

THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

Commentary by A.R. Faussett

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INTRODUCTION

The Song of Solomon, called in the *Vulgate* and *Septuagint*, "The Song of Songs," from the opening words. This *title* denotes its *superior excellence*, according to the *Hebrew* idiom; so *holy of holies*, equivalent to "most holy" ([Ex 29:37](#)); *the heaven of heavens*, equivalent to the highest heavens ([De 10:14](#)). It is one of the five volumes (*megilloth*) placed immediately after the Pentateuch in manuscripts of the Jewish Scriptures. It is also fourth of the Hagiographa (*Cetubim, writings*) or the third division of the Old Testament, the other two being the Law and the Prophets. The Jewish enumeration of the *Cetubim* is Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra (including Nehemiah), and Chronicles. Its *canonicity* is certain; it is found in all *Hebrew* manuscripts of Scripture; also in the *Greek Septuagint*; in the catalogues of MELITO, bishop of Sardis, A.D. 170 (EUSEBIUS, *Ecclesiastical History*, 4.26), and of others of the ancient Church.

ORIGEN and JEROME tell us that the Jews forbade it to be read by any until he was thirty years old. It certainly needs a degree of spiritual maturity to enter aright into the holy mystery of love which it allegorically sets forth. To such as have attained this maturity, of whatever age they be, the Song of Songs is one of the most edifying of the sacred writings. ROSENMULLER justly says, The sudden transitions of the bride from the court to the grove are inexplicable, on the supposition that it describes merely human love. Had it been the latter, it would have been positively objectionable, and never would have been inserted in the holy canon. The allusion to "Pharaoh's chariots" ([So 1:9](#)) has been made a ground for conjecturing that the love of Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter is the subject of the Song. But this passage alludes to a remarkable event in the history of the Old Testament Church, the deliverance from the hosts and chariots of Pharaoh at the Red Sea. (However, see on [So 1:9](#)). The other allusions are quite opposed to the notion; the bride is represented at times as a shepherdess ([So 1:7](#)), "an abomination to the Egyptians" ([Ge 46:34](#)); so also [So 1:6; 3:4; 4:8; 5:7](#) are at variance with it. The Christian fathers, ORIGEN and THEODORET, compared the teachings of Solomon to a ladder with three steps; Ecclesiastes, natural (the nature of sensible things, vain); Proverbs, moral; Canticles, mystical (figuring the union of Christ and the Church). The Jews compared Proverbs to the outer court of Solomon's temple, Ecclesiastes to the holy place, and Canticles to the holy of holies. Understood allegorically, the Song is cleared of all difficulty. "Shulamith" ([So 6:13](#)), the bride, is thus an appropriate name,

Daughter of Peace being the feminine of Solomon, equivalent to the *Prince of Peace*. She by turns is a vinedresser, shepherdess, midnight inquirer, and prince's consort and daughter, and He a suppliant drenched with night dews, and a king in His palace, in harmony with the various relations of the Church and Christ. As Ecclesiastes sets forth the vanity of love of the creature, Canticles sets forth the fullness of the love which joins believers and the Saviour. The entire economy of salvation, says HARRIS, aims at restoring to the world the lost spirit of love. God is love, and Christ is the embodiment of the love of God. As the other books of Scripture present severally their own aspects of divine truth, so Canticles furnishes the believer with language of holy love, wherewith his heart can commune with his Lord; and it portrays the intensity of Christ's love to him; the affection of love was created in man to be a transcript of the divine love, and the Song clothes the latter in words; were it not for this, we should be at a loss for language, having the divine warrant, wherewith to express, without presumption, the fervor of the love between Christ and us. The image of a bride, a bridegroom, and a marriage, to represent this spiritual union, has the sanction of Scripture throughout; nay, the spiritual union was *the original fact in the mind of God*, of which marriage is the transcript ([Isa 54:5; 62:5; Jer 3:1, &c.; Eze 16:1-63; 23:1-49; Mt 9:15; 22:2; 25:1, &c.; Joh 3:29; 2Co 11:2; Eph 5:23-32](#), where Paul does not go from the marriage relation to the union of Christ and the Church as if the former were the first; but comes down from the latter as the first and best recognized fact on which the relation of marriage is based; [Re 19:7; 21:2; 22:17](#)). Above all, the Song seems to correspond to, and form a trilogy with, [Psalms 45 and 72](#), which contain the same imagery; just as [Psalm 37](#) answers to Proverbs, and the [Psalms 39 and 73](#) to Job. Love to Christ is the strongest, as it is the purest, of human passions, and therefore needs the strongest language to express it: to the pure in heart the phraseology, drawn from the rich imagery of Oriental poetry, will not only appear not indelicate or exaggerated, but even below the reality. A single emblem is a *type*; the actual rites, incidents, and persons of the Old Testament were appointed types of truths afterwards to be revealed. But the *allegory* is a continued metaphor, in which the circumstances are palpably often purely imagery, while the thing signified is altogether real. The clue to the meaning of the Song is not to be looked for in the allegory itself, but in other parts of Scripture. "It lies in the casket of revelation an exquisite gem, engraved with emblematical characters, with nothing literal thereon to break the consistency of their beauty" [BURROWES]. This accounts for the name of God not occurring in it. Whereas in the *parable* the writer narrates, in the *allegory* he never does so. The Song throughout consists of immediate addresses either of Christ to the soul, or of the soul to Christ. "The experimental knowledge of Christ's loveliness and the believer's love is the best commentary on the whole of this allegorical Song" [LEIGHTON]. Like the curiously wrought Oriental lamps, which do not reveal the beauty of their transparent emblems until lighted up within, so the types and allegories of Scripture, "the lantern to our path" [[Ps 119:105](#)], need the inner light of the Holy Spirit of Jesus to reveal their significance. The details of the allegory are not to be too minutely pressed. In the Song, with an Oriental profusion of imagery, numbers of lovely, sensible objects

are aggregated not strictly congruous, but portraying jointly by their very diversity the thousand various and seemingly opposite beauties which meet together in Christ.

The unity of subject throughout, and the recurrence of the same expressions ([So 2:6, 7; 3:5; 8:3, 4; 2:16; 6:3; 7:10; 3:6; 6:10; 8:5](#)), prove the unity of the poem, in opposition to those who make it consist of a number of separate erotic songs. The sudden transitions (for example, from the midnight knocking at a humble cottage to a glorious description of the King) accord with the alternations in the believer's experience. However various the divisions assigned be, most commentators have observed four breaks (whatever more they have imagined), followed by four abrupt beginnings ([So 2:7; 3:5; 5:1; 8:4](#)). Thus there result five parts, all alike ending in full repose and refreshment. We read ([1Ki 4:32](#)) that Solomon's songs were "a thousand and *five*." The odd number *five* added over the complete *thousand* makes it not unlikely that the "five" refers to the Song of songs, consisting of five parts.

It answers to the idyllic poetry of other nations. The Jews explain it of the union of Jehovah and ancient Israel; the allusions to the *temple* and the *wilderness* accord with this; some Christians of Christ and the Church; others of Christ and the individual believer. All these are true; for the Church is one in all ages, the ancient typifying the modern Church, and its history answering to that of each individual soul in it. Jesus "sees all, as if that all were one, loves one, as if that one were all." "The time suited the manner of this revelation; because types and allegories belonged to the old dispensation, which reached its ripeness under Solomon, when the temple was built" [MOODY STUART]. "The daughter of Zion at that time was openly married to Jehovah"; for it is thenceforth that the prophets, in reproving Israel's subsequent sin, speak of it as a breach of her marriage covenant. The songs heretofore sung by her were the preparatory hymns of her childhood; "the last and crowning 'Song of Songs' was prepared for the now mature maiden against the day of her marriage to the King of kings" [ORIGEN]. Solomon was peculiarly fitted to clothe this holy mystery with the lovely natural imagery with which the Song abounds; for "he spake of trees, from the cedar in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall" ([1Ki 4:33](#)). A higher qualification was his knowledge of the eternal Wisdom or Word of God ([Pr 8:1-36](#)), the heavenly bridegroom. David, his father, had prepared the way, in [Psalms 45 and 72](#); the son perfected the allegory. It seems to have been written in early life, long before his declension; for after it a song of holy gladness would hardly be appropriate. It was the song of his first love, in the kindness of his youthful espousals to Jehovah. Like other inspired books, its sense is not to be restricted to that local and temporary one in which the writer may have understood it; it extends to all ages, and shadows forth everlasting truth ([1Pe 1:11, 12; 2Pe 1:20, 21](#)).

"Oh that I knew how all thy lights combine, and the configurations of their glorie,
Seeing not only how each verse doth shine, but all the constellations of the

storie."--HERBERT.

Three notes of time occur [MOODY STUART]: (1) The Jewish Church speaks of the Gentile Church ([So 8:8](#)) towards the end; (2) Christ speaks to the apostles ([So 5:1](#)) in the middle; (3) The Church speaks of the coming of Christ ([So 1:2](#)) at the beginning. Thus we have, in direct order, Christ about to come, and the cry for the advent; Christ finishing His work on earth, and the last supper; Christ ascended, and the call of the Gentiles. In another aspect we have: (1) In the individual soul the longing for the manifestation of Christ to it, and the various alternations in its experience ([So 1:2, 4; 2:8; 3:1, 4, 6, 7](#)) of His manifestation; (2) The abundant enjoyment of His sensible consolations, which is soon withdrawn through the bride's carelessness ([So 5:1-3, &c.](#)), and her longings after Him, and reconciliation ([So 5:8-16; 6:3, &c.; So 7:1, &c.](#)); (3) Effects of Christ's manifestation on the believer; namely, assurance, labors of love, anxiety for the salvation of the impenitent, eagerness for the Lord's second coming ([So 7:10, 12; 8:8-10, 14](#)).

CHAPTER 1

[So 1:1-17](#). CANTICLE I.-- ([So 1:2-2:7](#)) --THE BRIDE S EARCHING FOR AND FINDING THE K ING.

1. The song of songs--The most excellent of all songs, *Hebrew* idiom ([Ex 29:37; De 10:14](#)). A foretaste on earth of the "new song" to be sung in glory ([Re 5:9; 14:3; 15:2-4](#)).

Solomon's--"King of Israel," or "Jerusalem," is not added, as in the opening of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, not because Solomon had not yet ascended the throne [MOODY S TUART], but because his personality is hid under that of Christ, the true Solomon (equivalent to *Prince of Peace*). The earthly Solomon is not introduced, which would break the consistency of the allegory. Though the bride bears the chief part, the Song throughout is not hers, but that of her "Solomon." He animates her. He and she, the Head and the members, form but one Christ [A DELAIDE NEWTON]. Aaron prefigured Him as priest; Moses, as prophet; David, as a suffering king; Solomon, as the triumphant prince of peace. The camp in the wilderness represents the Church in the world; the peaceful reign of Solomon, after all enemies had been subdued, represents the Church in heaven, of which joy the Song gives a foretaste.

2. him--abruptly. She names him not, as is natural to one whose heart is full of some much desired friend: so Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre ([Joh 20:15](#)), as if everyone must know whom she means, the *one* chief object of her desire ([Ps 73:25; Mt 13:44-46; Php 3:7,8](#)).

kiss--the token of *peace* from the Prince of Peace ([Lu 15:20](#)); "our Peace" ([Ps 85:10; Col 1:21; Eph 2:14](#)).

of his mouth--marking the tenderest affection. For a king to permit his hands, or even garment, to be kissed, was counted a great honor; but that he should

himself kiss another *with his mouth* is the greatest honor. God had in times past spoken by *the mouth* of His prophets, who had declared the Church's betrothal; the bride now longs for contact with *the mouth of the Bridegroom Himself* ([Job 23:12](#); [Lu 4:22](#); [Heb 1:1, 2](#)). True of the Church before the first advent, longing for "the hope of Israel," "the desire of all nations"; also the awakened soul longing for the kiss of *reconciliation*; and further, the kiss that is the token of the *marriage contract* ([Ho 2:19, 20](#)), and of *friendship* ([1Sa 20:41](#); [Joh 14:21](#); [15:15](#)).

thy love--*Hebrew*, "loves," namely, tokens of love, loving blandishments.

wine--which makes glad "the heavy heart" of one ready to perish, so that he "remembers his misery no more" ([Pr 31:6, 7](#)). So, in a "better" sense, Christ's love ([Hab 3:17, 18](#)). He gives the same praise to the bride's love, with the emphatic addition, "How much" ([So 4:10](#)). Wine was created by His first miracle ([Joh 2:1-11](#)), and was the pledge given of His love at the last supper. The spiritual wine is His blood and His spirit, the "new" and better wine of the kingdom ([Mt 26:29](#)), which we can never drink to "excess," as the other ([Eph 5:18](#); compare [Ps 23:5](#); [Isa 55:1](#)).

3. Rather, "As regards the savor of thy ointments, it is good" [MAURER]. In [So 4:10, 11](#), the Bridegroom reciprocates the praise of the bride in the same terms.

thy name--Christ's *character and office* as the "Anointed" ([Isa 9:6](#); [61:1](#)), as "the savor of ointments" are the graces that surround His *person* ([Ps 45:7, 8](#)). [Ec 7:1](#), in its fullest sense, applies to Him. The holy anointing oil of the high priest, which it was death for anyone else to make (so [Ac 4:12](#)), implies the exclusive preciousness of Messiah's name ([Ex 30:23-28, 31-38](#)). So Mary brake the box of precious ointment over Him, appropriately ([Mr 14:5](#)), the broken box typifying His body, which, when broken, diffused all grace: compounded of various spices, &c. ([Col 1:19; 2:9](#)); of sweet odor ([Eph 5:2](#)).

poured-- ([Isa 53:12](#); [Ro 5:5](#)).

therefore--because of the manifestation of God's character in Christ ([1Jo 4:9, 19](#)). So the penitent woman ([Lu 7:37, 38, 47](#)).

virgins--the pure in heart ([2Co 11:2](#); [Re 14:4](#)). The same *Hebrew* is translated, "thy hidden ones" ([Ps 83:3](#)). The "ointment" of the Spirit "poured forth" produces the "love of Christ" ([Ro 5:5](#)).

4. (1) The cry of ancient Israel for Messiah, for example, Simeon, Anna, &c. (2) The cry of an awakened soul for the drawing of the Spirit, after it has got a glimpse of Christ's loveliness and its own helplessness.

Draw me--The Father draws ([Joh 6:44](#)). The Son draws ([Jer 31:3](#); [Ho 11:4](#); [Joh 12:32](#)). "Draw" here, and "Tell" ([So 1:7](#)), reverently qualify the word "kiss" ([So 1:2](#)).

me, we--No believer desires to go to heaven alone. We are converted as *individuals*; we follow Christ as joined in a *communion* of saints ([Joh 1:41, 45](#)). Individuality and community meet in the bride.

run--Her earnestness kindles as she prays ([Isa 40:31](#); [Ps 119:32, 60](#)).

after thee--not before ([Joh 10:4](#)).

king . . . brought me into-- ([Ps 45:14, 15](#); [Joh 10:16](#)). He is the anointed Priest ([So 1:3](#)); King ([So 1:4](#)).

chambers--Her prayer is answered even beyond her desires. Not only is she permitted to *run* after Him, but is brought into the inmost pavilion, where Eastern kings admitted none but the most intimate friends ([Es 4:11](#); [5:2](#); [Ps 27:5](#)). The erection of the temple of Solomon was the first bringing of the bride into permanent, instead of migratory, chambers of the King. Christ's body on earth was the next ([Joh 2:21](#)), whereby believers are brought within the veil ([Eph 2:6](#); [Heb 10:19, 20](#)). Entrance into the closet for prayer is the first step. The earnest of the future bringing into heaven ([Joh 14:3](#)). *His* chambers are the bride's also ([Isa 26:20](#)). There are various *chambers, plural* ([Joh 14:2](#)).

be glad and rejoice--*inward* and *outward* rejoicing.

in thee-- ([Isa 61:10](#); [Php 4:1, 4](#)). Not in our spiritual frames ([Ps 30:6, 7](#)).

remember--rather, "commemorate with praises" ([Isa 63:7](#)). The mere *remembrance* of spiritual joys is better than the *present enjoyment* of carnal ones ([Ps 4:6, 7](#)).

upright--rather, "uprightly," "sincerely" ([Ps 58:1](#); [Ro 12:9](#)); so Nathanael ([Joh 1:47](#)); Peter ([Joh 21:17](#)); or "deservedly" [MAURER].

