Song of Solomon - Commentaries by William Kelly

Lectures on the Song of Solomon, Song of Solomon 3:7-11; Song of Solomon 4-5

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It is not here, then, the Lamb rejected on earth and glorified in another scene. That is what we who are Christians are looking for, and, consequently, now we are willing to follow Him—glad to follow Him in His path of rejection. But in the case before us it is another thing, and so we find a beautiful picture of what is to be, what belongs to Him. Threescore valiant men surround—of the valiant men of Israel. “They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night"; for you see it is not yet the day. You must remember that. She is expecting, and looking for the day. You find her here, but it is a vision of the night. She is on her bed, so when she does go forth it is from her bed, and so on. It is not yet the day. The day is expected, looked for, counted on; but not yet come.

“King Solomon” —for there again it is the king— “King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver.” There was grace there. “The bottom thereof of gold” —divine righteousness—just as much indeed for Israel as for us. It is no question of man's righteousness at any time. “The covering of it of purple” —as suits a royal personage. “The midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.” I need not say that the groundwork of it all is love. “Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.” It is anticipative: He is not yet come; but that is what He is to be when He comes for her. Thus you see it is not at all the scene of one taken away into heaven: that is not the point at all. It is one coming—coming to the earth.

It is one that is crowned here; and again you observe the mother reappears, for her heart is different now. When He was here what had she for Him. No heart at all, none whatever, not even Jerusalem—not even that which ought to have been an answer to His love as His earthly bride. On the contrary, if there was any difference between Israel as, a whole and Jerusalem in particular, Jerusalem was the hottest of all against the King—against the Lord Jesus. But when this day comes His mother reappears. Always remember that it is not the bride: it is His, mother that comes out here. That is, it is not the bride only.

Now when we look at the New Testament, where we have the heavenly bride, we have the Father, but no mother. Why the Father there, and the mother here? Because for us, all is divine in its source. The Father—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—He is the One that is our God and our Father. But the mother is connected more with nature. The Father of Christ, who is the source of everything, is the One that gives us our place and being and relationship; but not the mother. We find here Israel's connection as the mother, so that I think there need not be a doubt on the part of any person who is open to conviction. Of course I am entirely hopeless of convincing those that will not be convinced. But I think that those that are willing to face the word of God need have no question whatever left in their souls as to the true intended bearing of this beautiful book.

Let no one suppose that I mean from this that we are not entitled to take all the love of it, for indeed we are. If Christ has, or will have, such love for them, how much more for us—for ours is much more, what I may call, a settled love: I mean a love that flows out of an already established—and divinely established—relationship. In their case it is a relationship that is going to be established. I grant that there is a certain beauty in the affections that proceed, but they are not of the same kind. They are greatly associated with the hope, whereas in our case it is not merely that. Ours is the present conscious lore of the Lord Jesus, and not exercises through which we pass in order to know that that love rests upon us. We may need them. If there be anything that hinders there must be exercises to deal with it and get rid of it; but that is not the proper state of a Christian person.

In the next chapter (4) we see how the Lord works to draw out the love of His people. And here we have a beautiful address which faith will lay hold of in the day that is coming. They will know that it is the Messiah that says this of them, and it will be full of comfort. “Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy heir is as a flock of goats that appear from mount Gilead.” And so he dwells upon her personal grace and beauty. Well, I am not going to enter, of course; into the details of this, but everything; is taken up that belonged to herself expressly. Not what she did: it was not her doings, because that is not the thing that sets the heart perfectly at rest. We cannot be always doings, and we may be very often too self-reproached because of the poverty of our doings, and if the love be to ourselves personally—if the love be told out, and told out not as a mere matter of feeling, not as a passing vision of anything of that kind; but if it be the unmovable, the immutable word of God, how blessed are the souls that are awakened to say, That is His language to me, that is what He feels about us. Well, this is what will be brought home to their heart in that day. You will notice the difference.

She speaks also. There is the interchange of affection on the part of the bride towards the Bridegroom. But I will point out one very marked and, I think, striking difference, and that is—that when He speaks He always speaks to her; when she speaks she speaks of Him, but not to Him. Now that is exactly what it should be. One can feel the propriety of this, and how perfectly suited it is in the relationship in which they stand, because what she wants is to know that such an one as He—that One so holy—that One so Perfect could love one who had been brought (in the very first chapter) to own that she had been the very reverse. Still grace had wrought, and she knew that grace had wrought, and she did not deny it. But still she wanted to know what He felt. And He speaks out; He lets her know.

