

“The Song of Songs”



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“The Song of Songs”

RESOURCES



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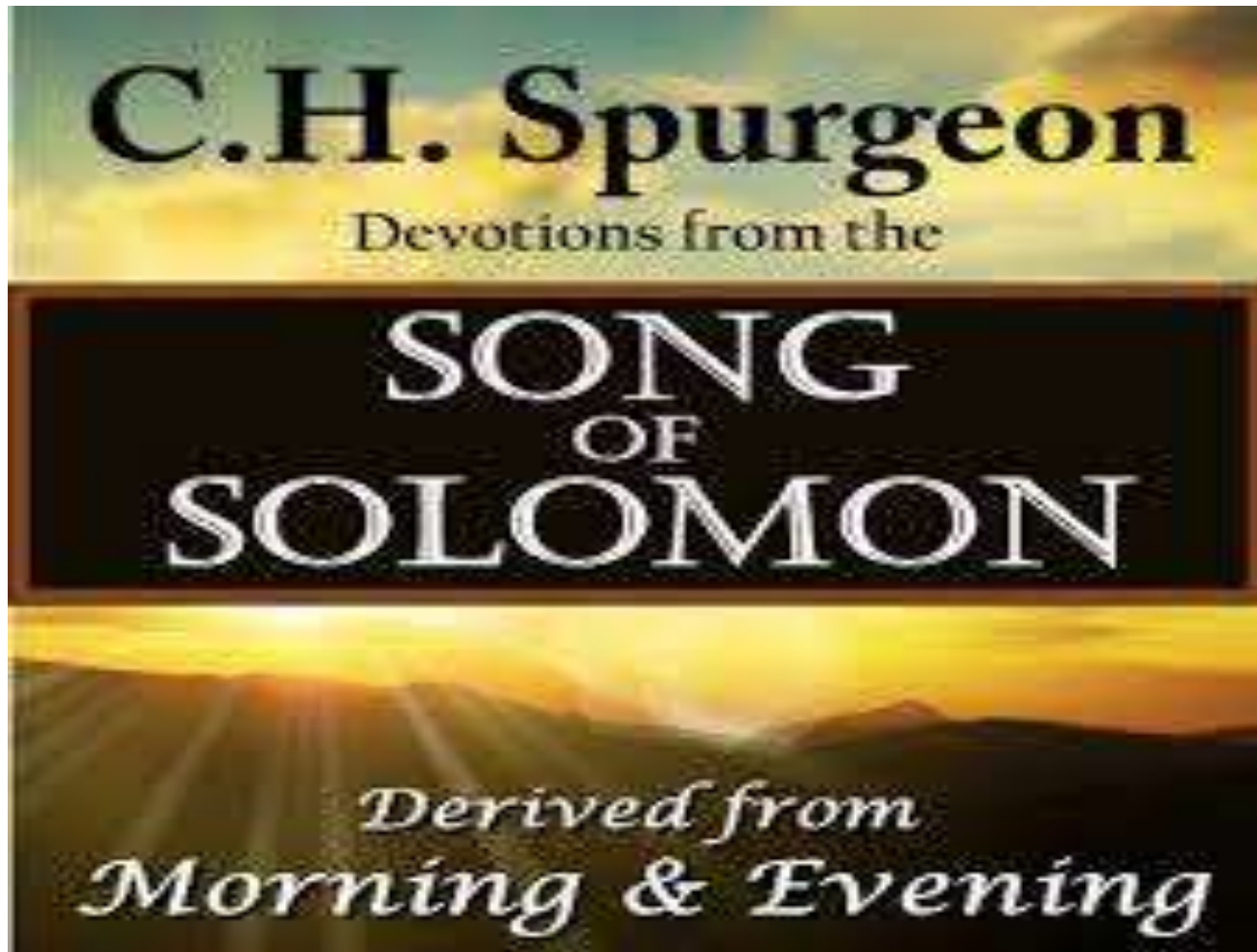
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Charles. H. Spurgeon:



"Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth."

