomon would hopefully be refreshed and profited by such a visit to the mother's house. Wine is a Biblical symbol of joy and the Shulamite desires that Solomon may eventually find joy in the institutional church through this form of church evangelism. This is not regular wine but spiced wine, the best there is. It was also hoped that the carnal Daughters would come to know the same joy of fellowship with Solomon that she knew and was experiencing.

This can also be applied with a desire of a Shulamite Soul to being another into her "mother's house" to cause them to drink the "spiced wine of the pomegranate". "Here in our present study of new relationships which the millennium marks for the Shulamite Soul, we see Christ related to His Church as our Elder Brother, Who as Head of His church, uses the church to instruct His people. In this particular verse the mother of the Shulamite Soul would instruct her in ethics, proprieties, and in reality, how to love in the public and private areas of life as it would be motivated by the love of her Beloved. This instruction would be manifested in the figure, "I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate." This particular instruction involves a higher and more noble consideration of living in fellowship with Christ in the public presence of others."¹¹²

Do you attend such a church that a new convert can be spiritually improved by attending it? The vast majority of local churches do little good for their members because the preaching is shallow, the standards are low and the music is bad. The pastor may be a preacher, but he is not a divine. Will the new convert learn Christian character and be taught about a walk with God there?

This is a problem with modern evangelism. If you do lead someone to Christ away from your church, where can you send him to grow? Most churches are weak and finding a good church for a young Christian can be quite a challenge today.

¹¹² O. Talmadge Spence, *Song of Solomon*, page 237.

Do we have such a burden for both ourselves and for others? We cannot help others to improve spiritually if we ourselves are not being improved. Many Christians have such a burden for others but without a corresponding burden for themselves.

Do we have a personal burden for this? Do I want to improve spiritually? Would I submit myself to this kind of preaching a ministry if we could find a church and a preacher who promoted the higher and better life? Do we want every compartment of our lives to be conformed to Christ? Are we looking for such a preacher? Most Christians want a dynamic, fiery preacher who can "bring the boom to the room". They look for an entertaining man who knows how to run a Sunday School and bus ministry who knows how to grow a church numerically. But few would look for a man who may be none of these things but who knows God, has a relationship and a walk with him, and who has plenty of the "spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate" of the gospel to share with others.

How many people actually want this "spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate?" Christians are saved and that is good enough. They made a profession and they "prayed the prayers on the back of this tract". They have been water baptized and attend church and may even tithe occasionally. But when the pastor brings out this wine, all of a sudden, they become total abstainers. They want the wine of the world but not the pomegranate wine of the Christian life. They have no burden for Christian culture, ethics, music or philosophy. They have no desire to **"go on to perfection"** (Hebrews 6:1). How badly do we want it? Do we have a desire to go with God as far as we can? Most Christians are content to be where they are and to be as they are. But the Shulamite is never content and always wants more of Christ.

8:3 His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.

We discussed this under Song 2:6. Christ provides the needed support for the Christian Himself, with both His left and right hands. The left hand in Scripture has the idea of weakness while the right hand is the hand of strength and might. Christ supports the head with the left hand. He does so gently and tenderly as to not damage this precious part of the body. The stronger right hand is reserved for embracing the whole body in a hug of love. Christ knows how and when to be tender but He can also be strong with His beloved when He needs to be. He knows what we need and how we need to have it applied- with either the right or the left hand. All this is restated in Song 8:3.

The left-handed provision is the more hidden side of Christ's provision. You don't see this because the left hand is the hand of weakness. It is Christ working in secret, behind the scenes, His constant, day-by-day provision that we are seldom aware of or think about. His left hand is under the head, unseen but there in support. There are things Christ does for us that we do not see but which are very important. Christ does more for you moment by moment in secret and in the dark that you never know about. But there are times that He uses the right hand of power to answer prayer in a mighty way that all can see and marvel at. So we then see the left hand is the constant, moment-by-moment support of our needs that is done "under our heads" that we may take for granted and not think of, while the right and is the deliberate and obvious public answers to prayer that we can see and rejoice in. We need both hands in our pilgrimage. We need Christ to uphold our heads with the left hand while providing our needs with the right.

"It is human to desire the right-hand blessings of God more than His left-hand providences. There are many in our time who say they 'expect a miracle every minute'. The charismatism of the time magnifies the miracle and does not see the moment-by-moment faithfulness of God's providence. It is a mistake of selfishness to beg God for a kind of miracle we love while standing

in a multiplicity of providences all around us. The right hand of God is the unusual working of God; the left hand of God is the most usual. Unfortunately, we too often shun the usual, the ordinary, the natural ways of God. This is to our discredit and often to our ingratitude towards God."¹¹³

8:4 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please.

This is similar to Song 2:7. The Shulamite repeats this charge to the Daughters that they not disturb Solomon nor wake him up. Don't do or say anything that would disturb the fellowship! We must plead to the carnal ones in the church that they do nothing to interfere in the fellowship between Christ and the spiritual ones. Don't pester Christ with your petty complaints and concerns and carnalities that would distract both Christ and the spiritual Christians from continuing in the communion. Carnal Christians tend to disrupt the peace of the church by their carnal concerns ("On which side of the church should we put the new piano? What color should the new carpet be?") Leave Christ and His beloved ones alone and let them continue in the more important tasks of fellowship and communion. The Shulamite was determined not to thus disturb Christ and she wants to make sure that no one else does either. We must be strong and firm against the Daughters of Jerusalem in our churches. It is these carnal ones who can do more damage to a church than any sinner can. The world can only do so much harm. They may throw the pastor in jail and padlock the church doors, but they can only attack the external. The Daughters of Jerusalem, who are within the church and members of it, do their work from the inside, like a cancer. Saints often do more harm to a Shulamite soul than any sinner can ever do. Your worst opposition will not come from the world but from the "brethren". After all, Jesus was betrayed not by a Pharisee but by one of his disciples, Judas. "Every Shulamite soul then must be determined that no carnal, worldly or nominal way will cause the spiritual ways of God to cease in the life."¹¹⁴

Compare this to Song 6:1: There, the Shulamite description of Solomon had "converted" the Daughters and they expressed the desire to seek Solomon with the Shulamite. But it would appear that revival was short lived if the Shulamite had to repeat this earlier charge. They had backslidden to their former carnality. Revivals usually don't last very long. The First Great Awakening ran from about 1720-1740 or so, but by the 1780s, you never would have known America had such a revival from the great apostasy that swept the new nation after independence. The Second Great Awakening ran from 1797-1825 but the period from 1830-1860 was a time of spiritual decline.¹¹⁵ The revivals during the Civil War were forgotten by the 1870s. Revivals and periods of spiritual awakenings are great things, but great care and diligence must be taken to maintain the fruits of such divine visitations.

The Daughters of Jerusalem

8:5a Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?

¹¹³ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 62.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, page 63.

¹¹⁵ I am aware of those who mistakenly believe that Charles Finney was somehow responsible for the Second Great Awakening. We mark the end of the Second Great Awakening at 1825, the same year Finney began his ministry. Finney ran off the "fumes" of earlier revivals. After 1825, there was a clear decline in the quality, frequency and methods of the revivals and Finney can be blamed for most of that. Finney was a heretic on many soteriological doctrines anyway, so he is not a safe guide to follow when studying revivals. I detail our issues with Finney in my book *Nettleton Verses Finney: The Decline of American Evangelicalism, 1820-1830*, available for free at my website www.pilgrimway.org.