The first half of the chapter then is occupied with the Bridegroom telling the bride how beautiful she was in His eyes. The latter part of it is something else, and that is it is fully knowing, fully appreciating the danger in which she found herself—the snares and the enemies that surrounded her. That is the meaning of the word “Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon” (ver. 8), and this is explained still more where he goes on to say, “Look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens.”

There is nothing in scripture without a blessed meaning, and in perfect grace towards the reader of the Bible who counts upon God's opening His word. “From the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.” These are images clearly of the greatest possible danger. They signify

that she had been, so to speak, in the lions' den. And so she had. The images show that she was surrounded by these most cruel enemies that are so eager to seize upon their prey. “From the mountains of the leopards.” And so she had been in the mountains of the leopards! But, “Come with me.” He calls her away—gives her the certainty of deliverance; for who is He? Is not He entitled to do so? Can He fail? Impossible. It is not, therefore, merely a cry from her heart. That is not the character of it. It is not herself bemoaning her danger. It is not herself praying therefore to be delivered “from the lions' dens, and from the mountains of the leopards,” but it is He who feels for her—He who knows it all infinitely better than she. It is He who says, “Come with me from Lebanon.” There is no reproach.

How did she get there? Departed from Him! How was she found in the mountains of the leopards? Was He there? Not at all. Did she go there to find Him? It was her self-will. It was her evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. It was that which had done the mischief for Jerusalem; it was that which had scattered the Jew to every part of the world. There they had been, no doubt, and even then they will be suffering, although they will be back in Jerusalem, as I suppose, when this Song of Solomon applies. They will be again in the mere place—the scene, but not yet in the conscious favor and under the glorious protection of Jehovah. Far from that. The lions and the leopards will still have to do with them, although they may not be any longer scattered among the Gentiles, but the lion and the leopard will have their hand over them. They will have their paw, so to speak, over them still. For, as we know, it is exactly in that way—as the beast—that the Gentile powers are described in the prophets. And I refer to this as an evident link of connection between this book and, I might say, the Psalms also; but the Psalms relate more to individual dealings. There is one Psalm, the 45th, and there may be other allusions, which form a kind of transition-link between the Book of Psalms and this wonderful Song of Songs. In that Psalm we have the bride, and the very same bride that is spoken of here. I only throw out this hint, by the way, as possibly helping souls who may not have considered it adequately.

Well then, the Lord pursues this second address, this invitation to come away from all these evil and dangerous surroundings and again speaks of what she is to Him. A very sweet word is added here—that after He had spoken of her as in the den of the lions and the mountains of the leopards, He should still say, “Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon” (ver. 11.) It is just in keeping with the same spirit, only a little stronger than what we find in the prophets; that is, that whereas Jerusalem will have really been discarded as the unfaithful wife, the Lord will look upon her more as in the sorrows of a widow. That is, He will not reproach her with her being a repudiate because a guilty woman, but He will speak of her with tenderness and mercy as in the sorrows and weeds of widowhood.

Then in the next chapter (5.) we have a further experience through which she passes, particularly in the second verse. The first verse rather belongs to the chapter before.

“I sleep.” It is still the same thought: it is night. “I sleep, but my heart waketh; it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled.” It is not His actual coming. This is what passed through her soul. This is what she sees, as it were, in the vision of the night. It is not, as yet, His coming in the morning. It is not that. He will come in the morning without clouds, but I repeat, you must always bear in mind that the morning has not yet come. This is, therefore, what passes through her heart which is filled with longing desire for His coming in the bright day. So here she, as it were, hears His voice, and she shows that her heart is by no means fitted, as yet, for His return for this is the excuse— “I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?” That is, though God's love was brought before her soul, instead of there being an answer at once by going forth to meet Him, she makes excuses why she cannot go, and why she cannot take the trouble to open the door, for that was all that was needed. So “My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door.” There is still an appeal to her, but there is that which is intended to produce self-judgment in her. She, as it were, says that He lingers, that He does not at once turn His back upon one that so ill-requited His love. “My beloved put in His hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.”