--Song of Solomon 1:2

For several days we have been dwelling upon the Savior's passion, and for some little time to come we shall linger there. In beginning a new month, let us seek the same desires after our Lord as those which glowed in the heart of the elect spouse. See how she leaps at once to *Him*; there are no prefatory words; she does not even mention His name; she is in the heart of her theme at once, for she speaks of *Him* who was the only Him in the world to her. How bold is her love! it was much condescension which permitted the weeping penitent to anoint His feet with spikenard--it was rich love which allowed the gentle Mary to sit at His feet and learn of Him--but here, love, strong, fervent love, aspires to higher tokens of regard, and closer signs of fellowship. Esther trembled in the presence of Ahasuerus, but the spouse in joyful liberty of perfect love knows no fear. If we have received the same free spirit, we also may ask the like. By kisses we suppose to be intended those varied manifestations of affection by which the believer is made to enjoy the love of Jesus. The kiss of *reconciliation* we enjoyed at our conversion, and it was sweet as honey dropping from the comb. The kiss of *acceptance* is still warm on our brow, as we know that He hath accepted our persons and our works through rich grace. The kiss of daily, present *communion*, is that which we pant after to be repeated day after day, till it is changed into the kiss of *reception*, which removes the soul from earth, and the kiss of *consummation* which fills it with the joy of heaven. Faith is our walk, but fellowship sensibly felt is our rest. Faith is the road, but communion with Jesus is the well from which the pilgrim drinks. O lover of our souls, be not strange to us; let the lips of Thy blessing meet the lips of our asking; let the lips of Thy fulness touch the lips of our need, and straightway the kiss will be effected.

"Thy love is better than wine."

--Song of Solomon 1:2

Nothing gives the believer so much joy as fellowship with Christ. He has enjoyment as others have in the common mercies of life, he can be glad both in God's gifts and God's works; but in all these separately, yea, and in all of them added together, he doth not find such substantial delight as in the matchless person of his Lord Jesus. He has wine which no vineyard on earth ever yielded; he has bread which all the corn-fields of Egypt could never bring forth. Where can such sweetness be found as we have tasted in communion with our Beloved? In our esteem, the joys of earth are little better than husks for swine compared with Jesus, the heavenly manna. We would rather have one mouthful of Christ's love, and a sip of his fellowship, than a whole world full of carnal delights. What is the chaff to the wheat? What is the sparkling paste to the true diamond? What is a dream to the glorious reality? What is time's mirth, in its best trim, compared to our Lord Jesus in His most despised estate? If you know anything of the inner life, you will confess that our highest, purest, and most enduring joys must be the fruit of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. No spring yields such sweet water as that well of God which was digged with the soldier's spear. All earthly bliss is of the earth earthy, but the comforts of Christ's presence are like Himself, heavenly. We can review our communion with Jesus, and find no regrets of emptiness therein; there are no dregs in this wine, no dead flies in this ointment. The joy of the Lord is solid and enduring. Vanity hath not looked upon it, but discretion and prudence testify that it abideth the test of years, and is in time and in eternity worthy to be called "the only true delight." For nourishment, consolation, exhilaration, and refreshment, no wine can rival the love of Jesus. Let us drink to the full this evening.

"We will remember Thy love more than wine."

--Song of Solomon 1:4

Jesus will not let His people forget His love. If all the love they have enjoyed should be forgotten, He will visit them with fresh love. "Do you forget my cross?" says He, "I will cause you to remember it; for at My table I will manifest Myself anew to you. Do you forget what I did for you in the council-chamber of eternity? I will remind you of it, for you shall need a counsellor, and shall find Me ready at your call." Mothers do not let their children forget them. If the boy has gone to Australia, and does not write home, his mother writes--"Has John forgotten his mother?" Then there comes back a sweet epistle, which proves that the gentle reminder was not in vain. So is it with Jesus, He says to us, "Remember Me," and our response is, "We will remember Thy love." *We will* remember Thy love and its matchless history. It is ancient as the glory which Thou hadst with the Father before the world was. We remember, O Jesus, Thine eternal love when Thou didst become our Surety, and espouse us as Thy betrothed. We remember the love which suggested the sacrifice of Thyself, the love which, until the fulness of time, mused over that sacrifice, and long for the hour whereof in the volume of the book it was written of Thee, "Lo, I come." We remember Thy love, O Jesus as it was manifest to us in Thy holy life, from the manger of Bethlehem to the garden of Gethsemane. We track Thee from the cradle to the grave--for every word and deed of Thine was love--and we rejoice in Thy love, which death did not exhaust; Thy love which shone resplendent in Thy resurrection. We remember that burning fire of love which will never let Thee hold Thy peace until Thy chosen ones be all safely housed, until Zion be glorified, and Jerusalem settled on her everlasting foundations of light and love in heaven.