This question is similar to Song 3:6. The Daughters speak for the last time. This time they notice that she is again coming out of the wilderness but is also "leaning upon her beloved." The Christian life is a marathon, a long voyage, and we need the support of Christ to hold us up as we travel along. She must lean on Christ in order to exercise a holy walk and pilgrimage. She cannot do it alone or in her own strength. We must learn to hate every thought and notion of self-sufficiency. And Solomon is with her, journeying with her, accompanying her on her trek to the heavenly city. Christ suffers no pilgrim to undertake such a long and dangerous journey alone.

"It is no little piece of dexterity of a holy walk, and is the great commendation of it, to do all we do by faith, to walk and go on in the faith of his strength, as leaning on him; this makes the Bride's posture wonderful."¹¹⁶

"She leaned, again, on her beloved, because the way was long. She had been going through the wilderness. It was a long journey, and she began to flag, and therefore she leaned; and the way is long with us, we have been converted to God now some of us these 20 years, others these 40, and there are some in this house who have known the Lord more than 60 years, and this is a long time in which to be tempted and tried, for sin is mighty and the flesh is weak. If one good spurt would win the race, the most of us would strain every nerve; but to tug on at the weary oar year after year when the novelty has gone...O soul, to win the crown by pressing on and on and on till we hear the Master's plaudit, this is no mean labor."¹¹⁷

The Daughters notice the fellowship between the Shulamite and Solomon and inquire of it. We see a continuing work of grace in the heart of at least some of the Daughters, which was started back in chapter 5. The Shulamite loves Solomon and rests her head upon him in a position of repose and trust. Such should be the posture of every Christian, to do as John did at the Last Supper, to lean the head upon the breast of Christ. This leaning upon Christ is the premier position of fellowship.

Shulamite

8:5b I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee.

James Durham has the Shulamite speaking these words because "I raised thee up" is in the masculine gender.¹¹⁸

We have discussed the apple tree under 2:3. It is obviously a place of both evangelism ("brought thee forth") and discipleship ("I raised thee up").

How did the Shulamite raise up Solomon under the apple tree? This is where their fellowship was cultivated and developed, where the Shulamite matured in her love and understanding toward Christ. She drew closer to him and glorified him all the more in the location under the apple tree.

¹¹⁶ James Durham, *The Song of Solomon*, page 415.

¹¹⁷ Charles Spurgeon, "Leaning on Our Beloved" in *The Most Holy Place*, page 559.

¹¹⁸ James Durham, *The Song of Solomon*, page 416.

"there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee." Who would be the mother of Christ? Solomon's mother may have raised him under the apple tree but how can something like this apply to Christ? We will not fall into a Romanist position of over-glorifying Mary in this context. But as of this writing, I would have no interpretation to make. If the object spoken of here was the Shulamite, then the interpretation would be easier. But if it refers to Solomon, as the Hebrew signifies, the interpretation become much more difficult.

Apple trees are among a unique breed of tree that not only gives shelter from the elements but also food. The fir, the pine, the evergreen may be more attractive than the apple tree and may not go through seasons of drought or winter hibernation but they give no fruit. The mighty redwoods and sequoias may be larger and more impressive than the apple tree but they too give no fruit. The oak and maple may be more popular to put in the front yard but they do not give fruit. These trees are like false religious systems- more impressive than the rather unimpressive apple tree but only the true religion of Christ, found under the humble apple tree, can give both shelter from the elements of a hostile world of sin as well as spiritual fruit to nourish the believer. The weary traveler seeking such refuge looks for the tree that can offer the desired protection as Christ does to the sinner fleeing the wrath to come. This traveler must also be strengthened with the fruit of this tree.

The apple tree is by no means the most attractive of trees- it is rather plain, as Christ appears to the eyes of the world. Isaiah 53:2 **"For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."** The apple tree may be plain and even ugly but you get fruit out of it and that is what is important.

Under the apple tree is a great place for communion and fellowship with Christ. In order to commune with Christ, we must sit under His tree out of delight and not duty.

The Shulamite?

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.

8:7 Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.

We are not sure who is speaking in Song 8:6,7, although most of the Puritan writers lean to the position that it is the Shulamite.

8:6 **"Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm"** Seals are marks of ownership. I have a hand-stamp that makes pressure impressions on paper, like a notary seal. When I stamp a page in one of my books, I am putting my seal on it. It identifies that book as my possession. Now what does sealing do in the life of the believer?

1. The Holy Spirit identifies us as belonging to God (through the redemptive work of Christ) through the application of this seal
2. It is also a warning to Satan and his demons that we are beyond their power and authority. Let's say that a demon encounters us and takes a notion to try to possess us or do us harm. But when he sees the seal on us, he knows that we belong to God and therefore cannot touch us without divine permission.

What is this seal? We are not told but it cannot be seen with physical eyes. One is on the heart, which cannot be seen, but the other is on the arm, which could be seen. The spiritual mark upon believers that only spiritual beings can see, probably placed on the forehead or right hand of the Christian. Compare the seal that is impressed upon believers by the Holy Spirit with some other seals, or "marks" in the Bible:

1. In Ezekiel 9, Ezekiel is told to mark men who sighed and cried over the sins of Jerusalem. These men would be protected from God's judgment on the city.
2. We have the 144,000 sealed with a mark on the forehead in Revelation 7.
3. Naturally, Satan will counterfeit God's sealing/markings of His servants by forcing his followers to take the mark of the beast in either the forehead or right hand in the tribulation period of Revelation 13.
4. We see a similar mark in Genesis 4:16 when God marked Cain in order to protect him from being killed. Now this is not quite the same thing for this was not a mark of ownership as the sealing is.

The seal on the arm may be something like what we would identify as an engagement ring today, or at least some other outward form of the expression of love. Solomon would give these love tokens to the Shulamite as a public display and personal reminder of his love for her. Every time the Shulamite looked at the outward seal, it would remind her of Solomon's love for her. Every time Solomon-Christ would look at the inner seal, which only He could see, it would remind Him of the love the Shulamite-Christian has for Him.

"love is strong as death" Maybe even stronger, for love will motivate men to do things that death cannot. We naturally think about the love of Christ being stronger than the threat of death as He died for us on the cross. Death was no obstacle as He died on the cross to manifest His love for us. Our love toward Christ should be as strong, that not even death or the threat of death or martyrdom, could quench it.

"With steadfast foot death marches over the world. No mountains can restrain the invasion of this all-conquering king...Everywhere and in everyplace beneath the moon hast thou sway...Thou art the great fisher...Master of all thou art! Thou hast dominion given unto thee. Thou wearest an iron crown...None among the sons of Adam can withstand death's insidious advances. When his hour is come, none can bid him delay...Insatiable and not to be appeased, he devoureth and devoureth ever. That scythe is never blunted; that hour glass never ceases to flow...But Christ's love is as strong as death...Who can withstand it? The stoutest must yield to it, and adamant hearts are dashed to shivers by one blow of its golden hammer...Who can measure the strength of Christ's love? Men have defied it, but their defiance hath been overcome. They have resisted long, but they have been compelled to throw down their weapons...Death is but weakness itself when compared to the love of Christ."¹¹⁹

"jealousy is cruel as the grave" Jealousy is presented in both a positive and negative manner in Scripture. The grave is cruel but so is an unsanctified, selfish jealousy. Jealousy will keep love alive in one form or another.