5. black--namely, "as the tents of Kedar," equivalent to *blackness* ([Ps 120:5](#)). She draws the image from the black goatskins with which the Scenite Arabs ("Kedar" was in Arabia-Petræa) cover their tents (contrasted with the splendid state tent in which *the King* was awaiting His bride according to Eastern custom); typifying the darkness of man's natural state. To feel this, and yet also feel one's self in Jesus Christ "comely as the curtains of Solomon," marks the believer ([Ro 7:18, &c.; 8:1](#); [1Ti 1:15](#), "I *am* chief"; so she says not merely, "I was," but "I am"; *still* black in herself, but comely through *His* comeliness put upon her ([Eze 16:14](#)).

curtains--first, the hangings and veil in the temple of Solomon ([Eze 16:10](#)); then, also, the "fine linen which is the righteousness of saints" ([Re 19:8](#)), the white wedding garment provided by Jesus Christ ([Isa 61:10](#); [Mt 22:11](#); [1Co 1:30](#); [Col 1:28](#); [2:10](#); [Re 7:14](#)). *Historically*, the dark tents of Kedar represent the Gentile Church ([Isa 60:3-7](#), &c.). As the vineyard at the close is transferred from the Jews, who had not kept their own, to the Gentiles, so the Gentiles are introduced at the commencement of the Song; for they were among the earliest enquirers after Jesus Christ ([Mt 2:1-12](#)): the wise men from the East (Arabia, or Kedar).

daughters of Jerusalem--professors, not the bride, or "the virgins," yet not enemies; invited to gospel blessings ([So 3:10, 11](#)); so near to Jesus Christ as not to be unlikely to find Him ([So 5:8](#)); desirous to seek Him with her ([So 6:1](#); compare [So 6:13](#); [7:1, 5, 8](#)). In [So 7:8, 9](#), the bride's Beloved becomes *their* Beloved; not, however, of *all* of them ([So 8:4](#); compare [Lu 23:27, 28](#)).

6. She feels as if her blackness was so great as to be gazed at by all. mother's children-- ([Mt 10:36](#)). She is to forget "her own people and her father's house," that is, the worldly connections of her unregenerate state ([Ps](#)

[45:10](#)); they had maltreated her ([Lu 15:15, 16](#)). Children of the same mother, but not the same father [M AURER], ([Joh 8:41-44](#)). They made her a common keeper of vineyards, whereby the sun looked upon, that is, burnt her; thus she did "not keep her own" vineyard, that is, fair beauty. So the world, and the soul ([Mt 16:26; Lu 9:25](#)). The believer has to watch against the same danger ([1Co 9:27](#)). So he will be able, instead of the self-reproach here, to say as in [So 8:12](#).

7. my soul loveth--more intense than "the virgins" and "the upright love thee" ([So 1:3, 4; Mt 22:37](#)). To carry out the design of the allegory, the royal encampment is here represented as moving from place to place, in search of green pastures, under the *Shepherd King* ([Ps 23:1-6](#)). The bride, having first enjoyed communion with him in the pavilion, is willing to follow Him into labors and dangers; arising from all absorbing love ([Lu 14:26](#)); this distinguishes her from the formalist ([Joh 10:27; Re 14:4](#)).

feedest--tendest thy flock ([Isa 40:11; Heb 13:20; 1Pe 2:25; 5:4; Re 7:17](#)). No *single* type expresses *all* the office of Jesus Christ; hence arises the variety of *diverse* images used to portray the manifold aspects of Him: these would be quite incongruous, if the Song referred to the earthly Solomon. Her intercourse with Him is peculiar. She hears His voice, and addresses none but Himself. Yet it is through a veil; she sees Him not ([Job 23:8, 9](#)). If we would be fed, we must follow the Shepherd through the *whole* breadth of His Word, and not stay on *one* spot alone.

makest . . . to rest--distinct from "feedest"; periods of rest are vouchsafed after labor ([Isa 4:6; 49:10; Eze 34:13-15](#)). Communion in private must go along with public following of Him.

turneth aside--rather one *veiled*, that is, as a *harlot*, not His true bride ([Ge 38:15](#)), [GESENIUS]; or as a *mourner* ([2Sa 15:30](#)), [WEISS]; or as one *unknown* [MAURER]. All imply estrangement from the Bridegroom. She feels estranged even among Christ's true servants, answering to "thy companions" ([Lu 22:28](#)), so long as she has not Himself present. The opposite spirit to [1Co 3:4](#).

8. If--she ought to have *known* ([Joh 14:8, 9](#)). The confession of her ignorance and *blackness* ([So 1:5](#)) leads Him to call her "fairest" ([Mt 12:20](#)). Her jealousy of letting even "His companions" take the place of Himself ([So 1:7](#)) led her too far. He directs her to follow them, as they follow Him ([1Co 11:1; Heb 6:10, 12](#)); to use ordinances and the ministry; where *they* are, *He* is ([Jer 6:16; Mt 18:19, 20; Heb 10:25](#)). Indulging in isolation is not the way to find Him. It was thus, literally, that Zipporah found her bridegroom ([Ex 2:16](#)). The bride unhesitatingly asks the watchmen afterwards ([So 3:3](#)).

kids-- ([Joh 21:15](#)). Christ is to be found in active ministrations, as well as in prayer ([Pr 11:25](#)).

shepherds' tents--ministers in the sanctuary ([Ps 84:1](#)).

9. horses in Pharaoh's chariots--celebrated for *beauty, swiftness, and ardor*, at the Red Sea ([Ex 14:15](#)). These qualities, which *seem* to belong to the ungodly, *really* belong to the saints [MOODY S TUART]. The allusion may be to

the horses brought at a high price by Solomon out of Egypt ([2Ch 1:16, 17](#)). So the bride is redeemed out of spiritual Egypt by the true Solomon, at an infinite price ([Isa 51:1; 1Pe 1:18, 19](#)). But the deliverance from *Pharaoh at the Red Sea* accords with the allusion to the tabernacle ([So 1:5; 3:6, 7](#)); it rightly is put at the beginning of the Church's call. The *ardor* and *beauty* of the bride are the point of comparison; ([So 1:4](#)) "run"; ([So 1:5](#)) "comely." Also, like Pharaoh's horses, she forms a great company ([Re 19:7, 14](#)). As Jesus Christ is both Shepherd and Conqueror, so believers are not only His *sheep*, but also, as a Church *militant* now, His *chariots and horses* ([So 6:4](#)).

10. rows of jewels-- ([Eze 16:11-13](#)). OLERIUS says, Persian ladies wear two or three rows of pearls round the head, beginning on the forehead and descending down to the cheeks and under the chin, so that their faces seem to be set in pearls ([Eze 16:11](#)). The comparison of the horses ([So 1:9](#)) implies the vital energy of the bride; this verse, her superadded graces ([Pr 1:9; 4:9; 1Ti 2:9; 2Pe 1:5](#)).

11. We--the Trinity implied by the Holy Ghost, whether it was so by the writer of the Song or not ([Ge 1:26; Pr 8:30; 30:4](#)). "The Jews acknowledged God as king, and Messiah as king, in interpreting the Song, but did not know that these two are one" [L EIGHTON].

make--not merely *give* ([Eph 2:10](#)).

borders of gold, with studs of silver--that is, "spots of silver"--Jesus Christ delights to give more "to him that hath" ([Mt 25:29](#)). He crowns *His own work* in us ([Isa 26:12](#)). The "borders" here are equivalent to "rows" ([So 1:10](#)); but here, the King seems to give the finish to her attire, by adding a *crown* (*borders*, or circles) of gold studded with silver spots, as in [Es 2:17](#). Both the *royal* and *nuptial* crown, or chaplet. The *Hebrew* for "spouse" ([So 4:8](#)) is *a crowned one* ([Eze 16:12; Re 2:10](#)). The crown is given at once upon conversion, in title, but in sensible possession afterwards ([2Ti 4:8](#)).

12. While--It is the presence of the Sun of Righteousness that draws out the believer's odors of grace. It was the sight of Him at table that caused the two women to bring forth their ointments for Him ([Lu 7:37, 38; Joh 12:3; 2Co 2:15](#)). Historically fulfilled ([Mt 2:11](#)); spiritually ([Re 3:20](#)); and in church worship ([Mt 18:20](#)); and at the Lord's Supper especially, for here *public* communion with Him at table amidst His friends is spoken of, as [So 1:4](#) refers to *private* communion ([1Co 10:16, 21](#)); typically ([Ex 24:9-11](#)); the future perfect fulfilment ([Lu 22:30; Re 19:9](#)). The allegory supposes the King to have stopped in His movements and to be seated with His friends on the divan. What grace that a table should be prepared for us, while still militant ([Ps 23:5](#))!

my spikenard--not boasting, but *owning* the Lord's grace to and in her. The spikenard is a lowly herb, the emblem of humility. She rejoices that *He* is well pleased with her graces, His own work ([Php 4:18](#)).

13. bundle of myrrh--abundant *preciousness* (Greek), ([1Pe 2:7](#)). Even a *little* myrrh was costly; much more a *bundle* ([Col 2:9](#)). BURROWES takes it of a *scent-box filled with liquid myrrh*; the liquid obtained by incision gave the tree its chief value.

he--rather, "it"; it is the myrrh that lies in the bosom, as the cluster of camphire is in the vineyards ([So 1:14](#)).

all night--an undivided heart ([Eph 3:17](#); contrast [Jer 4:14](#); [Eze 16:15, 30](#)). Yet on account of the everlasting covenant, God restores the adulteress ([Eze 16:60, 62](#); [Ho 2:2](#), &c.). The night is the whole present dispensation till the everlasting day dawns ([Ro 13:12](#)). Also, literally, "night" ([Ps 119:147, 148](#)), the night of *affliction* ([Ps 42:8](#)).

14. cluster--Jesus Christ is one, yet *manifold* in His graces.

camphire--or, "cypress." The "hennah" is meant, whose odorous flowers grow in clusters, of a color white and yellow softly blended; its bark is dark, the foliage light green. Women deck their persons with them. The loveliness of Jesus Christ.

vineyards--appropriate in respect to Him who is "the vine." The spikenard was for the banquet ([So 1:12](#)); the myrrh was in her bosom continually ([So 1:13](#)); the camphire is in the midst of natural beauties, which, though lovely, are eclipsed by the one cluster, Jesus Christ, pre-eminent above them all.

En-ge-di--in South Palestine, near the Dead Sea ([Jos 15:62](#); [Eze 47:10](#)), famed for aromatic shrubs.

15. fair--He discerns beauty in her, who had said, "I am black" ([So 1:5](#)), because of the everlasting covenant ([Ps 45:11](#); [Isa 62:5](#); [Eph 1:4,5](#)).

doves' eyes--large and beautiful in the doves of Syria. The prominent features of her beauty ([Mt 10:16](#)), gentleness, innocence, and constant love, emblem of the Holy Ghost, who changes us to *His own* likeness ([Ge 8:10, 11](#); [Mt 3:16](#)). The opposite kind of eyes ([Ps 101:5](#); [Mt 20:15](#); [2Pe 2:14](#)).

16. *Reply of the Bride*. She presumes to call Him beloved, because He called her so first. Thou callest me "fair"; if I am so, it is not in myself; it is all from Thee ([Ps 90:17](#)); but *Thou* art fair in Thyself ([Ps 45:2](#)).

pleasant-- ([Pr 3:17](#)) towards Thy friends ([2Sa 1:26](#)).

bed . . . green--the couch of green grass on which the King and His bride sit to "rest at noon." Thus her prayer in [So 1:7](#) is here granted; a green oasis in the desert, always found near waters in the East ([Ps 23:2](#); [Isa 41:17-19](#)). The scene is a kiosk, or summer house. *Historically*, the literal resting of the Babe of Bethlehem and his parents on the *green* grass provided for cattle ([Lu 2:7, 12](#)). In this verse there is an incidental allusion, in [So 1:15](#), to the offering ([Lu 2:24](#)). So the "cedar and fir" ceiling refers to the temple ([1Ki 5:6-10](#); [6:15-18](#)); type of the heavenly temple ([Re 21:22](#)).

17. our house--see on [So 1:16](#); but *primarily*, the kiosk ([Isa 11:10](#)), "His rest." Cedar is pleasing to the eye and smell, hard, and never eaten by worms.

fir--rather, "cypress," which is hard, durable, and fragrant, of a reddish hue

[GESENIUS, WEISS, and MAURER]. Contrasted with the shifting "tents" ([So 1:5](#)), *His* house is "*our* house" ([Ps 92:13](#); [Eph 2:19](#); [Heb 3:6](#)). Perfect oneness of Him and the bride ([Joh 14:20](#); [17:21](#)). There is the shelter of a princely roof from the sun ([Ps 121:6](#)), without the confinement of walls, and amidst rural beauties. The carved ceiling represents the wondrous excellencies of His divine nature.

CHAPTER 2

[So 2:1-17](#).

1. rose--if applied to Jesus Christ, it, with the white lily (lowly, [2Co 8:9](#)), answers to "white and ruddy" ([So 5:10](#)). But it is rather the *meadow-saffron*: the *Hebrew* means radically a plant with a *pungent bulb*, inapplicable to the *rose*. So *Syriac*. It is of a white and violet color [MAURER, GESENIUS, and WEISS]. The bride thus speaks of herself as lowly though lovely, in contrast with the lordly "apple" or citron tree, the bridegroom ([So 2:3](#)); so the "lily" is applied to her ([So 2:2](#)),

Sharon-- ([Isa 35:1, 2](#)). In North Palestine, between Mount Tabor and Lake Tiberias ([1Ch 5:16](#)). *Septuagint* and *Vulgate* translate it, "a plain"; though they err in this, the *Hebrew* Bible not elsewhere favoring it, yet the parallelism to *valleys* shows that, in the proper name Sharon, there is here a tacit reference to its meaning of lowliness. Beauty, delicacy, and lowliness, are to be in her, as they were in Him ([Mt 11:29](#)).

2. *Jesus Christ to the Bride* ([Mt 10:16](#); [Joh 15:19](#); [1Jo 5:19](#)). Thorns, equivalent to the wicked ([2Sa 23:6](#); [Ps 57:4](#)).

daughters--of men, not of God; not "the virgins." "If thou art the lily of Jesus Christ, take heed lest by impatience, rash judgments, and pride, thou thyself become a thorn" [LUTHER].

3. *Her reply*. apple--generic including the golden citron, pomegranate, and orange apple ([Pr 25:11](#)). He combines the *shadow* and fragrance of the citron with the *sweetness* of the orange and pomegranate fruit. The foliage is perpetual; throughout the year a succession of blossoms, fruit, and perfume ([Jas 1:17](#)).

among the sons--parallel to "among the daughters" ([So 2:2](#)). He alone is ever fruitful among the fruitless wild trees ([Ps 89:6](#); [Heb 1:9](#)).