There was real affection, although there was not any right answer to His. “I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet-smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spite: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave no answer.” It was the needed rebuke for Israel—for Jerusalem. It was making her feel that this occupation with herself or her circumstances, this lack of freshness of heart in going forth to meet Him was what she had to rebuke herself for; and so, now that she has come to her senses, to feel the wrong that she had done to His love, she goes, and she calls; and she searches for Him once more. “The watchmen that went about the city found me; they smote me.” Now, you see, it is worse. On the former occasion they could give her no direction to find Him whom her soul loved, but now they smote her, for what business had she to be out at that time of night? And so they smote her. “The keepers of the walls took away my vail from me.”

It was no doubt because of the, reality of her affection, and her desire to find the One that she loved, but still it was out of season: it was out of place and they, at any rate, dealt with that. Thus the very desire she had to find the Bridegroom brought her into a false position. So she says, “I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick of love.” And here then we find fresh persons—not the watchman, but her companions; Jerusalem will not be alone. There will be others: there will be others awakening at that time to whom she can speak, so to say. And, accordingly, say they, “What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved that thou dost so charge us?” Now comes what I referred to—her confession of the beauty of the Bridegroom. You see it is not said to Him. Now you see all her heart goes out in speaking of the Bridegroom. She speaks well of the Lord. She is not ashamed to tell about Him. It is not now merely that she loved Him, but who He was, and what He was, whom she loved, are what come out in the rest of the chapter.

[W.K.]

Lectures on the Song of Solomon, Song of Solomon 3:1-7

We now find ourselves in the great body of the Song of Solomon and the object of the Spirit of God, as I understand, in this portion is to show us the necessary exercises of heart through which the bride must pass in order to be spiritually fitted for the Lord Jesus—the King in His coming glory.

You will see at once that there is a very sensible difference from our position. The proper exercises of the Christian's heart begin when we are already in settled relationship with the Lord Jesus, It is not so with the Jew. In our case it is sovereign grace both of the deepest and of the highest character, because it is Christ on high in the presence of God—not merely the King, not merely on earth, however exalted, but in a new and heavenly glory, altogether above the expectations and hopes formed by Old Testament revelation. It is also of the deepest character, because it is no question of a people that had been previously chosen, and that had been the object of the dealings of God through ages, and blest because of God's love to their father Abraham.

Nothing of this appears in the dealing with the church of God. For there it is purely and solely grace acting in view of Christ in God's presence, and expressly also gathering persons entirely irrespective of any previous connection with God whatsoever. Now it is not so with the Jew. He is loved, as we are told, even now—loved for the fathers' sake. They are enemies, as we know, because of the gospel, but loved for the fathers' sake. Now there we see the ground. Although they will be obliged to own that they have lost everything, and that blessing must be on the score of mercy alone, yet there was that ground. We can plead, nothing of the kind. We really have nothing save what grace confers upon us, and confers all, fresh, and pure, and simple, from Christ, and for Christ. There may be exercises of heart in a person who is not yet brought into the proper Christian standing, and there may be a putting one's self under law. There may be a pointing out of our utter weakness. There may be discoveries of this kind, but they are not what I may call the normal exercises of a Christian's heart. They are very wholesome exercises of a heart that is not yet at rest; but a Christian, in the proper sense of the term, means one who is not merely born of God, and who is just clinging to God's mercy and goodness, but a Christian is a person who is at rest. A Christian is a person who is in peace with God. There may be Christians in a very abnormal state, but we have nothing to do with that in thinking of a Christian. We may have very much to do with it in looking at a particular soul—in getting that soul into a true and healthy condition; but if we talk about a Christian we must think about him according to the mind of God. If he is not according to that mind, one must seek to remove the hindrances; one should seek to foster what is of God, to strengthen his faith; and by the word to clear away and deal with whatever hinders, That is all quite right, but properly speaking no man is yet in a healthy Christian condition until he is settled—settled, without a question, in Christ, and knows that he is anew creature—knows that all the old is judged and gone before God, and the man is walking in peaceful communion on the ground of it. I say that no person is in the proper Christian condition until that is his state.