"the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame." "She compares this jealousy to coals of fire (the coals thereof are coals of fire) for their vehement heat, tormenting nature and consuming power; all which are to be found in this strong and jealous

¹¹⁹ Charles Spurgeon, "The Shulamite's Choice Prayer" in *The Most Holy Place*, pages 567-568.

love."¹²⁰ "The Lord Solomon compares His love to 'coals of fire', which hath a most vehement flame. He will not give His Shulamite up. He will allure her from the wilderness, again and again."¹²¹ The furnace of Christ's love never dies or cools nor does it ever need to be restoked or rekindled. Nebuchadnezzar's furnace which was heated sevenfold is an icebox compared to the flame, heat and brightness of the love of Christ, and the returned love of the Shulamite.

"Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it" Love cannot be extinguished. It is impossible. Nothing can destroy it, or can it be weighed or estimated. It is infinite. No flood of tribulation or trial can drown it. It rather tends to make it even stronger. Love rises above all the floods of trouble which would attempt to drown it.

"if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned." Nor can you place a value on this sort of love shared between Christ and the Christian. It cannot be estimated or valued, nor can it be purchased. We cannot earn or purchase the love of Christ toward us, for it is the product of grace, not works. It must be accepted freely for the love of Christ toward us cannot be bought or earned.

"contemned" to despise, drive away; to consider and treat as mean and despicable; to scorn. "This word is from the French 'contemner', 'to despise'. To condemn is to slight, scorn, disdain, despise or treat with contempt."¹²²

Daughters of Jerusalem?

8:8 We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?

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.

We are not sure of the speaker here but I tend to lean toward the converted Daughters of Jerusalem, who express an interest and concern regarding the well-being of one of their own, an immature new convert. This "little sister" is obviously immature as her breasts have yet to develop. This was the spiritual position of the Shulamite before she met and fell in love with Solomon. But what of her future husband? What shall we do for her in her day? As it looked right now, this little sister would never be married, just as it seemed back in chapter 1 that the Shulamite would never find a husband because she was "black." But the Shulamite did find love in Christ and she realized that she was desired of the Lord. The thoughts then naturally turn to the next "Shulamite" who at this time does not seem to possess too many admirable attributes or traits to attract a husband. But we must remember that Christ loves us with an "agape" love. This divine love is not at all like human love. We love people because we have a reason to; we are related, they are attractive to us, what they have done for us, and so on. Not so with God. He does not love us for any merit we may have in ourselves, for in reality, we have none. He loves us because it is His nature to love. God is love (1 John 4:10). He loves the unlovely because it is His nature to do so. So here is the little sister. Humanly speaking, we think to ourselves "As she is now, she'll never be married. She is too unattractive." But the ugly duckling usually develops into the beautiful swan. The Shulamite did.

¹²⁰ James Durham, *The Song of Solomon*, page 422.

¹²¹ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, page 245.

¹²² Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 80.

This also points our attention to those in our churches who may indeed be saved by grace but who do not seem to show many spiritually desirable characteristics. They are spiritually lazy and immature (they "have no breasts") and show little interest in spiritual things. Shall they ever attract a spiritual love? Will Christ woo them and make something beautiful out of them as He did the Shulamite? Will He claim (or reclaim) these in the church? He did with the Shulamite and He will do it yet again within our churches, as He will take the spiritually immature and make a strong and mighty Shulamite heart out of them. This is the continuing hope of the church. But only Solomon-Christ can do it. The preaching of the pastor-watchman and the testimony of other Shulamite hearts are tools that Christ uses to woo a Daughter of Jerusalem into a Shulamite relationship with Him.

"no breasts" The little sister (the immature Christian) cannot nourish others. She does not have the equipment to do so. Young and immature Christians cannot do very much in the vineyard until they develop some maturity, or breasts. We discussed the danger in overworking young Christians back in chapter 1. When someone just gets saved, the last thing they need to do is start working in the vineyard. The most important thing for a young Christian is not doing but growing. We ought not to allow new Christians to go out into the vineyard until they have matured in their own personal relationship with Christ first. Tend to your own vineyard first and make sure that it is healthy. Then go out into the vineyard (either the church or the world- a place of ministry) and tend the vines of others. Why should young Christians be barred from work? They are babes! What do they do? Babes can't do anything. They knock the furniture over and generally leave a mess. Let the young Christian mature for a year in the Sunday School. Let him learn the basic doctrines of the faith and learn of prayer and Bible reading. After he has matured, then send him to the work. The young Christian had better get that personal relationship with Christ worked out first before he puts his hand to the work. If his personal relationship with Christ is wrong then nothing else will be right.

Deuteronomy 24:5 says **"When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken."** Here is the principle for the Shulamite who has just recently been married through the new birth. She is to stay home for a year before going out to the war. Get that marriage established and on a solid footing, then go out there and work, not before. Your marriage to Christ is more important than any work you may do for Him.

"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." Provision will be made for the young Christian. If she is a wall, then they will build upon her a palace of silver. If she is a door, then she will be provided with boards of cedar. Who is making this provision? We are not sure because we are not sure who is speaking in 8:8,9. It could be Solomon, but why the plural? If it was him speaking, then he would use the singular pronoun. Ditto for the Shulamite. It could be the converted Daughters of Jerusalem, who take a spiritual interest in the spiritual welfare of one of their own as she matures into her Christian life.

This little sister may develop into one of two things or ministries, that of a wall or a door. This speaks of the possible ministries of types of Christian than the young Christian may develop into according to the will of God:

1. A wall.

A. This speaks of a polemic ministry. The wall separates as well as protects. This young Christian may develop into an apologist for the faith, defending the truth against the attacks of heresy and promoting the truth. This is an honorable and

needed ministry, if it is accompanied with the silver of redemption. This sort of ministry must be based on the redemptive grace of Christ, lest the polemicist degenerate into nothing more than a loudmouth with a bad attitude who attacks anything that moves. This sort of a ministry has a very real danger to it because if you concentrate on simply attacking and exposing and never do anything positive to build up the faith, then you stand in very real danger of "going bad" or developing a poor Christian attitude and making your faith shipwreck.

B. This ministry also requires scholarship for one cannot content for doctrine unless he is a theologian. Doctrinal attacks upon the truth require doctrinal responses and this is the arena of the theologian. We do not despise the term for the office of theologian is honorable. The anti-intellectualism of modern neo-Fundamentalism spends its time in demonizing the scholar and theologian. But who will write the books? Who will do the research? Who will defend the faith and promote the faith if not those so gifted with the talents and resources of scholarship?

C. If she takes such a ministry of scholarship and doctrinal activity, the Daughters say they will build a palace of silver for her. She will need a palace in which to so work, write and research. What a neglected and despised ministry this is in our day. She needs a study (not an office) where such a ministry can be fulfilled. We will help her and support her. Would to God that more pastors would support such writers and researchers and scholars in the church today with missionary-type support so that they might be free to engage in this much needed and honorable ministry.

2. A door.

A. This is more of an evangelistic ministry, keeping in mind that Christ said that He was the Door in John 10. We open the door and invite sinner and backslidden saint through it to Christ, who is within that door. This door is to be made of cedar, the strong, durable wood that is attractive. Our evangelism must be attractive. "Confrontational soulwinning" promoted by the hyper-evangelists and neo-Fundamentalists of our day is not Scripture but an honest, sincere witness is.

The Shulamite

8:10 I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.

"I am a wall" The Shulamite has undertaken a wall ministry as mentioned above. She will engage in scholarship both to defend, promote and defend the truth. Her love for Christ motivates her to defend His truth and to defend Him against the attacks of His many enemies. She has a holy jealousy and zeal for the person and the truth of Christ. But this ministry is only for the mature Christian, one with a strong relationship with Christ! This is a very difficult, demanding and challenging ministry and only the Shulamite Christian can engage in such a wall ministry of scholarship and polemics.