I sat . . . with . . . delight--literally, "I eagerly desired and sat" ([Ps 94:19](#); [Mr 6:31](#); [Eph 2:6](#); [1Pe 1:8](#)).

shadow-- ([Ps 121:5](#); [Isa 4:6](#); [25:4](#); [32:2](#)). Jesus Christ interposes the shadow of His cross between the blazing rays of justice and us sinners.

fruit--Faith plucks it ([Pr 3:18](#)). Man lost the tree of life ([Ge 3:22, 23](#)). Jesus Christ regained it for him; he eats it partly now ([Ps 119:103](#); [Joh 6:55, 57](#); [1Pe 2:3](#)); fully hereafter ([Re 2:7](#); [22:2, 14](#)); not earned by the sweat of his brow, or by his righteousness ([Ro 10:1-21](#)). Contrast the worldling's fruit ([De 32:32](#); [Lu 15:16](#)).

4. Historically fulfilled in the joy of Simeon and Anna in the temple, over the infant Saviour ([Lu 2:25-38](#)), and that of Mary, too (compare [Lu 1:53](#)); typified ([Ex 24:9-11](#)). Spiritually, the bride or beloved is led ([So 2:4](#)) first *into the King's chambers*, thence is *drawn* after Him in answer to her prayer; is next received on a grassy couch under a cedar kiosk; and at last in a "banqueting hall," such as, J OSEPHUS says, Solomon had in his palace, "wherein all the vessels were of gold" (*Antiquities*, 8:5,2). The transition is from holy retirement to *public* ordinances, church worship, and the Lord's Supper ([Ps 36:8](#)). The bride, as the queen of Sheba, is given "all her desire" ([1Ki 10:13](#); [Ps 63:5](#); [Eph 3:8, 16-21](#); [Php 4:19](#)); type of the heavenly feast hereafter ([Isa 25:6, 9](#)).

his banner . . . love--After having rescued us from the enemy, our victorious captain ([Heb 2:10](#)) seats us at the banquet under a banner inscribed with *His name*, "love" ([1Jo 4:8](#)). His love conquered us to Himself; this banner rallies round us the forces of Omnipotence, as our protection; it marks to what country we belong, heaven, the abode of love, and in what we most glory, the cross of Jesus Christ, through which we triumph ([Ro 8:37](#); [1Co 15:57](#); [Re 3:21](#)). Compare with "over me," "underneath are the everlasting arms" ([De 33:27](#)).

5. flagons--MAURER prefers translating, "dried raisin cakes"; from the *Hebrew* root "fire," namely, dried by heat. But the "house of *wine*" ([So 2:4](#), *Margin*) favors "flagons"; the "new wine" of the kingdom, the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

apples--from the tree ([So 2:3](#)), so sweet to her, the promises of God.

sick of love--the highest degree of sensible enjoyment that can be attained here. It may be at an early or late stage of experience. Paul ([2Co 12:7](#)). In the last sickness of J. Welch, he was overheard saying, "Lord, hold thine hand, it is enough; thy servant is a clay vessel, and can hold no more" [FLEMING, *Fulfilling of the Scriptures*]. In most cases this intensity of joy is reserved for the heavenly banquet. Historically, Israel had it, when the Lord's glory filled the tabernacle, and afterwards the temple, so that the priests could not stand to minister: so in the Christian Church on Pentecost. The bride addresses *Christ* mainly, though in her rapture she uses the *plural*, "Stay (*ye*) me," speaking generally. So far from asking the withdrawal of the manifestations which had overpowered her, she asks for more: so "*fainteth for*" ([Ps 84:2](#)): also Peter, on the mount of transfiguration ([Lu 9:33](#)), "Let us make . . . *not knowing what he said.*"

6. The "stay" she prayed for ([So 2:5](#)) is granted ([De 33:12, 27](#); [Ps 37:24](#); [Isa 41:16](#)). None can pluck from that *embrace* ([Joh 10:28-30](#)). His hand keeps us from falling ([Mt 14:30, 31](#)); to it we may commit ourselves ([Ps 31:5](#)).

left hand--the left is the inferior hand, by which the Lord less signally manifests His love, than by the right; the secret hand of ordinary providence, as distinguished from that of manifested grace (the "right"). They really go together, though sometimes they seem divided; here both are felt at once. THEODORET takes the left hand, equivalent to *judgment and wrath*; the right, equivalent to *honor and love*. The hand of justice no longer is lifted to smite, but is under the head of the believer to support ([Isa 42:21](#)); the hand of Jesus Christ pierced by

justice for our sin supports us. The charge not to disturb the beloved occurs thrice: but the sentiment here, "His left hand," &c., nowhere else fully; which accords with the intensity of joy ([So 2:5](#)) found nowhere else; in [So 8:3](#), it is only conditional, "*should* embrace," not "doth."

7. by the roes--not an oath but a solemn charge, to act as cautiously as the hunter would with the wild roes, which are proverbially timorous; he must advance with breathless circumspection, if he is to take them; so he who would not lose Jesus Christ and His Spirit, which is easily grieved and withdrawn, must be tender of conscience and watchful ([Eze 16:43](#); [Eph 4:30](#); [5:15](#); [1Th 5:19](#)). In *Margin*, title of [Ps 22:1](#), Jesus Christ is called the "*Hind* of the morning," hunted to death by the dogs (compare [So 2:8, 9](#), where He is represented as bounding on the hills, [Ps 18:33](#)). Here He is *resting*, but with a repose easily broken ([Zep 3:17](#)). It is thought a gross rudeness in the East to awaken one sleeping, especially a person of rank.

my love--in *Hebrew*, *feminine* for *masculine*, the abstract for concrete, Jesus Christ being the embodiment of *love* itself ([So 3:5](#); [8:7](#)), where, as here, the context requires it to be applied to Him, not her. She too is "love" ([So 7:6](#)), for His love calls forth her love. Presumption in the convert is as grieving to the Spirit as despair. The *lovingness* and *pleasantness* of the hind and roe ([Pr 5:19](#)) is included in this image of Jesus Christ.

CANTICLE II.-- ([So 2:8-3:5](#)) --JOHN THE BAPTIST'S M INISTRY.

8. voice--an exclamation of joyful surprise, evidently after a long silence. The restlessness of sin and fickleness in her had disturbed His rest with her, which she had professed not to wish disturbed "till He should please." He left her, but in sovereign grace unexpectedly heralds His return. She awakes, and at once recognizes His voice ([1Sa 3:9, 10](#); [Joh 10:4](#)); her sleep is not so sinfully deep as in [So 5:2](#).

leaping--bounding, as the roe does, over the roughest obstacles ([2Sa 2:18](#); [1Ch 12:8](#)); as the father of the prodigal "had compassion and *ran*" ([Lu 15:20](#)).

upon the hills--as the sunbeams glancing from hill to hill. So *Margin*, title of Jesus Christ ([Ps 22:1](#)), "*Hind of the morning*" (type of His resurrection). Historically, the coming of the kingdom of heaven (the gospel dispensation), announced by John Baptist, is meant; *it* primarily is the garden or vineyard; the bride is called so in a secondary sense. "The voice" of Jesus Christ is indirect, through "the friend of the bridegroom" ([Joh 3:29](#)), John the Baptist. Personally, He is silent during John's ministration, who awoke the long slumbering Church with the cry. "Every *hill* shall be made low," in the spirit of Elias, on the "rent mountains" ([1Ki 19:11](#); compare [Isa 52:7](#)). Jesus Christ is implied as coming with intense desire ([Lu 22:15](#); [Heb 10:7](#)), disregarding the mountain hindrances raised by man's sin.

9. he standeth--after having bounded over the intervening space like a roe. He often stands near when our unbelief hides Him from us ([Ge 28:16](#); [Re 3:14-](#)

[20](#)). His usual way; long promised and expected; sudden at last: so, in visiting the second temple ([Mal 3:1](#)); so at Pentecost ([Ac 2:1, 2](#)); so in visiting an individual soul, Zaccheus ([Lu 19:5, 6; Joh 3:8](#)); and so, at the second coming ([Mt 24:48, 50; 2Pe 3:4, 10](#)). So it shall be at His second coming ([1Th 5:2, 3](#)).

wall--over the cope of which He is first seen; next, He looks *through* (not *forth*; for He is outside) at the windows, *glancing* suddenly and stealthily (not as *English Version*, "showing Himself") through the lattice. The prophecies, types, &c., were lattice glimpses of Him to the Old Testament Church, in spite of the *wall* of separation which sin had raised ([Joh 8:56](#)); clearer glimpses were given by John Baptist, but not unclouded ([Joh 1:26](#)). The legal wall of partition was not to be removed until His death ([Eph 2:14, 15; Heb 10:20](#)). Even now, He is only seen by *faith*, through the windows of His Word and the lattice of ordinances and sacraments ([Lu 24:35; Joh 14:21](#)); not full vision ([1Co 13:12](#)); an incentive to our looking for His second coming ([Isa 33:17; Tit 2:13](#)).

10, 11. Loving reassurance given by Jesus Christ to the bride, lest she should think that He had ceased to love her, on account of her unfaithfulness, which had occasioned His temporary withdrawal. He allures her to brighter than worldly joys ([Mic 2:10](#)). Not only does the saint wish to depart to be with Him, but He still more desires to have the saint with Him above ([Joh 17:24](#)). Historically, the vineyard or garden of the King, here first introduced, is "the kingdom of heaven preached" by John the Baptist, before whom "the law and the prophets were" ([Lu 16:16](#)).

11. the winter--the law of the covenant of works ([Mt 4:16](#)).

rain is over-- ([Heb 12:18-24; 1Jo 2:8](#)). Then first the Gentile Church is called "beloved, which was not beloved" ([Ro 9:25](#)). So "the winter" of estrangement and sin is "past" to the believer ([Isa 44:22; Jer 50:20; 2Co 5:17; Eph 2:1](#)). The rising "Sun of righteousness" dispels the "rain" ([2Sa 23:4; Ps 126:5; Mal 4:2](#)). The winter in Palestine is past by April, but all the showers were not over till May. The time described here is that which comes directly after these last showers of winter. In the highest sense, the coming resurrection and deliverance of the earth from the *past* curse is here implied ([Ro 8:19; Re 21:4; 22:3](#)). No more "clouds" shall then "return after the rain" ([Ec 12:2; Re 4:3](#); compare [Ge 9:13-17](#)); "the rainbow round the throne" is the "token" of this.

12. flowers--tokens of anger past, and of grace come. "The summoned bride is welcome," say some fathers, "to weave from them garlands of beauty, wherewith she may adorn herself to meet the King." Historically, the flowers, &c., only give promise; the fruit is not ripe yet; suitable to the preaching of John the Baptist, "The kingdom of heaven is *at hand*"; not yet fully come.

the time of . . . singing--the rejoicing at the advent of Jesus Christ. GREGORY N YSSEUS refers the *voice* of the turtledove to John the Baptist. It with the olive branch announced to Noah that "the rain was over and gone" ([Ge 8:11](#)). So John the Baptist, spiritually. Its *plaintive* "voice" answers to his preaching of *repentance* ([Jer 8:6, 7](#)). *Vulgate* and *Septuagint* translate, "The

time of *pruning*," namely, spring ([Joh 15:2](#)). The mention of the "turtle's" cooing better accords with our text. The turtledove is migratory ([Jer 8:7](#)), and "comes" early in May; emblem of love, and so of the Holy Ghost. Love, too, shall be the keynote of the "new song" hereafter ([Isa 35:10](#); [Re 1:5](#); [14:3](#); [19:6](#)). In the individual believer now, joy and love are here set forth in their *earlier* manifestations ([Mr 4:28](#)).

13. putteth forth--rather, "ripens," literally, "makes red" [MAURER]. The unripe figs, which grow in winter, begin to ripen in early spring, and in June are fully matured [WEISS].

vines with the tender grape--rather, "the vines *in flower*," literally, "a flower," in apposition with "vines" [MAURER]. The vine flowers were so sweet that they were often put, when dried, into new wine to give it flavor. Applicable to the first manifestations of Jesus Christ, "the true Vine," both to the Church and to individuals; as to Nathanael under *the fig tree* ([Joh 1:48](#)).

Arise, &c.--His call, described by the bride, ends as it began ([So 2:10](#)); it is a consistent whole; "love" from first to last ([Isa 52:1, 2](#); [2Co 6:17, 18](#)). "Come," in the close of [Re 22:17](#), as at His earlier manifestation ([Mt 11:28](#)).

14. dove--here expressing endearment ([Ps 74:19](#)). Doves are noted for *constant attachment*; emblems, also, in their soft, plaintive note, of *softened penitents* ([Isa 59:11](#); [Eze 7:16](#)); other points of likeness are their *beauty*; "their wings covered with silver and gold" ([Ps 68:13](#)), typifying the change in the converted; the *dove-like spirit*, breathed into the saint by the Holy Ghost, whose emblem is the dove; *the messages of peace* from God to sinful men, as Noah's dove, with the olive branch ([Ge 8:11](#)), intimated that the flood of wrath was past; *timidity*, fleeing with fear from sin and self to the cleft Rock of Ages ([Isa 26:4](#), *Margin*; [Ho 11:11](#)); *gregarious*, flocking together to the kingdom of Jesus Christ ([Isa 60:8](#)); *harmless simplicity* ([Mt 10:16](#)).

clefts--the refuge of doves from storm and heat ([Jer 48:28](#); see [Jer 49:16](#)). GESENIUS translates the *Hebrew* from a different root, "the refuges." But see, for "clefts," [Ex 33:18-23](#). It is only when we are *in* Christ Jesus that our "voice is sweet" (in prayer, [So 4:3, 11](#); [Mt 10:20](#); [Ga 4:6](#), because it is *His* voice *in* us; also in speaking *of* Him, [Mal 3:16](#)); and our countenance comely" ([Ex 34:29](#); [Ps 27:5](#); [71:3](#); [Isa 33:16](#); [2Co 3:18](#)).

stairs-- ([Eze 38:20](#), *Margin*), a steep rock, broken into stairs or terraces. It is in "secret places" and rugged scenes that Jesus Christ woos the soul from the world to Himself ([Mic 2:10](#); [7:14](#)). So Jacob amid the stones of Beth-el ([Ge 28:11-19](#)); Moses at Horeb ([Ex 3:1-22](#)); so Elijah ([1Ki 19:9-13](#)); Jesus Christ with the three disciples on a "high mountain apart," at the transfiguration ([Mt 17:1](#)); John in Patmos ([Re 1:9](#)). "Of the eight beatitudes, five have an afflicted condition for their subject. As long as the waters are on the earth, we dwell in the ark; but when the land is dry, the dove itself will be tempted to wander" [JEREMY TAYLOR]. Jesus Christ does not invite her to leave the rock, but *in* it (Himself), yet in holy freedom to lay aside the timorous spirit, look up boldly as accepted in Him, pray, praise, and confess Him (in contrast to her shrinking from being

looked at, [So 1:6](#)), ([Eph 6:19](#); [Heb 13:15](#); [1Jo 4:18](#)); still, though trembling, the voice and countenance of the soul in Jesus Christ are pleasant to Him. The Church found no cleft in the Sinaitic legal rock, though good in itself, wherein to hide; but in Jesus Christ stricken by God for us, as the rock smitten by Moses ([Nu 20:11](#)), there is a hiding-place ([Isa 32:2](#)). She praised His "voice" ([So 2:8, 10](#)); it is thus that her voice also, though tremulous, is "sweet" to Him here.