Now it is plain that this is a very different thing from the bride here. If we look at the church in the New Testament, she is always assumed to be in that state. There may be, of course, as we know in matter of fact, things which are quite contrary to what we may call the theory of the church, or of a Christian. That is not God's idea. But I am speaking now, I repeat, of things according to God. But God does not look upon the bride in Song of Solomon according to that idea. Here therefore we come to the exercises—the individual, blessed, exercises through which the bride who is here contemplated must pass in order to be spiritually suited to the King in His glory. And we see her here in darkness. “By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth.” That is a remarkable condition. It is just what we find in the 50th of Isaiah—walking in darkness and seeing no light. But confiding, trusting; nay more than that, with affections drawn out towards Christ.

In fact, the great point of this book is the forming the affections and the giving her who has such affections (though what are these to His?)—giving her who has real and true affections for the returning King, confidence in His affection as incomparably beyond her own. Thus she needs this: she needs it more particularly because she is obliged to look back and see and know that she was “black” —not merely comely, but—black. She is obliged to see what she had passed through, and why it was. It would not be wholesome, it would not be true without this. For there cannot be stable blessing according to God, whether to the Christian now, or to the Jew by and by, or to any other soul apart from truth. There never can be the real power of grace without the power of truth. There always must be truth in the inward parts: that is, there always must be the confessing of what we really are in God's sight, or what we have done in God's sight. It must be out between God and our own soul. She consequently has to feel this very soon indeed. Spite of all that she has been or is, she, to her wonder, learns His love. It may not have that fullness of heavenly character that we know to be our portion, but it is nevertheless most rich and wondrous and truly divine.

Well then, “By night on my bed.” There may be this darkness. He has not come. It is not a question of the Lord being yet there. And these figures are used to bring vividly before us what she is passing through. “I sought Him whom my soul loveth” —for now she is not at all afraid to avow it. “I sought, but I found Him not. I will rise now and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways.” Just as if that were the place to find Christ. Not so. He is not regarded as coming through the broad ways or being in the streets; He comes out of the wilderness. That is where she knows, and where she will know, the Lord as taking and identifying Himself with the condition out of which Israel must come; whereas that is not at all the place where we know the Lord.

We know the Lord in another way altogether: we know Him in heaven. That is our proper way of knowing Him, but she has these anticipative views of Him and at the same time is trained in a deepening acquaintance with His love before He comes. “I sought, and I found Him not.” And no wonder: she sought Him not rightly. It was not the true place. “The watchmen that go about the city found me” —the guardians of order, but what could they say? What could they do? “To whom I said, Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth"; for she does confess now. It is not only that she has got the affection, but she owns it even to them although it might seem hardly the place. But so she does. “It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held Him, and would not let Him go until I had brought Him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.” That is, it is her soul laying hold of His coming into a renewed connection with Israel.

There is great force in all these figures. The mother is always Israel according to Scripture. Not so the church. The church is never regarded as the “mother.” Whom would she be the mother of? Not of herself—not of Christians. You could not have that. The church is not the mother of Christians, still less is the church the mother of the Lord. And there you see we at once find the importance of seeing relationship as God unfolds it in His word. The mother, as I have said, is always Israel. The bride, the wife, is the church. We do find a bride here, but we shall find that there is a difference. We must not confound the two. We must not suppose that the “mother” and the “bride” are the same; and it just shows the utter and dreadful blindness of system in the minds of men that the greater part of Christendom does regard the mother in the Song of Solomon and the bride to be the same identical person. Nay further, the grossness of darkness leads them to think that the Virgin Mary is both. They are so utterly dark, for I know nothing in paganism that is more degradingly dark than the superstition of Romanism. You would think it strange on the part of human beings who have got the Bible—who have got the New Testament—men, you must remember, of learning and ability, possibly some of them even converted to God, for I would not deny this. And yet I am telling you a plain and positive fact which it has been my experience to find out and know, when I say that these are the delusions which carry away and captivate souls at this present moment. Nay, into which souls out of a certain yearning and aspiration after something better, which they cannot find in ordinary

Protestantism, are breaking away. What a mercy, beloved brethren, to have the truth and the word of His truth.