"my breasts like towers" Watchman towers are probably meant, which are used to keep a watch for the enemy who would make their attacks against the city. As a wall Christian, she will maintain her duties in the tower, scanning the horizon to warn against the enemy and to arm the populace within the church against the attacks of the enemy. But she, unlike the little sister, has fully developed breasts so that she can properly nourish young converts in discipleship. She has

taken the wall-ministry but she needed full breasts to do it. Those of us in the wall-ministry of teaching, writing and preaching in the church must be able to feed the sincere milk of the word and be able to nourish young converts in the milk doctrines of truth. In this context, it is more difficult to be a teacher or a true teaching-pastor than an evangelist or a soulwinner. The intellectual and spiritual demands are greater in the house than they are in the field, which is the world. The only thing we can teach the sinner in our evangelism are the truths associated with the new birth, for he could receive little else (1 Corinthians 2:14 **"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."**). But we can and must teach the Christian everything! Theology encompasses all the areas of human knowledge, so the teacher/pastor must be a scholar, versed with all compartments of knowledge. This is very demanding! We had better make sure that we are fully developed and mature before we start trying to nurse the church.

"then was I in his eyes as one that found favour." Solomon was pleased with her desire for this kind of ministry. The Lord loves true Biblical scholarship, with its associated defense and propagation of the truth.

8:11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.

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.

We have talked much about the vineyard, especially around 1:6. Solomon has a vineyard at Baalhamon. He has His Church, the place for spiritual work, where fruit is harvested. He has one! It is up to the Shulamite heart, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to find the true vineyard-Church in his area that truly belongs to Solomon, else you could wind up in one of Satan's many vineyards.

The keepers of the vineyard were to bring 1000 pieces of silver a year to Solomon as either rent or tribute. We will take this in one of two ways:

1. The vineyard is the life and ministry of the individual Christian. We are to bring a continual stream of fruit to Christ every year as a form of tribute. If we truly love Christ then we will bring fruit. If our love is cold or if we have some serious spiritual problem in our life then no fruit will appear until the situation is rectified. Any and all spiritual fruit found in the life of a believer is precious. The Lord rewards even just a little fruit (Matthew 25:22,23 **"He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."**) because it is so precious.
2. The vineyard is the local church. If so, then the pastor-keeper of that vineyard is to bring that 1000 pieces of silver yearly as a tribute to Christ. There had better be fruit under his ministry. We will not limit this fruit to merely souls won, although that certainly makes up the fruit offering. But spiritual fruit brought by the pastor's ministry from the lives of his people include many things, such as spiritual growth, acceptance and understanding of the truth, evangelism, giving, and so on. If the pastor-keeper is a true man of God and is preaching what he is supposed to be preaching in the proper way,

then he will have enough fruit in order to make this yearly offering to the Master of the Vineyard, Christ.

"My vineyard, which is mine, is before me" The Shulamite is going to take the first interpretation above, that the vineyard is personal. She is going to make it her business that she will produce fruit regularly and constantly for Solomon.

"thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred." She is willing to pay Solomon what he demands in terms of the tribute-rent. He must have his thousand. But the keepers must have 200. The spiritual leaders over the Shulamite, who minister to her, her pastors and teachers, must also have their due. Here is a support and a case for ministerial support of pastors and other spiritual leaders. They deserve something from those to whom they minister for their faithful efforts. They do not get as much as Solomon, 1/5th to be exact, but they still are paid by those who are ministered to by them. If a pastor or a teacher has blessed you and helped you spiritually, then you make sure that he receives the "two hundred" that he deserves and is entitled to.

Solomon

8:13 Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it.

"Thou that dwellest in the gardens" O. Talmadge Spence will make this said unto the Shulamite for grammatical reasons.¹²³ We have said much concerning the gardens, especially under 4:12. The Shulamite dwells in the gardens. As opposed to vineyards, the garden is the special center of the deepest consideration of love, beauty, fragrance and orchards of fruitfulness. She dwells only in the best spots spiritually, a place of beauty, culture, law, order and design. No slob culture for the Shulamite heart! No worldliness or living below her spiritual privileges for her!

"the companions hearken to thy voice" The converted Daughters of Jerusalem, as well as her other spiritual companions, all of which are influenced by her godly testimony and love and relationship with Solomon.

"cause me to hear it." What did Solomon want to hear? The voice, or testimony of the Shulamite, which He delights in. He wants to hear it too, as she magnifies Solomon, with her voice, love and life. Christ always delights to hear the praises and love songs of His Shulamites.

The Shulamite

8:14 Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.

"Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices." The Shulamite desires that Solomon would make no delay in his final coming. This is obvious Second Coming language. This refers to her impatience and desire to have the final consummation of their love in heaven, after the rapture or after the millennium. The millennium will be the starting point of the consummation of the relationship between Christ

¹²³ *The Song of Solomon*, page 250.

and His church, which will stretch into the eternal age. It will take eternity to fully consummate it, since the love and the heart of Christ is infinite. It starts at conversion and is fulfilled at the Marriage and is consummated throughout eternity. The Song thus closes with the hope and desire on the part of the Christian for His Second Coming. Christ wants to return for His church even more than the church desires His return, but only at the right and proper time ordained by the Father. The continual cry of the Shulamite is "**Even so, come Lord Jesus!**" (Revelation 22:20). The Second Coming commences at the rapture and is consummated in eternity, where we will be forever with Him and He with us.

Notice the mountains of spices. This is the last of four mountains mentioned in the Song. We will review them briefly:

1. Mountains of Bether or division in Song 2:17. This speaks of the necessity of Biblical separation in our lives.
2. Mountain of myrrh in Song 4:6. Myrrh is that bitter herb that is so often associated with the suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is associated with suffering. Suffering is a necessary part of revival and spiritual growth. No growth without suffering. That "Something Good is Going to Happen to You" nonsense of Oral Roberts and other apostate Charismatics may produce a lot of happy emotions but it will produce no spiritual growth. A full practicing Charismatic is one of the spiritually shallowest and weakest people you will ever meet. Do you want to grow? Submit to those times of sufferings and trials and look of God's hand in it. Christians who have suffered for their faith possess a depth of Christianity that the nominal, two-o'clock-in-the-morning Christian knows nothing about nor can obtain. The Shulamite says that she is willing to go into the hottest crucible if necessary if it will draw her closer to Solomon. Are you willing to go through the fire in order to grow and get closer to Christ? There is no other way.
3. Mountains of the leopards in Song 4:8. Christ raptures the believer out of these dens of the lions and takes His beloved onto the high places, the mountaintops where fellowship can be sweet and uninterrupted. But the mountains of the leopards? This is a bit obscure. Leopards can be dangerous as they do attack men, but they are also very graceful animals. The Christian may find himself on the mount with the leopards and the context here suggests that it is not the best place to be and the Christian needs to come away from it as well. Lions and leopards are beautiful cats but they do attack with violence.

Now we have this new mountain, one of spices. This is a positive mountain as it is a place of very fragrant odors. It is the place of the ultimate fellowship with Christ, the highest we can go on this earth and in this life. The fragrance of fellowship and His presence is the characteristic of this high place in the life of the Shulamite heart.

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-----, Dictionary.com

Booklist on Song of Solomon

For a small book of 8 chapters, there is a surprising amount of literature on the Song. This is in contrast to the relative neglect of this book by modern commentators and preachers. Spurgeon lists one work by John Collinges on the first two chapters that runs 1,439 pages!