"The upright love Thee"

--Song of Solomon 1:4

Believers love Jesus with a deeper affection than they dare to give to any other being. They would sooner lose father and mother than part with Christ. They hold all earthly comforts with a loose hand, but they carry Him fast locked in their bosoms. They voluntarily deny themselves for His sake, but they are not to be driven to *deny* Him. It is scant love which the fire of persecution can dry up; the true believer's love is a deeper stream than this. Men have laboured to divide the faithful from their Master, but their attempts have been fruitless in every age. Neither crowns of honour, now frowns of anger, have untied this more than Gordian knot. This is no every-day attachment which the world's power may at length dissolve. Neither man nor devil have found a key which opens this lock. Never has the craft of Satan been more at fault than when he has exercised it in seeking to rend in sunder this union of two divinely welded hearts. It is written, and nothing can blot out the sentence, "*The upright love Thee.*" The intensity of the love of the upright, however, is not so much to be judged by what it appears as by what the upright long for. It is our daily lament that we cannot love enough. Would that our hearts were capable of holding more, and reaching further. Like Samuel Rutherford, we sigh and cry, "Oh, for as much love as would go round about the earth, and over heaven--yea, the heaven of heavens, and ten thousand worlds--that I might let all out upon fair, fair, only fair Christ." Alas! our longest reach is but a span of love, and our affection is but as a drop of a bucket compared with His deserts. Measure our love by our intentions, and it is high indeed; 'tis thus, we trust, our Lord doth judge of it. Oh, that we could give all the love in all hearts in one great mass, a gathering together of all loves to Him who is altogether lovely!

"We will be glad and rejoice in Thee."

--Song of Solomon 1:4

We will be glad and rejoice in Thee. We will not open the gates of the year to the dolorous notes of the sackbut, but to the sweet strains of the harp of joy, and the high sounding cymbals of gladness. "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise unto the rock of our salvation." We, the called and faithful and chosen, we will drive away our griefs, and set up our banners of confidence in the name of God. Let others lament over their troubles, we who have the sweetening tree to cast into Marah's bitter pool, with joy will magnify the Lord. Eternal Spirit, our effectual Comforter, we who are the temples in which Thou dwellest, will never cease from adoring and blessing the name of Jesus. *We WILL*, we are resolved about it, Jesus must have the crown of our heart's delight; we will not dishonour our Bridegroom by mourning in His presence. We are ordained to be the minstrels of the skies, let us rehearse our everlasting anthem before we sing it in the halls of the New Jerusalem. *We will BE GLAD AND REJOICE*: two words with one sense, double joy, blessedness upon blessedness. Need there be any limit to our rejoicing in the Lord even now? Do not men of grace find their Lord to be camphire and spikenard, calamus and cinnamon even now, and what better fragrance have they in heaven itself? *We will be glad and rejoice IN THEE*. That last word is the meat in the dish, the kernel of the nut, the soul of the text. What heavens are laid up in Jesus! What rivers of infinite bliss have their source, ay, and every drop of their fulness in Him! Since, O sweet Lord Jesus, Thou art the present portion of Thy people, favour us this year with such a sense of Thy preciousness, that from its first to its last day we may be glad and rejoice in Thee. Let January open with joy in the Lord, and December close with gladness in Jesus.

"Thou whom my soul loveth."

--Song of Solomon 1:7

It is well to be able, without any "if" or "but," to say of the Lord Jesus--" *Thou whom my soul loveth.*" Many can only say of Jesus that they *hope* they love Him; they *trust* they love Him; but only a poor and shallow experience will be content to stay here. No one ought to give any rest to his spirit till he feels quite sure about a matter of such vital importance. We ought not to be satisfied with a superficial *hope* that Jesus loves us, and with a bare trust that we love Him. The old saints did not generally speak with "buts," and "ifs," and "hopes," and "trusts," but they spoke positively and plainly. "I know whom I have believed," saith Paul. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," saith Job. Get positive knowledge of your love of Jesus, and be not satisfied till you can speak of your interest in Him as a reality, which you have made sure by having received the witness of the Holy Spirit, and His seal upon your soul by faith.