Now, if you look at the 12th of Revelation, how beautiful it is, and comforting to our souls, to find that a book which at first sight might not seem to be the key to other parts of Scripture yet indeed is so. I suppose that most people think that you want a key to the Revelation, but the truth of it is, so wonderfully is the word of God woven together, and so surprising the mutual uses of all parts of the Scriptures, that, as we find Genesis a key to Revelation, so also we find very often that the Revelation is a key to Genesis. And this is very encouraging to see, because it is God that has trained His people not to have their favorites—always a dangerous thing. Whether it is in living people or in the word of God, it is a great thing to be able to use without abusing—a great thing to be open to the help of all that God uses for His own glory and for the blessing of His people.

Well, the 12th of Revelation makes it perfectly plain, for there we have the woman, and the woman in remarkable glory. She has got the sun and the moon under her feet, a crown of twelve stars, etc. Now, what woman is that? I need not tell you what haste always says— “Oh, it is the church.” Not so; it is not, the church. For you see that the woman there brings forth the male of might; and that male of might—who is he? Surely there is no mistake. The male of might who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron—can anyone doubt who he is? It is Christ and none but Christ. Christ is the male of might. Consequently we see at once who the woman is, because it is Christ that always determines the truth of every person and everything.

Let me bring Him into contact with my own soul's state. Let me bring Him into contact with any soul anywhere. The moment you bring Christ in, you have the truth. I learn my own state, whether it is good or bad, by bringing the Lord in. And so also you learn who or what is before you by bringing Christ in. Well then, you bring Christ into that chapter, and you see Christ in the male of might and the woman is His mother? Who is that? Not the church. The church is not the mother of Christ. Israel, “of whom Christ came” is the mother, as the apostle Paul teaches in the 9th of Romans; so that you see what Paul puts so finely in the 9th of Romans is what John teaches symbolically in the 12th of Revelation; whereas when you come to see the church then you have another thing—the bride, the Lamb's wife. Ah, that is the church. Again, you find another woman (I may just say by the way), but she is neither one nor other. She is the woman that pretends to be the church, but is the antichurch. Just as there will be a man that will be the antichrist, so there is a woman that is the antichurch. That is Babylon, Rome is the great center of Babylon.

Well then, the meaning clearly is that she connects in her spiritual embrace, if I may say so, she associates, the one that she loved, who was clearly the returning King, with the mother's house— “the chamber of her that conceived me.”

“I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.” I have already shown the importance of this intimation: that comes in now and again in the book. It always introduces a fresh view of the matter and of the Lord as anticipated by the heart of Jerusalem; for here you must remember that Jerusalem is to be the chosen bride—and I mean, by that, Jerusalem that is to be. Not the Jerusalem that is on high—not the Jerusalem that now is, but the Jerusalem that is to be—the Jerusalem that is to be born of God, just as much as the Jerusalem on high is the great new creation in Christ. But this is the Jerusalem that is to be the chosen bride of the King when He comes again into this world.

“Who is this?” then is the word, “Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, will all powders of the merchant? Behold his bed which is Solomon's.” Nothing can be plainer. Solomon is not the figure of Christ in relation to the church. David may be. I do not mean that David always is, but David may be so preeminently, because he at any rate knew more of the sufferings of Christ and was identified with the rejection in a way that Solomon never was. Solomon never knew anything but glory: he was the man of peace. All, so to speak, was bright and glorious as far as Solomon was concerned and it is clear that this one that she looks for is not a suffering one.

[W.K.]

Song of Solomon, Song of Solomon 2:3-17

It will be noticed that the bride speaks a great deal of the Beloved to others, while He speaks rather of her to herself. This is thoroughly according to her need of re-assurance, and to the truth of things, when we know that Christ is the One really intended by the Spirit; for He is above all need of the creature and by His love creates love. That He loves her she needs to know; and on this He dwells most fully. Others may learn it from the fact that His love is set upon her: she relieves her heart by setting forth His beauty and excellence to others.

“As the citron among the trees of the wood,

So is my beloved among the sons.

In his shadow I delighted and sat down,

And his fruit [is] sweet to my taste.

He brought me to the house of wine,

And his banner over me [is] love.

Stay ye me with raisin-cakes,

Refresh me with citrons;

For I am sick of love.

His left hand [is] under my head,

And his right hand doth embrace me.