"First, there is a great dearth of books giving a genuine presentation of the Song of Solomon. The more popular ones are either too mystical or too physical; either too sensual or too romantic; either too modern or too intimate. There remains the quotations of Robert Murray M'Cheyne and Andrew A. Bonar of the Song in journals and sermons; the solid foundation of all terms, places, and persons of John Gill; the keenly devotional insights of Rev. Mr. James Durham; the practical and persistent commentary of George Burrowes; the purity of word studies of Dan T. Muse; and the plausible presentation of the plot of the Song by H. A. Ironside. Otherwise, we shall labor over and again to gain better works from other men.

"Second, the Song of Solomon is quite different in depth and spirituality over other books in God's Infallible Word. The drama of Job is obvious, although it, too, is presented in poetry; the hymnbook of Psalms is readily appreciated; the court scenes and theological treatises are evident in Romans; the fast-moving activity in Acts is always interesting; the presentation of faith and the faithful is inspiring in Hebrews; but when we draw aside to the Song of Solomon there are questionings and misunderstandings often assumed.

"Third, the twentieth century has brought the Christian world into the snare of "big-business church administration," mass evangelistic crusades, an emphasis upon numbers, as well as a displeasure for what some think of as a wasteful luxury to have a personal walk with Christ while millions die in sin.

"Finally, many have concluded that the Song has been terribly distorted and ruined for any serious consideration by modern man. Because of the preponderance of this conclusion, the study of the Song has almost become extinct, and many have forgotten that the Divines (distinguished from the fathers, scholastics, papists, theologians, and the churchmen), including some of the Reformers, in spite of the darkness of their day and its apostasy, found a great refuge of soul in this neglected Song of their own generation."¹²⁴

Reviews from the following:

* *Commenting and Commentaries* by Charles Spurgeon

@ From John Peter's Lange's *Commentary on Song of Solomon*

The Minister's Library by Cyril Barber

\$ Website of Ligonier Ministries by Keith Matheson <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/top-5-commentaries-on-the-song-of-songs/>

! *Old Testament Commentary Survey* by Tremper Longman III¹²⁵

¹²⁴ O. Talmadge Spence, *The Song of Solomon*, pages 1-2.

¹²⁵ Longman does not do a good job evaluating the commentaries on Song due to his misunderstanding of how to properly interpret the Song. If you get that wrong, your remarks on the Song will be flawed. He sees the Song as nothing more than a cobbled-together set of love poems.

< *Commentaries For Biblical Expositors* by James Rosscup
& Books reviewed by the author, John Cereghin

75 commentaries are listed below.

@ Ainsworth, Henry, *Annotations upon the five books of Moses, the book of the Psalms and the Song of Songs*, 1639. This volume has done much to shape the current allegorical exposition of the Song. It is accompanied by a metrical phrase.

*Beverley, T., *An Exposition of the Divinely Prophetic Song of Songs*, 1687. This maundering author finds in Canticles the history of the church from David to our Lord and rhymes no end of rubbish thereon. Truly, there is no end to the foolishness of expositors. We suppose there must be a public for which they cater and a very foolish public it must be.

*Brightman, Thomas, *A Commentary on the Canticles*, 1644. Brightman was a writer of high renown among the prophetic students of the 17th century. With singular strength of the visionary faculties, he sees in the Canticles "the whole condition of the church from the time of David till time shall be no more." Expounding on this needs an acrobatic imagination.

@ He regards the book as prophetic and divides it into two parts; 1:1-4:6 describes the condition of the legal church from the time of David to the death of Christ; 4:7-8:14, the state of the evangelical church from AD 34 to the second coming of Christ.

< Brooks, Richard, *Song of Songs*, Focus on the Bible, 1999. An evangelical pastor in England insists on a view opposite to that of Longman (below), certain that the main theme is Christ and the believer (7), human sexual love secondary (8). References to Solomon and the Shulamite and the places such as Sharon are vehicles to convey the chief spiritual idea (9). Attendant virgins are mature believers (21), daughters of Jerusalem believers young in the faith (32), watchmen gospel ministers (77). "I am black but lovely" in 1:5 means a Christian's dual view of self (saved but still sinful, (27), being sun-tanned in 1:6 refers to dangers, toils and snares in a hostile world (29), and later one reads scores of other ingenious allegorical imaginations boldly forced on the text. The work is one more clear example of preachers who insist on reading their opinions in arbitrarily, though they are self-convinced that they are teaching the Word.

*Burrowes, George, *Commentary*, 1853. Moody Stuart says "The excellent work is specially fitted to remove the prejudices of men of taste against the Song of Solomon, as the medium of spiritual communion between the soul and Christ. We welcome it as a valuable contribution to us from our transatlantic brethren."

A devotional exposition rather than a commentary. Does not consider the historical setting, does not deal with the two- or three-character theory and applies the text directly to the church.

Burrowes adds a lot of Oriental customs of the time to his remarks. He also has a long introduction to the Song. He includes his personal translation of the Song by putting it into verse, but this is quite unnecessary. The Authorized Version translation is

good enough for us. He occasionally corrects the Authorized Version text, which mars its value.

*Bush, Joseph, *The Canticles of the Song of Solomon*, 1867. A good compilation with a helpful translation. For popular use.

\$ Carr, Lloyd, *The Song of Solomon*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, 1984. Carr's contribution to the Tyndale series of commentaries is a very helpful work on the Song of Solomon. Like Gledhill, Carr takes a non-allegorical approach to the book, and provides numerous insights.

*Clapham, Enoch, *Solomon, His Song Expounded*, 1603. Clapham was a voluminous author of very remarkable attainments. This work is as rare as angel's visits.

@ Clarke, Adam, *Song of Solomon in his Commentary on the Whole Bible*. He eschews the allegorical interpretation.

*Cotton, John, *A Brief Exposition*, 1642. Cotton explains the sacred love-song historically and misses much of its sweetness by so doing.

@ Regards it as descriptive of the state of the church from Solomon's own time to the last judgment.

! Davidson, R., *Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon*. Daily Study Bible, 1986, 160 pp. Davidson takes the view that the Song is a collection of love poems. He gives a helpful analysis of the imagery of the book.

*Davidson, William, *A Brief Outline of an Examination of the Song of Solomon*, 1817. A precious work by one whose heart is warm with the good matter. He sees in the Song the history of the Church and Christ.

@ Sees the Song of the Christian church from the time of John the Baptist.

< Deere, Jack S., *Song of Songs*, in Bible Knowledge Commentary, 1983. A well-studied conservative treatment following the two character view, Solomon and a woman. He is clear, explains most matters that need explaining, and shows good expertise in the Hebrew word meaning and movement of the book. He develops the beauty of a love relationship as God intends it.

*Dove, John, *The Conversation of Solomon, A Direction to the Holiness of Life*, 1613. A quaint old work. The student will do better with the moderns. Moreover, this dove is rare and seldom lights on poor men's shelves.

*Durham, James, *An Exposition of the Song of Solomon*. Durham is always good and he is at his best upon the Canticles. He gives the essence of the good matter. For practical use this work is perhaps more valuable than any other key to the Song.

The standard devotional treatment. Interprets each section in light of Christ's relationship with His Church.

! Exum, C. J. *Song of Songs*, Old Testament Library , 2005, 263 pp. The Song is a collection of lyric poems but has a kind of unity or progression of sorts as the poems express a pattern of longing leading to satisfaction leading to renewed longing. The introduction has an interesting account of feminist and queer readings of the Song.

@ Fausset, A.R. and B.M. Smith, *Song of Solomon in The Poetical Books of the Holy Scriptures with a critical and explanatory commentary*, 1867. Largely adopts the view of Moody Stuart.