True love to Christ is in every case the Holy Spirit's work, and must be wrought in the heart by Him. He is the *efficient cause* of it; but the logical reason why we love Jesus lies in *Himself*. *Why do we love Jesus? Because He first loved us. Why do we love Jesus? Because He "gave Himself for us."* We have life through His death; we have peace through His blood. Though He was rich, yet *for our sakes* He became poor. *Why do we love Jesus? Because of the excellency of His person.* We are filled with a sense of His beauty! an admiration of His charms! a consciousness of His infinite perfection! His greatness, goodness, and loveliness, in one resplendent ray, combine to enchant the soul till it is so ravished that it exclaims, "Yea, He is altogether lovely." Blessed love this--a love which binds the heart with chains more soft than silk, and yet more firm than adamant!

"Tell me . . . where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon." --Song of Solomon 1:7

These words express the desire of the believer after Christ, and his longing for present communion with Him. Where doest Thou feed Thy flock? In *Thy house*? I will go, if I may find Thee there. In private *prayer*? Then I will pray without ceasing. In the *Word*? Then I will read it diligently. In Thine *ordinances*? Then I will walk in them with all my heart. Tell me where Thou feedest, for wherever Thou standest as the Shepherd, there will I lie down as a sheep; for none but Thyself can supply my need. I cannot be satisfied to be apart from Thee. My soul hungers and thirsts for the refreshment of Thy presence. "Where dost Thou make Thy flock to rest at noon?" for whether at dawn or at noon, my only rest must be where Thou art and Thy beloved flock. My soul's rest must be a grace-given rest, and can only be found in Thee. Where is the shadow of that rock? Why should I not repose beneath it? "Why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?" Thou hast companions--why should I not be one? Satan tells me I am unworthy; but I always was unworthy, and yet Thou hast long loved me; and therefore my unworthiness cannot be a bar to my having fellowship with Thee now. It is true I am weak in faith, and prone to fall, but my very feebleness is the reason why I should always be where Thou feedest Thy flock, that I may be strengthened, and preserved in safety beside the still waters. Why should I turn aside? There is no reason why I should, but there are a thousand reasons why I should not, for Jesus beckons me to come. If He withdrew Himself a little, it is but to make me prize His presence more. Now that I am grieved and distressed at being away from Him, He will lead me yet again to that sheltered nook where the lambs of His fold are sheltered from the burning sun

"A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me."

--Song of Solomon 1:13

Myrrh may well be chosen as the type of Jesus on account of its *preciousness*, its *perfume*, its *pleasantness*, its *healing*, *preserving*, *disinfecting qualities*, and its *connection with sacrifice*. But why is He compared to "a bundle of myrrh"? First, for plenty. He is not a drop of it, He is a casket full. He is not a sprig or flower of it, but a whole bundle. There is enough in Christ for all my necessities; let me not be slow to avail myself of Him. Our well-beloved is compared to a "bundle" again, for *variety*: for there is in Christ not only the one thing needful, but in "Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," everything needful is in Him. Take Jesus in His different characters, and you will see a marvellous variety--Prophet, Priest, King, Husband, Friend, Shepherd. Consider Him in His life, death, resurrection, ascension, second advent; view Him in His virtue, gentleness, courage, self-denial, love, faithfulness, truth, righteousness-- everywhere He is a bundle of preciousness. He is a "bundle of myrrh" for *preservation*--not loose myrrh tied up, myrrh to be stored in a casket. We must value Him as our best treasure; we must prize His words and His ordinances; and we must keep our thoughts of Him and knowledge of Him as under lock and key, lest the devil should steal anything from us. Moreover, Jesus is a "bundle of myrrh" for *speciality*. The emblem suggests the idea of distinguishing, discriminating grace. From before the foundation of the world, He was set apart for His people; and He gives forth His perfume only to those who understand how to enter into communion with Him, to have close dealings with Him. Oh! blessed people whom the Lord hath admitted into His secrets, and for whom He sets Himself apart. Oh! choice and happy who are thus made to say, "A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me."

"Behold, Thou art fair, my Beloved."