I charge you, daughters of Jerusalem,

By the gazelles and by the hinds of the field,

That ye stir not up, nor awake [my] love, Until he please.

The voice of my beloved I behold he cometh,

Leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.

My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart.

Behold, he standeth behind our wall,

He looketh in through the windows,

He glanceth through the lattice.

My beloved spake and said unto me,

Rise up, my fair one, and come away.

For, behold, the winter is past,

The rain is over, it is gone;

The flowers appear on the earth;

The time of singing is come,

And the voice of the thrush is heard in our land;

The fig tree melloweth her winter figs,

And the vines in bloom give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

My dove, in the clefts of the rock,

In the covert of the precipice,

Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice;

For sweet [is] thy voice, and thy countenance comely.

Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vineyards:

For our vineyards are in bloom.

My beloved [is] mine, and I his;

He feedeth [his flock] among the lilies.

Until the day dawn, and the shadows flee away,

Turn, my beloved: be thou like a gazelle, or a young hart,

Upon the mountains of Bether" (vers. 3-17).

Christ is described under the figure of the citron, the true bearer of fruit. Under His shadow she had rapture and sat down, and His fruit was sweet to her taste. Moses did not avail Israel though faithful as a servant. Nor did the first covenant meet the need, but provoked transgressions, and brought forth death and ruin. Christ is the spring of all good. Yet even at this early point the bride feels that the bright time is coming. It is evident that in the Song of Solomon is the revelation of the mutual affection between Messiah and the Israel of God, such as is found nowhere else. And this will be the sweeter to the people of God when brought by the Holy Spirit to judge their whilom truant affections; for Israel had gone after many lovers in the past: see Jer. 3., Ezek. 16., Hos. 1:2. 3. But her restoration to Messiah in the discovery of His faithful love, notwithstanding her shameless infidelity to such a lover, will be all the deeper; and this book supplies the needed expression of it all on both sides: so gracious is God, so complete His word, Who knew all from the beginning and reveals fully what will be realized only at the consummation of the age.

The psalms of David are rich indeed, but they reveal the rejection and the sufferings of the Messiah, no doubt in infinite grace, and the people's wickedness, sins, unbelief, and need generally, rather than the mutual love expressed in the Song of Songs. Still less do the Law and the Prophets show this forth as here. Yet Zeph. 3:17 is a beautiful word that illustrates, as far as it goes, the bearing of Song of Solomon Sympathy in sorrow predominates in the Psalms. Everything in the scripture is perfect in people, place, and season. And those taught of God find Christ to their everlasting profit and joy everywhere, save in such an unfolding as Ecclesiastes (the remarkable writing by the same hand which indited Canticles), the nothingness and misery of all where Christ is not, spite of the utmost round of passing pleasures and pursuits with the largest means and power of enjoying them. That the style necessarily differs immensely goes without saying: none but a simpleton or a malignant would expect, or if able, execute, otherwise. Yet in all these inspired books, however profoundly instructive to the Christian, the

Jewish people are those immediately and primarily in view, not the church of the firstborn ones, not the saints blessed with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ as we are now.

After the introductory sketch of chap. 1., the godly Jewish remnant are here shown as going through the spiritual process to make Messiah's love appreciated and fruitful. And the charge in ver. 7 should be compared with a similar one in chap. 3:5, and in chap. 8:4. In each case the coming of Messiah follows suitably to the advancing action of the book. The bride anticipates it by faith; for He is not yet come, however warm the language that realizes its blessedness. Jehovah shall arise and have mercy on Zion; for the time to favor her, yea, the set time, is come, though the Psalmist alone could suitably add that His servants take pleasure in her stones and favor the dust thereof. It is here His voice that is heard, as He comes leaping on the mountains, skipping on the hills. What He spoke and said reached the ear, the heart, of the bride (vers. 13, 14), where we next hear of “our” vineyards (ver. 15): compare chap. ii. 6-11. The first expression of conscious relationship follows (ver. 16). Progress is clear, when we compare what appears afterward. It is rather Himself and His love to her that comes out on this mention of His coming. We shall see more on each fresh occasion; but here His fullness of power, the suitability of the time and circumstances, and the welcome sound of His love to her, have their due place.

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