* Fenner, Dudley, *The Song of Solomon*, 1587. Moody Stuart says "This is a faithful and excellent translation, accomplished by an admirable exposition. There is no poetry in it but the renderings are often good and the comment valuable." We have not met with it.

< Fox, Michael V., *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, 1985. 454 pp. Valuable, penetrating study of ancient love songs and certain similarities of the biblical Song to these. The work has three parts: translation and interpretation of late Egyptian songs; translation and commentary on Song of Solomon, and the literary method of discussing love in Egypt and Israel. He gives his own new translation of Song of Solomon, sensitive to meaning of idioms and usually natural in wording. He brings to the task good skill in grammar, syntax and word meanings from cognate languages. He holds to a post-exilic date. This late dating is not at all necessary to conservatives.

! Fredericks, D. C., and D. J. Estes. *Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary, 2010. 472 pages. Estes wrote the Song of Songs commentary in this volume. He takes a similar approach to the Song as my commentary in seeing it as an anthology of love poems rather than as a drama. He recognizes that the Man and the Woman are not actual people, but still calls them Solomon and Shulamith throughout, pointing out that these names are both built on a root related to the Hebrew word shalom ("contented").

* Fry, John, *New Translation*, 1811. Fry's work may be called the supplement and complement of Dr. Good's. He divides the Songs into idylls and gives notes in the same manner as Good; but he also plunges into the spiritual meaning of the blessed Song, and so far is to be preferred.

@ The book is regarded as a collection of idylls, some of which were suggested by the marriage of Solomon, others by different domestic scenes in humble life; but all are parables of the love of Christ and His Church.

! Garrett, D. A. *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, New American Commentary, 1993. 448 pages. Garrett advocates the Solomonic authorship of the book. He treats the Song as a unified love poem and writes that it is neither an allegory nor a drama.

! Garrett, D. A., and P. R. House, *Song of Songs/Lamentations*, Word Biblical Commentary, 2004, 479 pp. Garrett wrote the commentary on the Song of Songs. This is a more scholarly version of the NAC commentary. He treats the book as lyric poetry,

a unified work with a chiastic structure composed of 13 songs (or cantos). He describes the man and woman as the tenor and soprano to underline his belief that this was a musical production. He believes that the songs have a progression in telling the story of the sexual coming-of-age of a young woman. In part, he takes a structuralist approach as he views it as a heroic quest on the part of the woman as she moves from the status of virgin to nonvirgin.

* Gifford, Mr. *A Dissertation on the Song of Solomon*, 1751. Worthless rhymes. This man dares to say that the Song is a pastoral, composed by Solomon for the amusement of his lighter hours, before God had given him the divine wisdom.

* Gill, John, *An Exposition of the Book of Solomon's Song*, 1728. The best thing Gill ever did. He could not exhaust his theme but he went as far as he could towards so doing. He is occasionally fanciful, but his work is precious. Those who despise it have never read it or are incapable of elevated spiritual feelings.

@ A vast treasure of varied learning, sound doctrine and spiritual experience; but it is neither sufficiently condensed nor it is so digested by the author as to present to the reader a clear idea of its own interpretation. He pushes the allegory to the furthest extreme and attaches every sense to the words which they can possibly bear.

A full, devotional typological exposition in which the writer stresses the relationship of Christ to the believer.

& Quite wordy, as Gill always is, and you have to sift through his Calvinism, but I agree with Spurgeon's review, a very valuable contribution. One might be surprised that as someone who had the reputation of "stuffiness" as Gill had could write so deeply and spiritually. He sees the Shulamite as the Church instead of the individual believer.

*Ginsburg, Christian, *A Translation*, 1857. Written upon an untenable theory, that the Song is intended "to record an example of virtue to young women who encountered and conquered the greatest of temptations and was eventually rewarded." This groveling interpretation needed the aid of great liberties with the text and a few interpolations, and the author has not hesitated to use them. However learned the book may be, this vicious theory neutralizes all.

\$ Gledhill, Tom, *The Message of the Song of Songs*, The Bible Speaks Today, 1994. Gledhill's commentary on the Song of Songs is accessible to any reader, but the fact that it is accessible does not mean that it is simplistic. In fact, in places it is truly profound and insightful. Gledhill sees the book for what it is - a poetic exploration of human love that points beyond itself to the Creator and Redeemer. Very highly recommended.

*Good, John Mason, *Song of Songs*, 1803. By a man of great learning. It is not at all spiritual or even expository, in the theological sense, but treats the Canticles as an Oriental drama, explaining its scenery and metaphors from a literary point of view.

@ A work of great beauty in which the author allows and defends the allegorical but confines himself to the literal sense.

Gordis, Robert, *The Song of Songs*, 1954. Rejects the allegorical interpretation of Catholics and the theory of Near Eastern ritual of the dying and reviving of a god and interprets the Song as a collection of lyrics composed over a period of five centuries.

*Green, William, *Song of Solomon*, 1781. Critical only.

*Harmer, Thomas, *Outlines of a New Commentary on Solomon's Song*, 1768. "This book is not well arranged but is otherwise one of the most ingenious, modest and interesting of all the treatises on the outward sense of the Song."- Moody Stuart.

\$ Hess, Richard S., *Song of Songs*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms, 2005. Among the more advanced commentaries written from an evangelical perspective, the work by Hess is probably the most helpful. In addition to careful exegesis, Hess provides insightful reflections on the theology of the book. This is something missing in too many commentaries. Highly recommended.

*Hodgson, Bernard, *Solomon's Song*, 1786. Moody Stuart says this is "a good translation" and therefore we suppose it is so but we do not admire it. It does not even refer to the mystical sense, and it mars the poetry of the Song. Hodgson renders 6:9 "My pigeon, my undefiled is but one." This is an alteration but certainly not an emendation. The name of the bride's mother he discovers to have been Talmadni. Wonderful!

@ The mystical sense of the Song is never referred to- not denied, still less acknowledged.

*Homes, Nathaniel, *A Commentary on the Canticles*, 1652. This goes to the very marrow of spiritual teaching and uses every word and syllable in a deeply experimental manner with great unction and power. Holmes however spiritualizes too much, and is both too luscious in expression and too prolix for these degenerate days.

* Houghton, William, *Translation*, 1865. Useless. The Song is viewed as a secular poem on chaste love.

* Ibn Ezra, Abraham, *Commentary on the Canticles*, 1874. The original Hebrew of the Song with a Jewish comment, which conveys but little instruction. In this small book the student will have a specimen of Jewish exposition.

Ironside, Harry, *The Song of Solomon*, 1883. A devotional work that, like other Brethren commentaries, approaches the Song from an allegorical and typological point of view. Adheres to the two-character theory.

! Jenson, R. W. *Song of Songs*, 2004, 106 pp. Jenson is a theologian, not a biblical scholar,¹²⁶ but he has interpretive sensitivity and sophistication. He believes that "the Song is a structured suite of poems building to an emotional climax" (4) and that while on one level it does speak of human sexuality, on another level (either that of the text

¹²⁶ A very interesting distinction made by Trempler? Why can someone be both?

itself or on the canonical level) it is appropriate to read it allegorically as the love between God and his people. Though I would not use allegory to describe his reading since that usually denotes early interpreters' fanciful handling of the details of the text, I affirm the principle that the canonical text does concern divine-human relationships

! Keel, O. *The Song of Songs*, Continental Commentaries, 1994, 308 pages. Keel demonstrates excellent literary and overall exegetical sensibilities. He even makes some insightful theological comments. The translation and writing are excellent, even humorous at times. A special feature, not unusual to Keel's work, is the presence of copies of relevant Near Eastern art.