15. Transition to the vineyard, often formed in "stairs" ([So 2:14](#)), or terraces, in which, amidst the vine leaves, foxes hid.

foxes--generic term, including jackals. They eat only grapes, not the vine flowers; but they need to be driven out *in time* before the grape is ripe. She had failed in watchfulness before ([So 1:6](#)); now when converted, she is the more jealous of *subtle* sins ([Ps 139:23](#)). In spiritual winter certain evils are frozen up, as well as good; in the spring of revivals these start up unperceived, crafty, false teachers, spiritual pride, uncharitableness, &c. ([Ps 19:12](#); [Mt 13:26](#); [Lu 8:14](#); [2Ti 2:17](#); [Heb 12:15](#)). "Little" sins are parents of the greatest ([Ec 10:1](#); [1Co 5:6](#)). Historically, John the Baptist spared not the *fox-like* Herod ([Lu 13:32](#)), who gave vine-like promise of fruit at first ([Mr 6:20](#)), at the cost of his life; nor the viper-Sadducees, &c.; nor the varied subtle forms of sin ([Lu 3:7-14](#)).

16. mine . . . his--rather, "is *for me* . . . *for Him*" ([Ho 3:3](#)), where, as here, there is the assurance of indissoluble union, in spite of temporary absence. [So 2:17](#), entreating Him to return, shows that He has gone, perhaps through her want of guarding against the "little sins" ([So 2:15](#)). The order of the clauses is reversed in [So 6:3](#), when she is riper in faith: there she rests more on *her being His*; here, on *His being hers*; and no doubt her sense of love to Him is a pledge that she is His ([Joh 14:21, 23](#); [1Co 8:3](#)); this is her consolation in His withdrawal now.

I am his--by creation ([Ps 100:3](#)), by redemption ([Joh 17:10](#); [Ro 14:8](#); [1Co 6:19](#)).

feedeth--as a "roe," or gazelle ([So 2:17](#)); instinct is sure to lead him back to his feeding ground, where the lilies abound. So Jesus Christ, though now withdrawn, the bride feels sure will return to His favorite resting-place ([So 7:10](#); [Ps 132:14](#)). So hereafter ([Re 21:3](#)). [Ps 45:1](#), title, terms his lovely bride's "lilies" [HENGSTENBERG] pure and white, though among thorns ([So 2:2](#)).

17. Night--is the image of the present world ([Ro 13:12](#)). "Behold men as if dwelling in subterranean cavern" [P LATO, *Republic*, 7.1].

Until--that is, "Before that," &c.

break--rather, "breathe"; referring to the refreshing breeze of dawn in the East; or to the air of *life*, which distinguishes morning from the death-like stillness of night. MAURER takes this verse of the *approach of night*, when the breeze arises after the heat of day (compare [Ge 3:8](#), *Margin*, with [Ge 18:1](#)), and the "shadows" are lost in night ([Ps 102:11](#)); thus our life will be the *day*; death, the *night* ([Joh 9:4](#)). The *English Version* better accords with ([So 3:1](#)). "By *night*" ([Ro 13:12](#)).

turn--to me.

Bether--Mountains of Bithron, separated from the rest of Israel by the Jordan ([2Sa 2:29](#)), not far from Bethabara, where John baptized and Jesus was first manifested. Rather, as *Margin*, "of divisions," and *Septuagint*, *mountains intersected* with deep gaps, hard to pass over, separating the bride and Jesus Christ. In [So 8:14](#) the mountains are *of spices*, on which the roe feeds, not *of separation*; for at His first coming He had to overpass the gulf made by sin between Him and us ([Zec 4:6, 7](#)); in His second, He will only have to come down from the fragrant hill above to take home His prepared bride. Historically, in the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ's call to the bride was not, as later ([So 4:8](#)), "Come *with* me," but "Come away," namely, to meet Me ([So 2:2, 10, 13](#)). Sitting in darkness ([Mt 4:16](#)), she "waited" and "looked" eagerly for Him, the "great light" ([Lu 1:79; 2:25, 38](#)); at His rising, the shadows of the law ([Col 2:16, 17; Heb 10:1](#)) were to "flee away." So we wait for the second coming, when means of grace, so precious now, shall be superseded by the Sun of righteousness ([1Co 13:10, 12; Re 21:22, 23](#)). The Word is our light until then ([2Pe 1:19](#)).

CHAPTER 3

[So 3:1-11](#).

1. By night--literally, "By nights." Continuation of the longing for the dawn of the Messiah ([So 2:17; Ps 130:6; Mal 4:2](#)). The spiritual desertion here ([So 2:17; 3:5](#)) is not due to indifference, as in [So 5:2-8](#). "As nights and dews are better for flowers than a continual sun, so Christ's absence (at times) giveth sap to humility, and putteth an edge on hunger, and furnisheth a fair field to faith to put forth itself" [RUTHERFORD]. Contrast [So 1:13; Ps 30:6, 7](#).

on . . . bed--the secret of her failure ([Isa 64:7; Jer 29:13; Am 6:1, 4; Ho 7:14](#)).

loveth--no want of sincerity, but of diligence, which she now makes up for by leaving her bed to seek Him ([Ps 22:2; 63:8; Isa 26:9; Joh 20:17](#)). Four times ([So 3:1-4](#)) she calls Jesus Christ, "Him whom my soul loveth," designating Him as *absent*; language of desire: "He loved me," would be language of *present* fruition ([Re 1:5](#)). In questioning the watchmen ([So 3:3](#)), she does not even name Him, so full is her heart of Him. Having found Him at dawn (for throughout *He* is the *morning*), she charges the daughters not to abridge by intrusion the period of His stay. Compare as to the thoughtful seeking for Jesus Christ in the time of John the Baptist, in vain at first, but presently after successful ([Lu 3:15-22; Joh 1:19-34](#)).

found him not--Oh, for such honest dealings with ourselves ([Pr 25:14; Jude 12](#))!

2. Wholly awake for God ([Lu 14:18-20; Eph 5:14](#)). "An honest resolution is often to (the doing of) duty, like a needle that draws the thread after it" [DURHAM]. Not a mere wish, that counts not the cost--to leave her easy bed, and wander in the dark night seeking Him ([Pr 13:4; Mt 21:30; Lu 14:27-33](#)).

the city--Jerusalem, literally ([Mt 3:5; Joh 1:19](#)), and spiritually the *Church*

here ([Heb 12:22](#)), in glory ([Re 21:2](#)).

broad ways--open spaces at the gates of Eastern cities, where the public assembled for business. So, the assemblies of worshippers ([So 8:2, 3](#); [Pr 1:20-23](#); [Heb 10:25](#)). She had in her first awakening shrunk from them, seeking Jesus Christ alone; but she was desired to seek the footsteps of the flock ([So 1:8](#)), so now in her second trial she goes forth to them of herself. "The more the soul grows in grace, and the less it leans on ordinances, the more it prizes and profits by them" [MOODY S TUART] ([Ps 73:16, 17](#)).

found him not--Nothing short of Jesus Christ can satisfy her ([Job 23:8-10](#); [Ps 63:1, 2](#)).

3. watchmen--ministers ([Isa 62:6](#); [Jer 6:17](#); [Eze 3:17](#); [Heb 13:17](#)), fit persons to consult ([Isa 21:11](#); [Mal 2:7](#)).

found me--the general ministry of the Word "finds" individually souls in quest of Jesus Christ ([Ge 24:27](#), end of verse [Ac 16:14](#)); whereas formalists remain unaffected.

4. Jesus Christ is generally "found" near the watchmen and means of grace; but they are not Himself; the star that points to Beth-lehem is not the Sun that has risen there; she hastens past the guideposts to the goal [MOODY STUART]. Not even angels could satisfy Mary, instead of Jesus Christ ([Joh 20:11-16](#)).

found him-- ([Isa 45:19](#); [Ho 6:1-3](#); [Mt 13:44-46](#)).

held him, &c.--willing to be held; not willing, if not held ([Ge 32:26](#); [Mt 28:9](#); [Lu 24:28, 29](#); [Re 3:11](#)). "As a little weeping child will hold its mother fast, not because it is stronger than she, but because her bowels constrain her not to leave it; so Jesus Christ yearning over the believer *cannot go*, because He *will not*" [DURHAM]. In [So 1:4](#) it is He who leads the bride into His chambers; here it is she who leads Him into her mother's. There are times when the grace of Jesus Christ seems to draw us to Him; and others, when we with strong cries draw Him to us and ours. In the East one large apartment often serves for the whole family; so the bride here speaks of her mother's apartment and her own together. The mention of the "mother" excludes impropriety, and imparts the idea of heavenly love, pure as a sister's, while ardent as a bride's; hence the frequent title, "my sister--spouse." Our mother after the Spirit, is *the Church*, the new Jerusalem ([Joh 3:5-8](#); [Ga 4:19, 26](#)); for her we ought to pray continually ([Eph 3:14-19](#)), also for the *national* Jerusalem ([Isa 62:6, 7](#); [Ro 10:1](#)), also for the *human family*, which is our mother and kindred after the flesh; these our mother's children have evilly treated us ([So 1:6](#)); but, like our Father, we are to return good for evil ([Mt 5:44, 45](#)), and so bring Jesus Christ home to them ([1Pe 2:12](#)).

5. So [So 2:7](#); but *there* it was for the non-interruption of her own fellowship with Jesus Christ that she was anxious; *here* it is for the not grieving of the Holy Ghost, on the part of the daughters of Jerusalem. Jealously avoid levity, heedlessness, and offenses which would mar the gracious work begun in others ([Mt 18:7](#); [Ac 2:42, 43](#); [Eph 4:30](#)).

CANTICLE III.-- ([So 3:6-5:1](#)) --THE BRIDEGROOM WITH THE BRIDE.

Historically, the ministry of Jesus Christ on earth.

6. New scene ([So 3:6-11](#)). The friends of the Bridegroom see a cortege approach. His palanquin and guard.

cometh out--rather, "up from"; the wilderness was lower than Jerusalem [MAURER].

pillars of smoke--from the perfumes burned around Him and His bride. Image from Israel and the tabernacle (answering to "bed," [So 3:7](#)) marching through the desert with the pillar of smoke by day and fire by night ([Ex 14:20](#)), and the pillars of smoke ascending from the altars of incense and of atonement; so Jesus Christ's righteousness, atonement, and ever-living intercession. Balaam, the last representative of patriarchism, was required to curse the Jewish Church, just as *it* afterwards would not succumb to Christianity without a struggle ([Nu 22:41](#)), but he had to bless in language like that here ([Nu 24:5, 6](#)). Angels too joyfully ask the same question, when Jesus Christ with the tabernacle of His body (answering to "His bed," [So 3:7](#); [Joh 1:14](#), "dwelt," *Greek* "tabernacled," [Joh 2:21](#)) ascends into heaven ([Ps 24:8-10](#)); also when they see His glorious bride with Him ([Ps 68:18](#); [Re 7:13-17](#)). Encouragement to her; amid the darkest trials ([So 3:1](#)), she is still on the road to glory ([So 3:11](#)) in a palanquin "paved with love" ([So 3:10](#)); she is now in soul spiritually "coming," exhaling the sweet graces, faith, love, joy, peace, prayer, and praise; (the fire is lighted *within*, the "smoke" is seen *without*, [Ac 4:13](#)); it is in the *desert* of trial ([So 3:1-3](#)) she gets them; she is the "merchant" buying from Jesus Christ without money or price ([Isa 55:1](#); [Re 3:18](#)); just as myrrh and frankincense are got, not in Egypt, but in the Arabian sands and the mountains of Palestine. Hereafter she shall "come" ([So 3:6, 11](#)) in a glorified body, too ([Php 3:21](#)). Historically, Jesus Christ returning from the wilderness, full of the Holy Ghost ([Lu 4:1, 14](#)). The same, "Who is this," &c. ([Isa 63:1, 5](#)).

7. In [So 3:6](#) the *wilderness* character of the Church is portrayed; in [So 3:7, 8](#), its *militant* aspect. In [So 3:9, 10](#), Jesus Christ is seen dwelling in believers, who are His "chariot" and "body." In [So 3:11](#), the consummation in glory.

bed--palanquin. His body, literally, guarded by a definite number of angels, *threescore*, or sixty ([Mt 26:53](#)), from the wilderness ([Mt 4:1, 11](#)), and continually ([Lu 2:13; 22:43; Ac 1:10, 11](#)); just as six hundred thousand of Israel guarded the Lord's tabernacle ([Nu 2:17-32](#)), one for every ten thousand. In contrast to the "bed of sloth" ([So 3:1](#)).

valiant-- ([Jos 5:13, 14](#)). Angels guarding His *tomb* used like words ([Mr 16:6](#)). of Israel--true subjects, not mercenaries.

8. hold--not actually grasping them, but having them girt on the thigh ready for use, like their Lord ([Ps 45:3](#)). So believers too are guarded by angels ([Ps 91:11; Heb 1:14](#)), and they themselves need "every man" ([Ne 4:18](#)) to be armed ([Ps 144:1, 2; 2Co 10:4; Eph 6:12, 17; 1Ti 6:12](#)), and "expert" ([2Co 2:11](#)).

because of fear in the night--Arab marauders often turn a wedding into mourning by a night attack. So the bridal procession of saints in the night of this wilderness is the chief object of Satan's assault.

9. chariot--more elaborately made than the "bed" or travelling litter ([So 3:7](#)), from a *Hebrew* root, "to elaborate" [EWALD]. So the temple of "cedar of Lebanon," as compared with the temporary tabernacle of shittim wood ([2Sa 7:2, 6, 7; 1Ki 5:14; 6:15-18](#)), Jesus Christ's body is the antitype, "made" by the Father for Him ([1Co 1:30; Heb 10:5](#)), the wood answering to His human nature, the gold, His divine; the two being but one Christ.

10. pillars--supporting the canopy at the four corners; curtains at the side protect the person within from the sun. Pillars with silver sockets supported the veil that enclosed the holy of holies; emblem of Jesus Christ's *strength* ([1Ki 7:21](#)), *Margin*, "silver," emblem of His *purity* ([Ps 12:6](#)); so the saints hereafter ([Re 3:12](#)).

bottom--rather, "the back for resting or reclining on" (*Vulgate* and *Septuagint*) [MAURER]. So the floor and mercy seat, the *resting*-place of God ([Ps 132:14](#)) in the temple, was gold ([1Ki 6:30](#)).

covering--rather, "seat," as in [Le 15:9](#). Hereafter the saints shall share His *seat* ([Re 3:21](#)).

purple--the veil of the holiest, partly purple, and the *purple* robe put on Jesus Christ, accord with *English Version*, "*covering*." "Purple" (including scarlet and crimson) is the emblem of *royalty*, and of *His blood*; typified by the passover lamb's blood, and the wine when the twelve *sat* or *reclined* at the Lord's table.

paved--translated, like mosaic pavement, with the various acts and promises of love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ([Zep 3:17; 1Jo 4:8, 16](#)), in contrast with the tables of stone in the "midst" of the ark, covered with writings of stern command (compare [Joh 19:13](#)); *this* is all grace and love to believers, who answer to "the daughters of Jerusalem" ([Joh 1:17](#)). The exterior silver and gold, cedar, purple, and guards, may deter, but when the bride enters *within*, she rests on a pavement of love.