< Kinlaw, Dennis, *Songs of Songs*, in Expositor's Bible Commentary. Volume 5, 1991. Kinlaw has a good statement of views in explaining the book (pp. 1202-06), and of purpose. The latter is to describe marriage with its physical intimacies as it ought to be, in God's will, a delight to both partners (1207). Yet he believes that proper marital love is also symbolical of God and His people (1209). He approves a tenth century date and thinks that Solomon may or may not be the writer. The commentary is in many parts rather good.

! Konkel, A., and Tremper Longman III. *Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*. Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, 2006, 400 pages. I authored the Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs commentaries. I approach the Song of Songs as containing twenty-three love poems that celebrate love and occasionally warn about its dangers.

LaBotz, Paul, *The Romance of the Ages*, 1965. A strongly typological interpretation of the Song.

* Littledale, R.F., *A Commentary*, 1869. Littledale is a close follower of John Mason Neale and here reproduces the beauties and the deformities of medieval spiritualizing. Great judgment will be needed to extract the good and the true from the mass of the semi-popish comment here heaped together. If discretion be used, jewels of silver and gold may be extracted.

\$ Longman, Tremper, *Song of Songs*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament, 2001. For those seeking a thorough exegetical commentary, Longman's work in the NICOT series is a good resource. He approaches the book as a poem (or more precisely an anthology of poems) about the male-female relationship, which itself is analogous to the relationship between God and His people.

< In a work of 238 big pp. with broad study behind it, Longman says the Song may or may not be by Solomon. The story is not about him, rather the two main characters, a woman and a man, are seen in terms of a literal (natural) sexual relationship, the Song being an anthology of love poems expressing emotions, not a drama with an overall plot, and not a piece with allegorical meanings (37-37). Longman's discussion of views in history (20-47) is valuable. He sets the poetry in the world of ancient near eastern love poetry (Egyptian, Mesopotamian, northwest semitic, etc., 49-54). It affirms love, sex, and marriage in relation to God's redemptive aims for

relationships, and in sync with Him (70). The commentator devotes a half page to two and a half on verses, unpacking what their meaning suggests, for instance man's admiring comparison of the woman to a mare among chariots, enhanced by ornaments (1:9). Serious users will include this, one of the top overall sources, especially in the informative introduction and effort to keep a natural sense (cf. the opposite in Brooks, among many others).¹²⁷

* MacPherson, Peter, *The Song of Songs*, 1856. "His supposition that this song consists of verses written round an archway is so entirely gratuitous that it is only misguiding and deceptive." Moody Stuart.

< Mason, Clarence E., *Love Song. The Song of Solomon Comes Alive for Today*,¹²⁸ 1976. Brief explanation, giving main views and taking the Song to be historical of Solomon and his Shulamite bride. The author taught for many years at Philadelphia College of Bible and was rather well-known as a Bible teacher.

! Mitchell, C. W. *Song of Songs*. Concordia, 2003. xliii/1230 pp. As the page length indicates, this is quite a full commentary! In keeping with the series, this book is distinctively Lutheran in its interpretation with a strong interest in law- gospel and in "what promotes Christ" in the book. It does not ignore the implications of the book for marriage but puts all the emphasis on a christological reading.

*Miller, Andrew, *Meditations*. First published in the Plymouth Brethren magazine *Things Old and New*. Devotional and glowing with the light of fellowship with Jesus.

A devotional treatment that interprets the Song as stressing a believer's relationship to Christ.

! Murphy, R. E. *The Song of Songs*, 1990, 227 pages. Murphy provides an excellent critical reading of the text. He emphasizes its final form and is concerned with theological issues. His lengthy introduction gives a helpful survey of the history of interpretation, issues of prosody, and basic interpretive approach

Nee, Watchman, *Song of Songs*. Writing from a communist Chinese prison, Nee discusses spiritual fellowship with the Lord in the secret, hidden recesses of the heart. Allegorical.

& He will occasionally correct the Authorized Version. This can be useful and interesting if you can wade through the occasional extreme mysticism of Nee.

* Noyes, G.R., *A Translation of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Canticles*, 1846. The author sees in the Canticles nothing but a collection of amatory songs written without express

¹²⁷ If Longman really believes this, then this commentary cannot be recommended. Have you noticed that those in the "Scholar's Union" are afraid or unwilling to criticize each other? A commentary may be a waste of paper but they will always find some reason to give it a recommendation. Rosscup was no exception.

¹²⁸ I never liked these commentaries with "XXX Comes Alive!" or "XXX For You" as their title. The Bible is already "alive" and is already relevant without an uninspired commentator making it "come alive". Most commentaries aren't that good.

moral or religious design. Blind!¹²⁹

@ Conceives the book to be a collection of amatory songs written by some Jewish poet, either in the reign of Solomon or soon after it, without any express moral or religious design.

< Patterson, Paige, *Song of Solomon*, Everyman's Bible Commentary, 1986. 124 pp. In an Old Testament Survey course, this turns out to be very helpful, crammed as it is with statements showing awareness of problems, views, and sources, yet not going into great detail. Patterson thinks Solomon wrote the ideal of love in marriage early in his reign (p. 17), reflecting the companionship, loyalty, joy, peace, devotion, forgiveness, chastity, tenderness, and sexual union. The commentator discusses seven interpretations,¹³⁰ preferring a literal human love but also an analogy of intimacy between the Lord and Israel, Christ and His church (22). Using a chapter to comment on each of the Song's chapters in English, Patterson is lucid and informed in verse by verse comment, often perceptive about when to be literal and when to be figurative.

*Percy, Thomas, *New Translation*, 1764. His theory of the sacred Song is dead and not worthy of a monument in our pages. We trust that not a relic will remain. Percy did very well with his ballads but he had better have let the Song of Songs alone.

@ Confines himself to the literal sense and adopts the view that Song was written on the occasion of Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter and is divided into 7 parts answering to the 7 days of the marriage feast.

! Pope, M. H. *Song of Songs*. Anchor/Yale Bible Commentary, 1977, 743 pages. This commentary contains a wealth of linguistic, literary, and historical information. The history of interpretation, comparative sections, and fifty-five-page bibliography are worth the price of the book. Pope fairly represents positions different from his own. His overall approach to the book as connected with the love and death cults of the ancient world leaves much to be desired but is interesting.

< This is liberal and highly commended by many. A very full bibliography appears, and Pope has a masterful survey of the history of interpretations. To the diligent he offers the profit of much help in textual, lexical, exegetical matters more often than in his own interpretation of the meaning. He ties the marriage relationship with rites of cults in the ancient Near East, wandering afield from a view conservatives will accept as natural. One will need to exercise much discernment, finding much help at times, much that is interpretively misleading at others, despite the high regard in which liberals hold the work.

Pouget, Guillaume and Jean Guitton, *The Canticle of Canticles*, 1946. Building upon the three-character theory, this work is helpful for its application of the text. The interpretation is not to our liking.

\$ Provan, Iain, *Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, NIV Application Commentary, 2001. I have already mentioned this volume in the post on Ecclesiastes. The section of the

¹²⁹ Most of the commentators on the Song would fall into the same condemnation of being "blind!".

¹³⁰ Seven interpretations? In other words, Patterson couldn't make up his mind what he believed.

book on the Song of Songs should prove just as helpful to preachers and others looking for practical application.

* Robotham, John, *Exposition*, 1652. Very solid but not to be compared with Durham. It is just a little dull and commonplace.

& Ruckman, Peter, *The Song of Solomon*, The Bible Believer's Commentary Series, 2010. A mixture of a devotional and doctrinal commentary. Ruckman is surprisingly good on the Song. He is full of interesting and practical observations. Ruckman puts most of the doctrinal and prophetic applications into the Tribulation period in a dispensational manner. As with all of his commentaries, this one is also based on the Authorized Version and he strives not to change or correct a single word of the text. This is a surprising commentary as Ruckman is not really known for devotional writings, but he does a good job in this commentary. Unlike many commentators, when he hits a passage he can't interpret, he says so and doesn't resort to correcting the text to come up with an interpretation. He may be trying to find too many doctrinal and prophetic truths in the Song that simply may not be there due to the unique nature of the Song. He might try to apply too much dispensational and prophetic material however.

! Schwab, G. M. *Song of Songs. Expositor's Bible Commentary, Revised*, 2008, pages 366–431. study of this sensuous love poem. He is to be commended for reading the Song as a collection of love poems rather than as a drama. He navigates the book's theological meaning very well. study of this sensuous love poem. He is to be commended for reading the Song as a collection of love poems rather than as a drama. He navigates the book's theological meaning very well.

& Sibbes, Richard, *Union With Christ; Expository Sermons on Song of Solomon 4:16-6:3*. We wish Sibbes would have preached through the entire book. Usual Puritan thoroughness. Sibbes takes the spiritual view of the Song.

* Skinner, John, *Essays Towards a Literal or True Radical Exposition*, 1809. Not very important.

! Snaith, J. G., *Song of Songs*, New Century Bible, 1993. 140 pages. Insights can be found here and there, but it is really too brief to compete with the other commentaries available

& Spence, O. Talmadge, *The Song of Solomon*, 1996, 258 pages. Spence (who died in 2000) was a rarity in the modern church, a genuine divine and sanctified scholar. He had a head for the doctrine but also had the heart which must accompany it. Spence brings many interesting wells of thought that are worth meditating upon. We shall not see too many more of his kind before the rapture. I heard Spence preach through the Song in the summer of 1992. He said he did an in-depth study of the Song while recovering from a traffic accident earlier that year when he read through the Song over a hundred times while recuperating. Some of his criticisms of dispensationalism are inaccurate. Still, highly recommended.

& Spurgeon, Charles, *Sermons on the Song of Solomon*. A collection of the sermons on the Song preached by Spurgeon. There are several such compilations available, all of them worth the money. This may be republished under a number of different titles, such as *The Most Holy Place*.

* Stuart, A. Moody, *Exposition*, 1860. Although this admirable author expounds the Song upon a theory which we do not quite endorse, we do not know where to find a book of equal value in all respects. He has poetry in his soul and beyond that, a heart like that of Rutherford, fired with love to the Altogether Lovely One. We thank him for this noble volume.

@ An eminently devout and spiritual commentary where a parallel is instituted and carried out in a most ingenious and elaborate manner between the Song and the gospels and Acts of which it is regarded as a prophetic epitome. Regards 1:2-2:7 descriptive of the period immediately before and after the birth of Christ; 2:8-3:5 from the appearance of John till the baptism of Jesus; 3:6-5:1 from Christ's return out of the wilderness to the last supper; 5:2-8:5 from the agony in the garden till the evangelizing of the Samaritans; 8:5-14 from the calling of the Gentiles to the close of revelation.

Taylor, James, *Union and Communion*, 1893. Thoughts on the relationship of Christ and His church based upon an allegorical interpretation. Devotional.

* Thrupp, John Francis, *New Translation*, 1862. We are highly pleased with this work. It defends the usual Christian interpretation by the conclusions of sober criticism and shows that the spiritual sense is confirmed by the investigations of modern scholarship. In the introduction, the author deals a heavy blow at the skeptical school and at those, like Ginsberg, content themselves with imputing a merely moral meaning to the blessed Canticle of love.

< Tournay, Raymond J., *Word of God, Song of Love*, 1988, 194 pp. He has the Song written in the Persian era but is weak on evidence. He combines two themes, levels of meaning, one about Solomon and his Egyptian wife in lovers' intimacy and the second an allegorical idea about Messiah and the daughter of Zion with her city where she dwells. The second is a Messianic yearning to encourage Jews in the Persian era to believe in the Messianic Kingdom to come. It is as if the Messiah is asleep, delaying that new era. Here, Tournay labors at the fancy that the person sleeping in the Song is the man, not the woman. Tournay has steeped himself in rabbinics and the Hebrew language as well as scholarly literature on the Song.

* Weiss, Benjamin, *The Song of Songs Unveiled*, 1859. This author believes that the Song sets forth the history of Israel and her relation to the Covenant Angel from Horeb to Calvary. Beyond a few eastern illustrations, nothing of value contributed to existing materials. The work is thoroughly evangelical.

@ Sees the Song as half historical and half prophetic and to embrace the entire interval from the dedication of the tabernacle of Moses to the resurrection of Christ and the formation of churches among the Gentiles.

@ Wesley, John, *Song of Solomon in Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament*, 1765. Defends the allegorical interpretation.

* Wilcocks, Thomas, *Exposition*, 1624. Short and somewhat in the manner of a paraphrase. This venerable author gives a doctrinal summary of each verse and from this we have frequently been directed to a subject of discourse.

* Williams, Thomas, *A New Translation*, 1801. This volume is little known but its value is above the average of Canticles literature. We have read many of the remarks with pleasure but most of them are to be found in the standard commentaries.

@ Withington, Leonard, *Solomon's Song translated and explained*, 1861. The bride is the daughter of an Arab Sheikh (7:1) whom Solomon married. He writes this poem to show how pure his felicity, how happy his marriage with a rural bride taken from a pagan nation, whom nevertheless he brings under the influence of the true religion and hopes to convert to the true faith. But God exalted the song to a higher purpose, to foreshadow the formation and union of the Gentile church with Christ.

@ Wordsworth, Charles, *The Books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon in the authorized version with notes and introduction*, 1868. Regards the book as a prophetic allegory, suggested by the occasion of Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter and descriptive of the gathering of the world into mystical union with Christ, the consecration of the world into a church espoused to Him as the Bride.

* Wright, M., *The Beauty of the Word in the Song of Solomon*, 1872. A purely spiritual commentary, casting no light upon the text but drawing much from it. More devotional than expository. The figures of the allegory are pressed as far as they should be, perhaps further.

About the Author

Dr. John Cereghin was saved on February 9, 1978 at the age of 13 after being raised in the Roman Catholic church. He was saved after listening to a program on missionary shortwave radio station HCJB from Quito, Ecuador. He left the Catholic church in 1983 and joined Maranatha Baptist Church in Elkton, Maryland in 1985. In 1986, she transferred from the University of Maryland to Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland, earning the first doctor's degree awarded by the school in 1995. Dr. Cereghin also earned his Master of Theology degree from Foundations Theological Seminary in Dunn, North Carolina in 1994.

Dr. Cereghin's ministry background includes working at Radio Station WOEL in Elkton, Maryland (1986-1998), teaching in various capacities at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland from 1988-1998, also serving as Dean of Men, Registrar and Academic Dean, and pastoring Queen Anne's Baptist Church, Centreville, Maryland (1989-1990), Charity Baptist Church, Mebane, North Carolina (1994-1995) and Grace Baptist Church in Smyrna, Delaware (1998-present). He is married to his wife Teresa and they have 4 children and 4 grandchildren.