11. Go forth-- ([Mt 25:6](#)).

daughters of Zion--spirits of saints, and angels ([Isa 61:10; Zec 9:9](#)).

crown--nuptial ([Eze 16:8-12](#)), (the Hebrews wore costly crowns or chaplets at weddings), and kingly ([Ps 2:6; Re 19:12](#)). The crown of thorns was once His nuptial chaplet, His blood the wedding wine cup ([Joh 19:5](#)). "His mother," that so crowned Him, is the *human race*, for He is "the Son of *man*," not merely the son of Mary. The same mother reconciled to Him ([Mt 12:50](#)), as the Church, travails in birth for souls, which she presents to Him as a crown ([Php 4:1; Re 4:10](#)). Not being ashamed to call the children brethren ([Heb 2:11-14](#)), He calls *their* mother *His* mother ([Ps 22:9; Ro 8:29; Re 12:1, 2](#)).

behold-- ([2Th 1:10](#)).

day of his espousals--chiefly the final marriage, when the number of the elect is complete ([Re 6:11](#)).

gladness-- ([Ps 45:15](#); [Isa 62:5](#); [Re 19:7](#)). MOODY STUART observes as to this Canticle ([So 3:6-5:1](#)), the center of the Book, these characteristics: (1) The bridegroom takes the chief part, whereas elsewhere the bride is the chief speaker. (2) Elsewhere He is either "King" or "Solomon"; here He is twice called "King Solomon." The bride is six times here called the "spouse"; never so before or after; also "sister" four times, and, except in the first verse of the next Canticle [[So 5:2](#)], nowhere else. (3) He and she are never separate; no absence, no complaint, which abound elsewhere, are in this Canticle.

CHAPTER 4

[So 4:1-16](#).

1. Contrast with the bride's state by nature ([Isa 1:6](#)) *her state by grace* ([So 4:1-7](#)), "perfect through His comeliness put upon her" ([Eze 16:14](#); [Joh 15:3](#)). The praise of Jesus Christ, unlike that of the world, hurts not, but edifies; as His, not ours, is the glory ([Joh 5:44](#); [Re 4:10, 11](#)). Seven features of beauty are specified ([So 4:1-5](#)) ("lips" and "speech" are but one feature, [So 4:3](#)), the number for *perfection*. To each of these is attached a comparison from nature: the resemblances consist not so much in outward likeness, as in the combined sensations of delight produced by contemplating these natural objects.

doves'--the large melting eye of the Syrian dove appears especially beautiful amid the foliage of its native groves: so the bride's "eyes within her locks" ([Lu 7:44](#)). MAURER for "locks," has "veil"; but locks suit the connection better: so the *Hebrew* is translated ([Isa 47:2](#)). The dove was the only bird counted "clean" for sacrifice. Once the heart was "the cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Grace makes the change.

eyes-- ([Mt 6:22](#); [Eph 1:18](#); contrast [Mt 5:28](#); [Eph 4:18](#); [1Jo 2:16](#)). Chaste and guileless ("harmless," [Mt 10:16](#), *Margin*; [Joh 1:47](#)). John the Baptist, historically, was the "turtledove" ([So 2:12](#)), with eye directed to the coming Bridegroom: his Nazarite unshorn hair answers to "locks" ([Joh 1:29, 36](#)).

hair . . . goats--The hair of goats in the East is fine like silk. As long hair is her glory, and marks her subjection to man ([1Co 11:6-15](#)), so the Nazarite's hair marked his subjection and separation unto God. (Compare [Jud 16:17](#), with [2Co 6:17](#); [Tit 2:14](#); [1Pe 2:9](#)). Jesus Christ cares for the minutest concerns of His saints ([Mt 10:30](#)).

appear from--literally, "*that lie down* from"; lying along the hillside, they seem to *hang from* it: a picture of the bride's hanging tresses.

Gilead--beyond Jordan: there stood "the heap of witness" ([Ge 31:48](#)).

2. even shorn--the *Hebrew* is translated ([1Ki 6:25](#)), "of one size"; so the point of comparison to *teeth* is their *symmetry* of form; as in "came up from the washing," the *spotless whiteness*; and in "twins," the *exact correspondence of the upper and lower teeth*: and in "none barren," *none wanting*, none without its fellow. Faith is the tooth with which we eat the living bread ([Joh 6:35, 54](#)). Contrast the teeth of sinners ([Ps 57:4](#); [Pr 30:14](#)); also their end ([Ps 3:7](#); [Mt](#)

[25:30](#)). Faith leads the flock to the washing ([Zec 13:1](#); [1Co 6:11](#); [Tit 3:5](#)).
none . . . barren-- ([2Pe 1:8](#)). He who is begotten of God begets instrumentally other sons of God.

3. thread--like a delicate fillet. Not thick and white as the leper's lips (type of sin), which were therefore to be "covered," as "unclean" ([Le 13:45](#)).

scarlet--The blood of Jesus Christ ([Isa 6:5-9](#)) cleanses the leprosy, and unseals the lips ([Isa 57:19](#); [Ho 14:2](#); [Heb 13:15](#)). Rahab's scarlet thread was a type of it ([Jos 2:18](#)).

speech--not a separate feature from the *lips* ([Zep 3:9](#); [Col 4:6](#)). Contrast "uncircumcised lips" ([Ex 6:12](#)). MAURER and BURROWES translate, "thy mouth."

temples--rather, *the upper part of the cheek* next the temples: the seat of shamefacedness; so, "within thy locks," no display ([1Co 11:5, 6, 15](#)). Mark of true penitence ([Ezr 9:6](#); [Eze 16:63](#)). Contrast [Jer 3:3](#); [Eze 3:7](#).

pomegranate--When cut, it displays in rows seeds pellucid, like crystal, tinged with red. Her modesty is not on the surface, but within, which Jesus Christ can see into.

4. neck--stately: in beautiful contrast to the blushing temples ([So 4:3](#)); not "stiff" ([Isa 48:4](#); [Ac 7:51](#)), as that of unbroken nature; nor "stretched forth" wantonly ([Isa 3:16](#)); nor burdened with the legal yoke ([La 1:14](#); [Ac 15:10](#)); but erect in gospel freedom ([Isa 52:2](#)).

tower of David--probably on Zion. He was a man of war, preparatory to the reign of Solomon, the king of peace. So warfare in the case of Jesus Christ and His saints precedes the coming rest. Each soul won from Satan by Him is a trophy gracing the bride ([Lu 11:22](#)); (each hangs on Him, [Isa 22:23, 24](#)); also each victory of her faith. As shields adorn a temple's walls ([Eze 27:11](#)), so necklaces hang on the bride's neck ([Jud 5:30](#); [1Ki 10:16](#)).

5. breasts--The bust is left open in Eastern dress. The breastplate of the high priest was made of "two" pieces, folded one on the other, in which were the Urim and Thummim (*lights* and *perfection*). "Faith and love" are the double breastplate ([1Th 5:8](#)), answering to "hearing the word" and "keeping it," in a similar connection with breasts ([Lu 12:27, 28](#)).

roes--He reciprocates her praise ([So 2:9](#)). Emblem of *love* and *satisfaction* ([Pr 5:19](#)).

feed-- ([Ps 23:2](#)).

among the lilies--shrinking from thorns of strife, worldliness, and ungodliness ([2Sa 23:6](#); [Mt 13:7](#)). Roes feed *among*, not *on* the lilies: where these grow, there is moisture producing green pasturage. The lilies represent her white dress ([Ps 45:14](#); [Re 19:8](#)).

6. Historically, *the hill of frankincense* is Calvary, where, "through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself"; the mountain of myrrh is His embalmment ([Joh 19:39](#)) till the resurrection "daybreak." The third Canticle occupies the one

cloudless day of His presence on earth, beginning from the night ([So 2:17](#)) and ending with the night of His departure ([So 4:6](#)). His promise is almost exactly in the words of her prayer ([So 2:17](#)), (the same Holy Ghost breathing in Jesus Christ and His praying people), with the difference that she then looked for His visible coming. He now tells her that when He shall have gone from sight, He still is to be met with spiritually in prayer ([Ps 68:16; Mt 28:20](#)), until the everlasting day break, when we shall see face to face ([1Co 13:10, 12](#)).

7. Assurance that He is going from her in love, not in displeasure ([Joh 16:6, 7](#)).

all fair--still stronger than [So 1:15; So 4:1](#).

no spot--our privilege ([Eph 5:27; Col 2:10](#)); our duty ([2Co 6:17; Jude 23; Jas 1:27](#)).

8. Invitation to her to leave the border mountains (the highest worldly elevation) between the hostile lands north of Palestine and the Promised Land ([Ps 45:10; Php 3:13](#)).

Amana--south of Anti-Libanus; the river Abana, or Amana, was near Damascus ([2Ki 5:12](#)).

Shenir--The whole mountain was called *Hermon*; the part held by the Sidonians was called *Sirion*; the part held by the Amorites, *Shenir* ([De 3:9](#)). Infested by the devouring lion and the stealthy and swift leopard ([Ps 76:4; Eph 6:11; 1Pe 5:8](#)). Contrasted with the mountain of myrrh, &c. ([So 4:6; Isa 2:2](#)); the good land ([Isa 35:9](#)).

with me--twice repeated emphatically. The presence of Jesus Christ makes up for the absence of all besides ([Lu 18:29, 30; 2Co 6:10](#)). Moses was permitted to see Canaan from Pisgah; Peter, James, and John had a foretaste of glory on the mount of transfiguration.

9. sister . . . spouse--This title is here first used, as He is soon about to institute the Supper, the pledge of the nuptial union. By the term "sister," carnal ideas are excluded; the ardor of a spouse's love is combined with the purity of a sister's ([Isa 54:5](#); compare [Mr 3:35](#)).

one--Even *one* look is enough to secure His love ([Zec 12:10; Lu 23:40-43](#)). Not merely the Church collectively, but each *one* member of it ([Mt 18:10, 14; Lu 15:7, 24, 32](#)).

chain--necklace ([Isa 62:3; Mal 3:17](#)), answering to the "shields" hanging in the tower of David ([So 4:4](#)). Compare the "ornament" ([1Pe 3:4](#)); "chains" ([Pr 1:9; 3:22](#)).

10. love--*Hebrew*, "loves"; manifold tokens of thy love.

much better--answering to her "better" ([So 1:2](#)), but with *increased* force. An Amoebean pastoral character pervades the Song, like the classic Amoebean idylls and eclogues.

wine--The love of His saints is a more reviving cordial to Him than wine; for example, at the feast in Simon's house ([Lu 7:36, 47; Joh 4:32](#); compare [Zec](#)

[10:7](#)).

smell of . . . ointments than all spices--answering to her praise ([So 1:3](#)) with increased force. Fragrant, as being fruits of *His* Spirit in us ([Ga 5:22](#)).

11. drop--always ready to fall, being full of honey, though not always ([Pr 10:19](#)) actually *dropping* ([So 5:13](#); [De 32:2](#); [Mt 12:34](#)).

honeycomb-- ([Pr 5:3](#); [16:24](#)).

under thy tongue--not always *on*, but *under*, the tongue, ready to fall ([Ps 55:21](#)). Contrast her former state ([Ps 140:3](#); [Ro 3:13](#)). "Honey and milk" were the glory of the good land. The change is illustrated in the penitent thief. Contrast [Mt 27:44 with Lu 23:39](#), &c. It was literally with "one" eye, a sidelong glance of love "better than wine," that he refreshed Jesus Christ ([So 4:9, 10](#)). "To-day shalt thou be *with Me* (compare [So 4:8](#)) in Paradise" ([So 4:12](#)), is the only joyous sentence of His seven utterances on the cross.

smell of . . . garments--which are often perfumed in the East ([Ps 45:8](#)). The perfume comes from Him on us ([Ps 133:2](#)). We draw nigh to God in the perfumed garment of our elder brother ([Ge 27:27](#); see [Jude 23](#)).

Lebanon--abounding in odoriferous trees ([Ho 14:5-7](#)).

12. The *Hebrew* has no "is." Here she is distinct from the garden ([So 5:1](#)), yet identified with it ([So 4:16](#)) as being one with Him in His sufferings. Historically the Paradise, into which the soul of Jesus Christ entered at death; and the tomb of Joseph, in which His body was laid amid "myrrh," &c. ([So 4:6](#)), situated in a *nicely kept* garden (compare "gardener," [Joh 20:15](#)); "sealed" with a stone ([Mt 27:66](#)); in which it resembles "wells" in the East ([Ge 29:3, 8](#)). It was in a garden of light Adam fell; in a garden of darkness, Gethsemane, and chiefly that of the tomb, the second Adam retrieved us. Spiritually the garden is the gospel kingdom of heaven. Here all is ripe; previously ([So 2:13](#)) it was "the *tender* grape." The garden is His, though He calls the plants hers ([So 4:13](#)) by His gift ([Isa 61:3](#), end).

spring . . . fountain--Jesus Christ ([Joh 4:10](#)) sealed, while He was in the sealed tomb: it poured forth its full tide on Pentecost ([Joh 7:37-39](#)). Still He is a sealed fountain until the Holy Ghost opens it to one ([1Co 12:3](#)). The Church also is "a garden enclosed" ([Ps 4:3](#); [Isa 5:1](#), &c.). Contrast [Ps 80:9-12](#). So "a spring" ([Isa 27:3](#); [58:11](#)); "sealed" ([Eph 4:30](#); [2Ti 2:19](#)). As wives in the East are secluded from public gaze, so believers ([Ps 83:3](#); [Col 3:3](#)). Contrast the open streams which "pass away" ([Job 6:15-18](#); [2Pe 2:17](#)).

13. orchard--*Hebrew*, "a paradise," that is, a pleasure-ground and orchard. Not only flowers, but fruit trees ([Joh 15:8](#); [Php 1:11](#)).

camphire--not camphor ([So 1:14](#)), *hennah*, or cypress blooms.

14. calamus--"sweet cane" ([Ex 30:23](#); [Jer 6:20](#)).

myrrh and aloes--Ointments are associated with His death, as well as with feasts ([Joh 12:7](#)). The bride's ministry of "myrrh and aloes" is recorded ([Joh 19:39](#)).

15. of--This pleasure-ground is not dependent on mere reservoirs; it has a fountain *sufficient to water* many "gardens" (*plural*).

living-- ([Jer 17:8](#); [Joh 4:13, 14](#); [7:38, 39](#)).

from Lebanon--Though the fountain is lowly, the source is lofty; fed by the perpetual snows of Lebanon, refreshingly cool ([Jer 18:14](#)), fertilizing the gardens of Damascus. It springs upon earth; its source is heaven. It is now not "sealed," but open "streams" ([Re 22:17](#)).

16. Awake--literally, "arise." All besides is ready; one thing alone is wanted--the breath of God. This follows rightly after His death ([So 6:12](#); [Ac 2:1-4](#)). It is His call to the Spirit to come ([Joh 14:16](#)); in [Joh 3:8](#), compared to "the wind"; quickening ([Joh 6:63](#); [Eze 27:9](#)). Saints offer the same prayer ([Ps 85:6](#); [Hab 3:2](#)). The north wind "*awakes*," or *arises* strongly, namely, the Holy Ghost as a reprover ([Joh 16:8-11](#)); the south wind "*comes*" gently, namely, the Holy Ghost as the comforter ([Joh 14:16](#)). The west wind brings rain from the sea ([1Ki 18:44, 45](#); [Lu 12:54](#)). The east wind is tempestuous ([Job 27:21](#); [Isa 27:8](#)) and withering ([Ge 41:23](#)). These, therefore, are not wanted; but first the north wind clearing the air ([Job 37:22](#); [Pr 25:23](#)), and then the warm south wind ([Job 37:17](#)); so the Holy Ghost first clearing away mists of gloom, error, unbelief, sin, which intercept the light of Jesus Christ, then infusing spiritual warmth ([2Co 4:6](#)), causing the graces to exhale their odor.

Let my beloved, &c.--*the bride's reply*. The fruit was now at length ripe; the last passover, which He had so desired, is come ([Lu 22:7, 15, 16, 18](#)), the only occasion in which He took charge of the preparations.

his--answering to Jesus Christ's "My." She owns that the garden is His, and the fruits in her, which she does not in false humility deny ([Ps 66:16](#); [Ac 21:19](#); [1Co 15:10](#)) are His ([Joh 15:8](#); [Php 1:11](#)).

CHAPTER 5

[So 5:1-16](#).

1. Answer to her prayer ([Isa 65:24](#); [Re 3:20](#)).

am come--already ([So 4:16](#)); "come" ([Ge 28:16](#)).

sister . . . spouse--As Adam's was created of his flesh, out of his opened side, there being none on earth on a level with him, so the bride out of the pierced Saviour ([Eph 5:30-32](#)).

have gathered . . . myrrh--His course was already complete; the myrrh, &c. ([Mt 2:11](#); [26:7-12](#); [Joh 19:39](#)), emblems of the indwelling of the anointing Holy Ghost, were already gathered.

spice--literally, "balsam."

have eaten--answering to her "eat" ([So 4:16](#)).

honeycomb--distinguished here from liquid "honey" dropping from trees. The last supper, here set forth, is one of *espousal*, a pledge of the future *marriage* ([So 8:14](#); [Re 19:9](#)). Feasts often took place in gardens. In the absence of sugar, then unknown, honey was more widely used than with us. His eating honey with

milk indicates His true, yet spotless, human nature from infancy ([Isa 7:15](#)); and after His resurrection ([Lu 24:42](#)).

my wine-- ([Joh 18:11](#)) --a cup of wrath to Him, of mercy to us, whereby God's Word and promises become to us "milk" ([Ps 19:10; 1Pe 2:2](#)). "My" answers to "His" ([So 4:16](#)). The myrrh (emblem, by its bitterness, of *repentance*), honey, milk (*incipient faith*), wine (*strong faith*), in reference to believers, imply that He accepts all their graces, however various in degree.

eat--He desires to make us partakers in His joy ([Isa 55:1, 2; Joh 6:53-57; 1Jo 1:3](#)).

drink abundantly--so as to be filled ([Eph 5:18](#); as [Hag 1:6](#)).

friends-- ([Joh 15:15](#)).

CANTICLE IV.-- ([So 5:2-8:4](#)) --FROM THE AGONY OF GETHSEMANE TO THE CONVERSION OF SAMARIA.

2. Sudden change of scene from evening to midnight, from a betrothal feast to cold repulse. He has gone from the feast alone; night is come; He knocks at the door of His espoused; she hears, but in sloth does not shake off half-conscious drowsiness; namely, the disciples' torpor ([Mt 26:40-43](#)), "the spirit willing, the flesh weak" (compare [Ro 7:18-25; Ga 5:16, 17, 24](#)). Not *total* sleep. The lamp was burning beside the *slumbering* wise virgin, but wanted trimming ([Mt 25:5-7](#)). It is *His* voice that rouses her ([Jon 1:6; Eph 5:14; Re 3:20](#)). Instead of bitter reproaches, He addresses her by the most endearing titles, "my sister, my love," &c. Compare His thought of *Peter* after the denial ([Mr 16:7](#)).

dew--which falls heavily in summer nights in the East (see [Lu 9:58](#)).

drops of the night-- ([Ps 22:2; Lu 22:44](#)). His death is not *expressed*, as unsuitable to the allegory, a song of love and joy; [So 5:4](#) refers to the scene in the judgment hall of Caiaphas, when Jesus Christ employed the cock-crowing and look of love to awaken Peter's sleeping conscience, so that his "bowels were moved" ([Lu 22:61, 62](#)); [So 5:5, 6](#), the disciples with "myrrh," &c. ([Lu 24:1, 5](#)), seeking Jesus Christ in the tomb, but finding Him not, for He has "withdrawn Himself" ([Joh 7:34; 13:33](#)); [So 5:7](#), the trials by watchmen extend through the whole night of His withdrawal from Gethsemane to the resurrection; they took off the "veil" of Peter's disguise; also, literally the linen cloth from the young man ([Mr 14:51](#)); [So 5:8](#), the sympathy of friends ([Lu 23:27](#)).

undefiled--not polluted by spiritual adultery ([Re 14:4; Jas 4:4](#)).

3. Trivial excuses ([Lu 14:18](#)).

coat--rather, the inmost vest, next the skin, taken off before going to bed.

washed . . . feet--before going to rest, for they had been soiled, from the Eastern custom of wearing sandals, not shoes. Sloth ([Lu 11:7](#)) and despondency ([De 7:17-19](#)).

4. A key in the East is usually a piece of wood with pegs in it corresponding to small holes in a wooden bolt within, and is put through a hole in the door, and thus draws the bolt. So Jesus Christ "puts forth His hand (namely, His Spirit, [Eze](#)

[3:14](#)), by (*Hebrew*, 'from,' so in [So 2:9](#)) the hole"; in "chastening" ([Ps 38:2](#); [Re 3:14-22](#), singularly similar to this passage), and other unexpected ways letting Himself in ([Lu 22:61, 62](#)).

bowels . . . moved for him--It is His which are first troubled for us, and which cause ours to be troubled for Him ([Jer 31:20](#); [Ho 11:8](#)).

5. dropped with myrrh--The best proof a bride could give her lover of welcome was to anoint herself (the back of the hands especially, as being the coolest part of the body) *profusely* with the *best* perfumes ([Ex 30:23](#); [Es 2:12](#); [Pr 7:17](#)); "sweet-smelling" is in the *Hebrew* rather, "spontaneously exuding" from the tree, and therefore the *best*. She designed also to anoint Him, whose "head was filled with the drops of night" ([Lu 24:1](#)). The myrrh typifies *bitter* repentance, the fruit of the Spirit's unction ([2Co 1:21, 22](#)).

handles of the lock--sins which closed the heart against Him.

6. withdrawn--He *knocked* when she was sleeping; for to have left her *then* would have ended in the death sleep; He *withdraws* now that she is roused, as she needs correction ([Jer 2:17, 19](#)), and can appreciate and safely bear it now, which she could not then. "The strong He'll strongly try" ([1Co 10:13](#)).

when he spake--rather, "because of His speaking"; at the remembrance of His tender words ([Job 29:2, 3](#); [Ps 27:13](#); [142:7](#)), or *till He should speak*.

no answer-- ([Job 23:3-9](#); [30:20](#); [34:29](#); [La 3:44](#)). Weak faith receives immediate comfort ([Lu 8:44, 47, 48](#)); strong faith is tried with delay ([Mt 15:22, 23](#)).

7. watchmen--historically, the Jewish priests, &c. (see on [So 5:2](#)); spiritually, ministers ([Isa 62:6](#); [Heb 13:17](#)), faithful in "smiting" ([Psalm 141. 5](#)), but (as she leaves them, [{v.} 8](#)) too harsh; or, perhaps, unfaithful; disliking her zeal wherewith she sought Jesus Christ, first, with spiritual prayer, "opening" her heart to Him, and then in charitable works "about the city"; miscalling it fanaticism ([Isa 66:5](#)), and taking away her veil (the greatest indignity to an Eastern lady), as though she were positively immodest. She had before sought Him by night in the streets, under strong affection ([So 3:2-4](#)), and so without rebuff from "the watchmen," found Him immediately; but now after sinful neglect, she encounters pain and delay. God forgives believers, but it is a serious thing to draw on His forgiveness; so the *growing reserve* of God towards Israel observable in Judges, as His people repeat their demands on His grace.

8. She turns from the unsympathizing watchmen to humbler persons, not yet themselves knowing Him, but in the way towards it. Historically, His secret friends in the night of His withdrawal ([Lu 23:27, 28](#)). Inquirers *may* find ("if ye find") Jesus Christ before she who has grieved His Spirit finds Him again.

tell--in prayer ([Jas 5:16](#)).

sick of love--from an opposite cause ([So 2:5](#)) than through excess of delight at His *presence*; now excess of pain at His *absence*.

9. Her own beauty ([Eze 16:14](#)), and lovesickness for Him, elicit now their enquiry ([Mt 5:16](#)); heretofore "other lords besides Him had dominion over them"; thus they had seen "no beauty in Him" ([Isa 26:13; 53:2](#)).

10. ([1Pe 3:15](#)).

white and ruddy--health and beauty. So David (equivalent to *beloved*), His forefather after the flesh, and type ([1Sa 17:42](#)). "The Lamb" is at once His nuptial and sacrificial name ([1Pe 1:19; Re 19:7](#)), characterized by white and red; *white*, His spotless manhood ([Re 1:14](#)). The *Hebrew* for *white* is properly "illuminated by the sun," white as the light" (compare [Mt 17:2](#)); *red*, in His blood-dyed garment as slain ([Isa 63:1-3; Re 5:6; 19:13](#)). Angels are white, not red; the blood of martyrs does not enter heaven; His alone is seen there.

chiefest--literally, "a standard bearer"; that is, as conspicuous above all others, as a standard bearer is among hosts ([Ps 45:7; 89:6; Isa 11:10; 55:4; Heb 2:10](#); compare [2Sa 18:3; Job 33:23; Php 2:9-11; Re 1:5](#)). The chief of sinners needs the "chiefest" of Saviours.

11. head . . . gold--*the Godhead* of Jesus Christ, as distinguished from His *heel*, that is, His manhood, which was "bruised" by Satan; both together being one Christ ([1Co 11:3](#)). Also His sovereignty, as Nebuchadnezzar, the supreme king was "the head of gold" ([Da 2:32-38; Col 1:18](#)), the highest creature, compared with Him, is brass, iron, and clay. "Preciousness" (*Greek*, [1Pe 2:7](#)).

bushy--*curled*, token of Headship. In contrast with her *flowing* locks ([So 4:1](#)), the token of her subjection to Him ([Ps 8:4-8; 1Co 11:3, 6-15](#)). The *Hebrew* is (pendulous as) the *branches of a palm*, which, when in leaf, resemble waving plumes of feathers.

black--implying youth; no "gray hairs" ([Ps 102:27; 110:3, 4; Ho 7:9](#)). Jesus Christ was crucified in the prime of vigor and manliness. In heaven, on the other hand, His hair is "white," He being the Ancient of days ([Da 7:9](#)). These contrasts often concur in Him ([So 5:10](#)), "white and ruddy"; here the "raven" ([So 5:12](#)), the "dove," as both with Noah in the ark ([Ge 8:11](#)); emblems of judgment and mercy.

12. as the eyes of doves--rather, "as doves" ([Ps 68:13](#)); bathing in "the rivers"; so combining in their "silver" feathers the *whiteness* of milk with the *sparkling brightness* of the water trickling over them ([Mt 3:16](#)). The "milk" may allude to the white around the pupil of the eye. The "waters" refer to the eye as the fountain of *tears of sympathy* ([Eze 16:5, 6; Lu 19:41](#)). Vivacity, purity, and love, are the three features typified.

fitly set--as a gem in a ring; as the precious stones in the high priest's breastplate. Rather, translate as *Vulgate* (the doves), *sitting at the fulness* of the stream; by the full stream; or, as MAURER (the eyes) *set in fulness*, not sunk in their sockets ([Re 5:6](#)), ("seven," expressing *full* perfection), ([Zec 3:9; 4:10](#)).

13. cheeks--the seat of beauty, according to the *Hebrew* meaning [GESENIUS]. Yet men smote and spat on them ([Isa 50:6](#)).

bed--full, like the raised surface of the garden bed; fragrant with ointments, as

beds with aromatic plants (literally, "balsam").

sweet flowers--rather, "*terraces* of aromatic herbs"--"*high-raised* parterres of sweet plants," in parallelism to "bed," which comes from a *Hebrew* root, meaning "elevation."

lips-- ([Ps 45:2](#); [Joh 7:46](#)).

lilies--red lilies. Soft and gentle ([1Pe 2:22, 23](#)). How different lips were man's ([Ps 22:7](#))!

dropping . . . myrrh--namely, His lips, just as the sweet dewdrops which hang in the calyx of the lily.

14. rings set with . . . beryl--*Hebrew*, *Tarshish*, so called from the city. The ancient chrysolite, gold in color (*Septuagint*), our topaz, one of the stones on the high priest's breastplate, also in the foundation of New Jerusalem ([Re 21:19, 20](#); also [Da 10:6](#)). "Are as," is plainly to be supplied, see in [So 5:13](#) a similar ellipsis; not as MOODY S TUART: "*have* gold rings." The hands bent in are compared to beautiful rings, in which beryl is set, as the nails are in the fingers. BURROWES explains the rings as *cylinders* used as signets, such as are found in Nineveh, and which resemble fingers. A ring is the token of sonship ([Lu 15:22](#)). A slave was not allowed to wear a *gold* ring. He imparts His sonship and freedom to us ([Ga 4:7](#)); also of authority ([Ge 41:42](#); compare [Joh 6:27](#)). He seals us in the name of God with His signet ([Re 7:2-4](#)), compare below, [So 8:6](#), where she desires to be herself *a signet-ring* on His arms; so "graven on the palms," &c., that is, on the signet-ring in His hand ([Isa 49:16](#); contrast [Hag 2:23, with Jer 22:24](#)).

belly--BURROWES and MOODY STUART translate, "body." NEWTON, as it is elsewhere, "bowels"; namely, His compassion ([Ps 22:14](#); [Isa 63:15](#); [Jer 31:20](#); [Ho 11:8](#)).

bright--literally, "elaborately wrought so as to shine," so His "prepared" body ([Heb 10:5](#)); the "ivory palace" of the king ([Ps 45:8](#)); spotless, pure, so the bride's "neck is as to tower of *ivory*" ([So 7:4](#)).

sapphires--spangling in the girdle around Him ([Da 10:5](#)). "To the pure all things are pure." As in statuary to the artist the partly undraped figure is suggestive only of beauty, free from indelicacy, so to the saint the personal excellencies of Jesus Christ, typified under the ideal of the noblest human form. As, however, the bride and bridegroom are in public, the usual robes on the person, richly ornamented, are presupposed ([Isa 11:5](#)). Sapphires indicate His *heavenly* nature (so [Joh 3:13](#), "*is* in heaven"), even in His humiliation, *overlaying* or cast "over" His ivory human body ([Ex 24:10](#)). Sky-blue in color, the *height* and *depth* of the love of Jesus Christ ([Eph 3:18](#)).

15. pillars--strength and steadfastness. Contrast man's "legs" ([Ec 12:3](#)). Allusion to the temple ([1Ki 5:8, 9; 7:21](#)), the "cedars" of "Lebanon" ([Ps 147:10](#)). Jesus Christ's "legs" were not broken on the cross, though the thieves' were; on them rests the weight of our salvation ([Ps 75:3](#)).

sockets of fine gold--His sandals, answering to the bases of the pillars; "set up from everlasting" ([Pr 8:22, 23](#)). From the head ([So 5:11](#)) to the feet, "of fine

gold." He was tried in the fire and found without alloy.

countenance--rather, "His aspect," including both *mien* and *stature* (compare [2Sa 23:21](#), *Margin*; with [1Ch 11:23](#)). From the several *parts*, she proceeds to the general effect of the *whole* person of Jesus Christ.

Lebanon--so called from its *white* limestone rocks.

excellent--literally, "choice," that is, fair and tall as the cedars on Lebanon ([Eze 31:3](#), &c.). Majesty is the prominent thought ([Ps 21:5](#)). Also the cedars' *duration* ([Heb 1:11](#)); *greenness* ([Lu 23:31](#)), and refuge afforded by it ([Eze 17:22, 23](#)).

16. Literally, "His *palate* is *sweetness*, yea, all over loveliness," that is, He is the *essence* of these qualities.

mouth--so [So 1:2](#), not the same as "lips" ([So 5:13](#)), His breath ([Isa 11:4](#); [Joh 20:22](#)). "All over," all the beauties scattered among creatures are transcendently concentrated in Him ([Col 1:19](#); [2:9](#)).

my beloved--for I love Him.

my friend--for He loves me ([Pr 18:24](#)). Holy boasting ([Ps 34:2](#); [1Co 1:31](#)).

CHAPTER 6

[So 6:1-13](#).

1. Historically, at Jesus Christ's crucifixion and burial, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, and others, joined with His professed disciples. By speaking of Jesus Christ, the bride does good not only to her own soul, but to others (see on [So 1:4](#); [Mal 3:16](#); [Mt 5:14-16](#)). Compare the hypocritical use of similar words ([Mt 2:8](#)).

2. gone down--Jerusalem was on a hill (answering to its *moral* elevation), and the gardens were at a little distance in the valleys below.

beds of spices--(balsam) which He Himself calls the "mountain of myrrh," &c. ([So 4:6](#)), and again ([So 8:14](#)), the resting-place of His body amidst spices, and of His soul in paradise, and now in heaven, where He stands as High Priest for ever. Nowhere else in the Song is there mention of mountains of spices.

feed in . . . gardens--that is, in the churches, though He may have withdrawn for a time from the individual believer: she implies an invitation to the daughters of Jerusalem to enter His spiritual Church, and become lilies, made white by His blood. He is gathering some lilies now to plant on earth, others to transplant into heaven ([So 5:1](#); [Ge 5:24](#); [Mr 4:28, 29](#); [Ac 7:60](#)).

3. In speaking of Jesus Christ to others, she regains her own assurance. Literally, "I am *for* my beloved . . . *for me*." Reverse order from [So 2:16](#). She *now*, after the season of darkness, grounds her convictions on His love towards her, more than on hers towards Him ([De 33:3](#)). *There*, it was the young believer concluding that she was His, from the sensible assurance that He was hers.

4. Tirzah--meaning "pleasant" ([Heb 13:21](#)); "well-pleasing" ([Mt 5:14](#)); the royal city of one of the old Canaanite kings ([Jos 12:24](#)); and after the revolt of Israel, the royal city of its kings, before Omri founded Samaria ([1Ki 16:8, 15](#)). No ground for assigning a later date than the time of Solomon to the Song, as Tirzah was even in his time the capital of the north (Israel), as Jerusalem was of the south (Judah).

Jerusalem--residence of the kings of *Judah*, as Tirzah, of *Israel* ([Ps 48:1, &c.](#); [122:1-3](#); [125:1, 2](#)). Loveliness, security, unity, and loyalty; also the union of Israel and Judah in the Church ([Isa 11:13](#); [Jer 3:18](#); [Eze 37:16, 17, 22](#); compare [Heb 12:22](#); [Re 21:2, 12](#)).

terrible--awe-inspiring. Not only armed as a city on the defensive, but as an army on the offensive.

banners--(See on [So 5:10](#); [Ps 60:4](#)); Jehovah-nissi ([2Co 10:4](#)).

5. ([So 4:9](#); [Ge 32:28](#); [Ex 32:9-14](#); [Ho 12:4](#)). This is the way "the army" ([So 6:4](#)) "overcomes" not only enemies, but Jesus Christ Himself, with eyes fixed on Him ([Ps 25:15](#); [Mt 11:12](#)). Historically, [So 6:3-5](#), represent the restoration of Jesus Christ to His Church at the resurrection; His sending her forth as an army, with new powers ([Mr 16:15-18, 20](#)); His rehearsing the *same* instructions (see on [So 6:6](#)) as when with them ([Lu 24:44](#)).

overcome--literally, "have taken me by storm."

6. Not vain repetition of [So 4:1, 2](#). The use of the same words shows His love unchanged after her temporary unfaithfulness ([Mal 3:6](#)).

8. threescore--indefinite number, as in [So 3:7](#). Not queens, &c., of *Solomon*, but witnesses of the espousals, rulers of the earth contrasted with the saints, who, though many, are but "one" bride ([Isa 52:15](#); [Lu 22:25, 26](#); [Joh 17:21](#); [1Co 10:17](#)). The one Bride is contrasted with the many wives whom Eastern kings had in violation of the marriage law ([1Ki 11:1-3](#)).

9. Hollow professors, like half wives, have no part in the one bride.

only one of her mother--namely, "Jerusalem above" ([Ga 4:26](#)). The "little sister" ([So 8:8](#)) is not inconsistent with her being "the only one"; for that sister is one with herself ([Joh 10:16](#)).

choice-- ([Eph 1:4](#); [2Th 2:13](#)). As she exalted Him above all others ([So 5:10](#)), so He now her.

daughters . . . blessed her-- ([Isa 8:18](#); [61:9](#); [Eze 16:14](#); [2Th 1:10](#)). So at her appearance after Pentecost ([Ac 4:13](#); [6:15](#); [24:25](#); [26:28](#)).

10. The words expressing the admiration of the daughters. Historically ([Ac 5:24-39](#)).

as the morning--As yet she is not come to the fulness of her light ([Pr 4:18](#)).

moon--shining in the night, by light borrowed from the sun; so the bride, in the darkness of this world, reflects the light of the Sun of righteousness ([2Co 3:18](#)).

sun--Her light of justification is perfect, for it is His ([2Co 5:21](#); [1Jo 4:17](#)). The

moon has less light, and has only one half illuminated; so the bride's sanctification is as yet imperfect. Her future glory ([Mt 13:43](#)).

army-- ([So 6:4](#)). The climax requires this to be applied to the starry and angelic hosts, from which God is called Lord of Sabaoth. Her final glory ([Ge 15:5](#); [Da 12:3](#); [Re 12:1](#)). The Church Patriarchal, "the morning"; Levitical, "the moon"; Evangelical, "the sun"; Triumphant, "the bannered army" ([Re 19:14](#)).

11. The bride's words; for she everywhere is the narrator, and often soliloquizes, which He never does. The first garden ([So 2:11-13](#)) was that of spring, full of flowers and grapes not yet ripe; the second, autumn, with spices (which are always connected with the person of Jesus Christ), and nothing unripe ([So 4:13](#), &c.). The third here, of "nuts," from the previous autumn; the end of winter, and verge of spring; the Church in the upper room ([Ac 1:13](#), &c.), when one dispensation was just closed, the other not yet begun; the hard shell of the old needing to be broken, and its inner sweet kernel extracted [ORIGEN] ([Lu 24:27, 32](#)); waiting for the Holy Ghost to usher in spiritual spring. The *walnut* is meant, with a bitter outer husk, a hard shell, and sweet kernel. So the Word is distasteful to the careless; when awakened, the sinner finds the letter hard, until the Holy Ghost reveals the sweet inner spirit.

fruits of the Valley--MAURER translates, "the *blooming products* of the river," that is, the plants growing on the margin of the river flowing through the garden. She goes to watch the *first* sproutings of the various plants.

12. Sudden outpourings of the Spirit on Pentecost ([Ac 2:1-13](#)), while the Church was using the means (answering to "the garden," [So 6:11](#); [Joh 3:8](#)).

Ammi-nadib--supposed to me one proverbial for swift driving. Similarly ([So 1:9](#)). Rather, "my willing people" ([Ps 110:3](#)). A willing chariot bore a "willing people"; or Nadib is *the Prince*, Jesus Christ ([Ps 68:17](#)). She is borne in a moment into His presence ([Eph 2:6](#)).

13. Entreaty of the daughters of Jerusalem to her, in her chariot-like flight from them (compare [2Ki 2:12](#); [2Sa 19:14](#)).

Shulamite--new name applied to her now for the first time. *Feminine* of Solomon, Prince of Peace; His bride, daughter of peace, accepting and proclaiming it ([Isa 52:7](#); [Joh 14:27](#); [Ro 5:1](#); [Eph 2:17](#)). Historically, this name answers to the time when, not without a divine design in it, the young Church met in *Solomon's* porch ([Ac 3:11](#); [5:12](#)). The entreaty, "Return, O Shulamite," answers to the people's desire to keep Peter and John, after the lame man was healed, when they were about to enter the temple. Their reply attributing the glory not to themselves, but to Jesus Christ, answers to the bride's reply here, "What will ye see" in me? "As it were," &c. She accepts the name Shulamite, as truly describing her. But adds, that though "one" ([So 6:9](#)), she is nevertheless "two." Her glories are her Lord's, beaming through her ([Eph 5:31, 32](#)). The two armies are the family of Jesus Christ in heaven, and that on earth, joined and one with Him; the one militant, the other triumphant. Or Jesus Christ and His ministering angels are one army, the Church the other, both being one ([Joh](#)

[17:21, 22](#)). Allusion is made to Mahanaim (meaning *two hosts*), the scene of Jacob's victorious conflict by prayer ([Ge 32:2, 9, 22-30](#)). Though she is peace, yet she has warfare here, between flesh and spirit within and foes without; her strength, as Jacob's at Mahanaim, is Jesus Christ and His host enlisted on her side by prayer; whence she obtains those graces which raise the admiration of the daughters of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 7

[So 7:1-13](#).

1. thy feet--rather, "thy goings" ([Ps 17:5](#)). Evident allusion to [Isa 52:7](#): "*How beautiful . . . are the feet of him . . . that publisheth peace*" (Shulamite, [So 6:13](#)).

shoes--Sandals are richly jewelled in the East ([Lu 15:22; Eph 6:15](#)). She is evidently "on the mountains," whither she was wafted ([So 6:12](#)), *above* the daughters of Jerusalem, who therefore portray her *feet* first.

daughter--of God the Father, with whom Jesus Christ is one ([Mt 5:9](#)), "children of (the) God" (of *peace*), equivalent to Shulamite ([Ps 45:10-15; 2Co 6:18](#)), as well as bride of Jesus Christ.

prince's--therefore princely herself, freely giving the word of life to others, not sparing her "feet," as in [So 5:3; Ex 12:11](#). To act on the offensive is defensive to ourselves.

joints--rather, "the rounding"; the full graceful curve of the hips in the female figure; like the *rounding* of a *necklace* (as the *Hebrew* for "jewels" means). Compare with the *English Version*, [Eph 4:13-16; Col 2:19](#). Or, applying it to the girdle binding together the robes round the hips ([Eph 6:14](#)).

cunning workman-- ([Ps 139:14-16; Eph 2:10, 22; 5:29, 30, 32](#)).

2. navel--rather, "girdle-clasp," called from the part of the person underneath. The "shoes" ([So 7:1](#)) prove that *dress* is throughout presupposed on all parts where it is usually worn. She is "a bride adorned for her husband"; the "uncomely parts," being most adorned ([1Co 12:23](#)). The girdle-clasp was adorned with red rubies resembling the "round goblet" (crater or *mixer*) of spice-mixed wine (not "liquor," [So 8:2; Isa 5:22](#)). The wine of the "New Testament in His blood" ([Lu 22:20](#)). The spiritual exhilaration by it was mistaken for that caused by new wine ([Ac 2:13-17; Eph 5:18](#)).

belly--that is, *the vesture* on it. As in [Ps 45:13, 14](#), gold and needlework compose the bride's attire, so golden-colored "wheat" and white "lilies" here. The ripe grain, in token of harvest joy, used to be decorated with lilies; so the accumulated spiritual food ([Joh 6:35; 12:24](#)), free from chaff, not fenced with thorns, but made attractive by lilies ("believers," [So 2:2; Ac 2:46, 47; 5:13, 14](#), in common partaking of it). Associated with the exhilarating wine cup ([Zec 9:17](#)), as here.

3. The daughters of Jerusalem describe her in the same terms as Jesus Christ in [So 4:5](#). The testimonies of heaven and earth coincide. twins--faith and love.

4. tower of ivory--In [So 4:4](#), Jesus Christ saith, "a tower of David builded for an armory." Strength and conquest are the main thought in His description; here, beauty and polished whiteness; contrast [So 1:5](#).

fishpools--seen by BURCKHARDT, clear ([Re 22:1](#)), deep, quiet, and full ([1Co 2:10, 15](#)).

Heshbon--east of Jordan, residence of the Amorite king, Sihon ([Nu 21:25](#), &c.), afterwards held by Gad.

Bath-rabbim--"daughter of a multitude"; a crowded thoroughfare. Her eyes ([So 4:1](#)) are called by Jesus Christ, "doves' eyes," waiting on Him. But here, looked on by the daughters of Jerusalem, they are compared to a placid lake. She is calm even amidst the crowd ([Pr 8:2; Joh 16:33](#)).

nose--or, face.

tower of Lebanon--a border-fortress, watching the hostile Damascus.

Towards Jesus Christ her face was full of holy shame (see on [So 4:1](#); [So 4:3](#)); towards spiritual foes, like a watchtower ([Hab 2:1; Mr 13:37; Ac 4:13](#)), elevated, so that she looks not up from earth to heaven, but down from heaven to earth. If we retain "nose," discernment of spiritual fragrance is meant.

5. upon thee--the headdress "upon" her.

Carmel--signifying a well-cultivated field ([Isa 35:2](#)). In [So 5:15](#) He is compared to *majestic* Lebanon; she here, to *fruitful* Carmel. Her headdress, or crown ([2Ti 4:8; 1Pe 5:4](#)). Also the souls won by her ([1Th 2:19, 20](#)), a token of her fruitfulness.

purple--royalty ([Re 1:6](#)). As applied to hair, it expresses the glossy splendor of black hair (literally, "pendulous hair") so much admired in the East ([So 4:1](#)). While the King compares her hair to the flowering hair of goats (the token of her *subjection*), the daughters of Jerusalem compare it to *royal* purple.

galleries--(so [So 1:17, Margin; Re 21:3](#)). But MAURER translates here, "flowing ringlets"; with these, as with "thongs" (so LEE, from the *Arabic* translates it) "the King is held" bound ([So 6:5; Pr 6:25](#)). Her purple crowns of martyrdom especially captivated the King, appearing from His galleries ([Ac 7:55, 56](#)). As Samson's strength was in his locks ([Jud 16:17](#)). Here first the daughters see the King themselves.

6. Nearer advance of the daughters to the Church ([Ac 2:47; 5:13](#), end). Love to her is the first token of love to Him ([1Jo 5:1](#), end).

delights--fascinating charms to them and to the King ([So 7:5; Isa 62:4](#), Hephzi-bah). Hereafter, too ([Zep 3:17; Mal 3:12; Re 21:9](#)).

7. palm tree-- ([Ps 92:12](#)). The sure sign of *water near* ([Ex 15:27; Joh 7:38](#)).

clusters--not of dates, as MOODY STUART thinks. The parallelism ([So 7:8](#)),

"clusters of the vine," shows it is here clusters of grapes. Vines were often trained (termed "wedded") on other trees.

8. The daughters are no longer content to admire, but resolve to lay hold of her fruits, high though these be. The palm stem is bare for a great height, and has its crown of fruit-laden boughs at the summit. It is the symbol of triumphant joy ([Joh 12:13](#)); so hereafter ([Re 7:9](#)).

breasts-- ([Isa 66:11](#)).

the vine--Jesus Christ ([Ho 14:7](#), end; [Joh 15:1](#)).

nose--that is, breath; the Holy Ghost breathed into her *nostrils* by Him, whose "mouth is most sweet" ([So 5:16](#)).

apples--citrons, off the tree to which He is likened ([So 2:3](#)).

9. roof of thy mouth--thy voice ([Pr 15:23](#)).

best wine--the *new* wine of the gospel kingdom ([Mr 14:25](#)), poured out at Pentecost ([Ac 2:4, 13, 17](#)).

for my beloved-- ([So 4:10](#)). Here first the daughters call Him theirs, and become one with the bride. The steps successively are ([So 1:5](#)) where they misjudge her ([So 3:11](#)); [So 5:8](#), where the possibility of their finding Him, before she regained Him, is expressed; [So 5:9](#) ([So 6:1; 7:6, 9; Joh 4:42](#)).

causing . . . asleep to speak-- ([Isa 35:6; Mr 5:19, 20; Ac 2:47; Eph 5:14](#)). Jesus Christ's first miracle turned water into "good wine kept until now" ([Joh 2:10](#)); just as the Gospel revives those asleep and dying under the law ([Pr 31:6; Ro 7:9, 10, 24, 25; 8:1](#)).

10. Words of the daughters of Jerusalem and the bride, now united into one ([Ac 4:32](#)). They are mentioned again distinctly ([So 8:4](#)), as fresh converts were being added from among enquirers, and these needed to be charged not to grieve the Spirit.

his desire is toward me--strong assurance. He so desires us, as to give us sense of His desire toward us ([Ps 139:17, 18; Lu 22:15; Ga 2:20; 1Jo 4:16](#)).

11. field--the country. "The tender grape (MAURER translates, flowers) and vines" occurred before ([So 2:13](#)). But here she prepares for Him all kinds of fruit old and new; also, she anticipates, in going forth to seek them, communion with Him in "loves." "Early" implies immediate earnestness. "The villages" imply distance from Jerusalem. At Stephen's death the disciples were scattered from it through Judea and Samaria, preaching the word ([Ac 8:4-25](#)). Jesus Christ was with them, confirming the word with miracles. They gathered the *old* fruits, of which Jesus Christ had sown the seed ([Joh 4:39-42](#)), as well as *new* fruits.

lodge--forsaking *home* for Jesus Christ's sake ([Mt 19:29](#)).

12. ([Mr 1:35; Joh 9:4; Ga 6:10](#)). Assurance fosters diligence, not indolence.

13. mandrakes--*Hebrew, dudaim*, from a root meaning "to love"; love apples, supposed to exhilarate the spirits and excite love. Only here and [Ge 30:14-16](#). *Atropa mandragora* of LINNÆUS; its leaves like lettuce, but dark green, flowers purple, root forked, fruit of the size of an apple, ruddy and sweet-smelling, gathered in wheat harvest, that is, in May (*Mariti*, ii. 195).

gates--the entrance to the kiosk or summer house. Love "lays up" the best of everything for the person beloved ([1Co 10:31](#); [Php 3:8](#); [1Pe 4:11](#)), thereby really, though unconsciously, laying up for itself ([1Ti 6:18, 19](#)).

CHAPTER 8

[So 8:1-14](#).

1. He had been a brother already. Why, then, this prayer here? It refers to the time after His resurrection, when the previous *outward* intimacy with Him was no longer allowed, but it was implied it should be renewed at the second coming ([Joh 20:17](#)). For this the Church here prays; meanwhile she enjoys *inward* spiritual communion with Him. The last who ever "kissed" Jesus Christ on earth was the traitor Judas. The bride's return with the King to her mother's house answers to [Ac 8:25](#), after the mission to Samaria. The rest spoken of ([So 8:4](#)) answers to [Ac 9:31](#).

that sucked . . . mother--a brother born of the same mother; the closest tie.

2. Her desire to bring Him into her home circle ([Joh 1:41](#)).

who would instruct me--rather, "thou wouldest instruct me," namely, how I might best please thee ([Isa 11:2, 3](#); [50:4](#); [Lu 12:12](#); [Joh 14:26](#); [16:13](#)).

spiced wine--seasoned with aromatic perfumes. Jesus Christ ought to have our choicest gifts. Spices are never introduced in the song in His absence; therefore the time of His return from "the mountain of spices" ([So 8:14](#)) is contemplated. The cup of betrothal was given by Him at the last supper; the cup or marriage shall be presented by her at His return ([Mt 26:29](#)). Till then the believer often cannot feel towards, or speak of, Him as he would wish.

3, 4. The "left and right hand," &c., occurred only once actually ([So 2:6](#)), and here optatively. Only at His first manifestation did the Church palpably embrace Him; at His second coming there shall be again sensible communion with Him. The rest in [So 8:4](#), which is a *spiritual* realization of the wish in [So 8:3](#) ([1Pe 1:8](#)), and the charge not to disturb it, close the first, second, and fourth canticles; not the third, as the bridegroom there takes charge Himself; nor the fifth, as, if *repose* formed its close, we might mistake the present state for our rest. The broken, longing close, like that of the whole Bible ([Re 22:20](#)), reminds us we are to be waiting for a Saviour to come. On "daughters of Jerusalem," see on [So 7:10](#).

CANTICLE V.-- ([So 8:5-14](#)) --FROM THE CALL OF THE GENTILES TO THE CLOSE OF REVELATION.

5. Who is this--Words of the daughters of Jerusalem, that is, the churches of Judea; referring to Paul, on his return from Arabia ("the wilderness"), whither he had gone after conversion ([Ga 1:15-24](#)).

I raised thee . . . she . . . bare thee-- ([Ac 26:14-16](#)). The first words of Jesus Christ to the bride since her going to the garden of nuts ([So 6:9, 10](#)); so His appearance to Paul is the only one since His ascension, [So 8:13](#) is not an address of Him as *visible*: her reply implies He is not visible ([1Co 15:8](#)). Spiritually, she was found in the moral wilderness ([Eze 16:5; Ho 13:5](#)); but now she is "coming up from" it ([Jer 2:2; Ho 2:14](#)), especially in the last stage of her journey, her conscious weakness casting itself the more wholly on Jesus Christ ([2Co 12:9](#)). "Raised" ([Eph 2:1-7](#)). Found ruined under the forbidden tree ([Ge 3:22-24](#)); restored under the shadow of Jesus Christ crucified, "the green tree" ([Lu 23:31](#)), fruit-"bearing" by the cross ([Isa 53:11; Joh 12:24](#)). "Born again by the Holy Ghost" "there" ([Eze 16:3-6](#)). In this verse, *her dependence*, in the similar verse, [So 3:6](#), &c., *His omnipotence to support her*, are brought out ([De 33:26](#)).

6. Implying approaching absence of the Bridegroom.

seal--having her name and likeness engraven on it. His Holy Priesthood also in heaven ([Ex 28:6-12, 15-30; Heb 4:14](#)); "his heart" there answering to "thine heart" here, and "two shoulders" to "arm." (Compare [Jer 22:24, with Hag 2:23](#)). But the Holy Ghost ([Eph 1:13, 14](#)). As in [So 8:5](#), she was "leaning" on Him, that is, her arm on His *arm*, her head on His *bosom*; so she prays now that before they part, her impression may be engraven both on His *heart* and His *arm*, answering to His *love* and His *power* ([Ps 77:15](#); see [Ge 38:18; Isa 62:3](#)).

love is strong as death-- ([Ac 21:13; Ro 8:35-39; Re 12:11](#)). This their love unto death flows from His ([Joh 10:15; 15:13](#)).

jealousy . . . the grave--*Zealous love*, jealous of all that would come between the soul and Jesus Christ ([1Ki 19:10; Ps 106:30, 31; Lu 9:60; 14:26; 1Co 16:22](#)).

cruel--rather, "unyielding" hard, as the grave will not let go those whom it once holds ([Joh 10:28](#)).

a most vehement flame--literally, "the fire-flame of Jehovah" ([Ps 80:16; Isa 6:6](#)). Nowhere else is *God's* name found in the Song. The zeal that burnt in Jesus Christ ([Ps 69:9; Lu 12:49, 50](#)) kindled in His followers ([Ac 2:3; Ro 15:30; Php 2:17](#)).

7. waters--in contrast with the "coals of fire" ([So 8:6; 1Ki 18:33-38](#)). Persecutions ([Ac 8:1](#)) cannot quench love ([Heb 10:34; Re 12:15, 16](#)). Our many provocations have not quenched His love ([Ro 8:33-39](#)).

if . . . give all the substance . . . contemned--Nothing short of Jesus Christ Himself, not even heaven without Him, can satisfy the saint ([Php 3:8](#)). Satan offers the world, as to Jesus Christ ([Mt 4:8](#)), so to the saint, in vain ([1Jo 2:15-17; 5:4](#)). Nothing but our love in turn can satisfy Him ([1Co 13:1-3](#)).

8. The Gentile Church ([Eze 16:48](#)). "We," that is, the Hebrew Church, which heretofore admitted Gentiles to communion, only by becoming *Judaic proselytes*. Now first *idolatrous* Gentiles are admitted *directly* ([Ac 11:17-26](#)).

Generally, the saint's anxiety for other souls ([Mr 5:19](#); [Joh 4:28, 29](#)).

no breasts--neither faith nor love as yet (see on [So 4:5](#)), which "come by hearing" of Him who first loved us. Not yet fit to be His bride, and mother of a spiritual offspring.

what shall we do--the chief question in the early Church at the first council ([Ac 15:23-29](#)). How shall "the elder brother" treat the "younger," already received by the Father ([Lu 15:25-32](#))? Generally ([2Sa 15:15](#); [Joh 9:4](#); [Ac 9:6](#); [Ga 6:10](#)).

In the day . . . spoken for--that is, when she shall be *sought in marriage* ([Jud 14:7](#)), namely, by Jesus Christ, the heavenly bridegroom.

9. wall . . . door--the very terms employed as to the Gentile question ([Ac 14:27](#); [Eph 2:14](#)). If she be a wall in Zion, founded on Jesus Christ ([1Co 3:11](#)), we will not "withstand God" ([Ac 11:17](#); [15:8-11](#)). But if so, we must not "build" ([Ac 15:14-17](#)) on her "wood, hay, stubble" ([1Co 3:12](#)), that is, Jewish rites, &c., but "a palace of silver," that is, all the highest privileges of church communion ([Ga 2:11-18](#); [Eph 2:11-22](#)). Image from the splendid turrets "built" on the "walls" of Jerusalem, and flanking the "door," or gateway. The Gentile Church is the "door," the type of catholic accessibility ([1Co 16:9](#)); but it must be not a mere thoroughfare but furnished with a wooden framework, so as not merely to admit, but also to safely enclose: cedar is fragrant, beautiful, and enduring.

10. The Gentile Church's joy at its free admission to gospel privileges ([Ac 15:30, 31](#)). She is one wall in the spiritual temple of the Holy Ghost, the Hebrew Church is the other; Jesus Christ, the common foundation, joins them ([Eph 2:11-22](#)).

breasts . . . towers--alluding to the silver palace, which the bridal virgins proposed to build on her ([So 8:9](#)). "Breasts" of consolation ([Isa 66:11](#)); faith and love ([1Th 5:8](#)); opposed to her previous state, "no breasts" ([So 8:8](#); [2Th 1:3](#)). Thus [Eze 16:46, 61](#) was fulfilled, both Samaria and the Gentiles being joined to the Jewish gospel Church.

favour--rather, "peace." The Gentile Church too is become the Shulamite ([So 6:13](#)), or *peace*-enjoying bride of Solomon, that is, Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace ([Ro 5:1](#); [Eph 2:14](#)). Reject not those whom God accepts ([Nu 11:28](#); [Lu 9:49](#); [Ac 15:8, 9](#)). Rather, superadd to such every aid and privilege ([So 8:9](#)).

11. The joint Church speaks of Jesus Christ's vineyard. Transference of it from the Jews, who rendered not the fruits, as is implied by the silence respecting any, to the Gentiles ([Mt 21:33-43](#)).

Baal-hamon--equivalent to *the owner of a multitude*; so Israel in Solomon's day ([1Ki 4:20](#)); so [Isa 5:1](#), "*a very fruitful hill*" abounding in *privileges*, as in *numbers*.

thousand pieces--namely, silverlings, or shekels. The vineyard had a thousand vines probably; a vine at a silverling ([Isa 7:23](#)), referring to this passage.

12. "mine" by grant of the true Solomon. Not merely "let out to keepers," as in the Jewish dispensation of *works*, but "mine" by *grace*. This is "before me," that is, *in my power* [M AURER]. But though no longer under constraint of "keeping" the law as a mere letter and covenant of works, *love* to Jesus Christ will constrain her the more freely to render all to Solomon ([Ro 8:2-4](#); [1Co 6:20](#); [Ga 5:13](#); [1Pe 2:16](#)), after having paid what justice and His will require should be paid to others ([1Co 7:29-31](#); [9:14](#)). "Before me" may also mean "I will never lose sight of it" (contrast [So 1:6](#)) [MOODY STUART]. She will not keep it for herself, though so freely given to her, but for His use and glory ([Lu 19:13](#); [Ro 6:15](#); [14:7-9](#); [1Co 12:7](#)). Or the "two hundred" may mean a *double tithe* (two-tenths of the whole paid back by Jesus Christ) as the reward of grace for our surrender of *all* (the thousand) to Him ([Ga 6:7](#); [Heb 6:10](#)); then she and "those that keep" are the same [ADELAIDE NEWTON]. But Jesus Christ pays back not merely *two tithes*, but *His all* for our all ([1Co 3:21-23](#)).

13. Jesus Christ's address to her; now no longer visibly present. Once she "had not kept" her vineyard ([So 1:6](#)); now she "dwells" in it, not as its owner, but its superintendent under Jesus Christ, with vinedressers ("companions"), for example, Paul, &c. ([Ac 15:25, 26](#)), under her ([So 8:11, 12](#)); these ought to obey her when she obeys Jesus Christ. Her voice in prayer and praise is to be heard continually by Jesus Christ, if her voice before men is to be effective ([So 2:14](#), end; [Ac 6:4](#); [13:2, 3](#)).

14. (See on [So 2:17](#)). As she began with longing for His first coming ([So 1:2](#)), so she ends with praying for His second coming ([Ps 130:6](#); [Php 3:20, 21](#); [Re 22:20](#)). MOODY STUART makes the rose upon spices to be the musk deer. As there are four gardens, so four mountains, which form not mere images, as Gilead, Carmel, &c., but part of the structure of the Song: (1) Bether, or *division* ([So 2:17](#)), God's justice *dividing* us from God. (2) Those "of leopards" ([So 4:8](#)), sin, the world, and Satan. (3) That "of myrrh and aloes" ([So 4:6, 14](#)), the sepulchre of Calvary. (4) Those "of spices," here answering to "the hill of frankincense" ([So 4:6](#)), where His *soul* was for the three days of His death, and heaven, where He is a High Priest now, offering incense for us on the fragrant mountain of His own finished work ([Heb 4:14, 7:25](#); [Re 8:3, 4](#)); thus He surmounts the other three mountains, God's justice, our sin, death. The mountain of spices is as much greater than our sins, as heaven is higher than earth ([Ps 103:11](#)). The abrupt, unsatisfied close with the yearning prayer for His *visible* coming shows that the marriage is future, and that to wait eagerly for it is our true attitude ([1Co 1:7](#); [1Th 1:10](#); [Tit 2:13](#); [2Pe 3:12](#)).