-Song of Solomon 1:16

From every point our Well-beloved is most fair. Our various experiences are meant by our heavenly Father to furnish fresh standpoints from which we may view the loveliness of Jesus; how amiable are our trials when they carry us aloft where we may gain clearer views of Jesus than ordinary life could afford us! We have seen Him from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, and He has shone upon us as the sun in his strength; but we have seen Him also "from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards," and He has lost none of His loveliness. From the languishing of a sick bed, from the borders of the grave, have we turned our eyes to our soul's spouse, and He has never been otherwise than "all fair." Many of His saints have looked upon Him from the gloom of dungeons, and from the red flames of the stake, yet have they never uttered an ill word of Him, but have died extolling His surpassing charms. Oh, noble and pleasant employment to be for ever gazing at our sweet Lord Jesus! Is it not unspeakably delightful to view the Saviour in all His offices, and to perceive Him matchless in each?--to shift the kaleidoscope, as it were, and to find fresh combinations of peerless graces? In the manger and in eternity, on the cross and on His throne, in the garden and in His kingdom, among thieves or in the midst of cherubim, He is everywhere "altogether lovely." Examine carefully every little act of His life, and every trait of His character, and He is as lovely in the minute as in the majestic. Judge Him as you will, you cannot censure; weigh Him as you please, and He will not be found wanting. Eternity shall not discover the shadow of a spot in our Beloved, but rather, as ages revolve, His hidden glories shall shine forth with yet more inconceivable splendour, and His unutterable loveliness shall more and more ravish all celestial minds.

"I am the rose of Sharon."

--Song of Solomon 2:1

Whatever there may be of beauty in the material world, Jesus Christ possesses all that in the spiritual world in a tenfold degree. Amongst flowers the rose is deemed the sweetest, but Jesus is infinitely more beautiful in the garden of the soul than the rose can in the gardens of earth. He takes the first place as the fairest among ten thousand. He is the sun, and all others are the stars; the heavens and the day are dark in comparison with Him, *for the King in His beauty transcends all.* "I am the rose of Sharon." This was the best and rarest of roses. Jesus is not "the rose" alone, He is "the rose of Sharon," just as He calls His righteousness "gold," and then adds, "the gold of Ophir"--the best of the best. He is positively lovely, and superlatively the loveliest. *There is variety in His charms.* The rose is delightful to the eye, and its scent is pleasant and refreshing; so each of the senses of the soul, whether it be the taste or feeling, the hearing, the sight, or the spiritual smell, finds appropriate gratification in Jesus. *Even the recollection of His love is sweet.* Take the rose of Sharon, and pull it leaf from leaf, and lay by the leaves in the jar of memory, and you shall find each leaf fragrant long afterwards, filling the house with perfume. Christ *satisfies the highest taste* of the most educated spirit to the very full. The greatest amateur in perfumes is quite satisfied with the rose: and when the soul has arrived at her highest pitch of true taste, she shall still be content with Christ, nay, she shall be the better able to appreciate Him. Heaven itself possesses nothing which excels the rose of Sharon. What emblem can fully set forth His beauty? Human speech and earth-born things fail to tell of Him. Earth's choicest charms commingled, feebly picture His abounding preciousness. Blessed rose, bloom in my heart for ever!

"His fruit was sweet to my taste."

--Song of Solomon 2:3

Faith, in the Scripture, is spoken of under the emblem of all the senses. It is *sight*: "Look unto me and be ye saved." It is *hearing*: "Hear, and your soul shall live." Faith is *smelling*: "All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia"; "thy name is as ointment poured forth." Faith is spiritual *touch*. By this faith the woman came behind and touched the hem of Christ's garment, and by this we handle the things of the good word of life. Faith is equally the spirit's taste. "How sweet are Thy words to my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my lips." "Except a man eat my flesh," saith Christ, "and drink my blood, there is no life in him."

This "*taste*" is faith *in one of its highest operations*. One of the first performances of faith is *hearing*. We hear the voice of God, not with the outward ear alone, but with the inward ear; we hear it as God's Word, and we believe it to be so; that is the "hearing" of faith. Then our mind *looketh* upon the truth as it is presented to us; that is to say, we understand it, we perceive its meaning; that is the "seeing" of faith. Next we discover its preciousness; we begin to admire it, and find how fragrant it is; that is faith in its "*smell*." Then we appropriate the mercies which are prepared for us in Christ; that is faith in its "*touch*." Hence follow the enjoyments, peace, delight, communion; which are faith in its "taste." Any one of these acts of faith is saving. To hear Christ's voice as the sure voice of God in the soul will save us; but that which gives true enjoyment is the aspect of faith wherein Christ, by holy taste, is received into us, and made, by inward and spiritual apprehension of His sweetness and preciousness, to be the food of our souls. It is then we sit "under His shadow with great delight," and find His fruit sweet to our taste.

"My beloved." --Song of Solomon 2:8

This was a golden name which the ancient Church in her most joyous moments was wont to give to the Anointed of the Lord. When the time of the singing of birds was come, and the voice of the turtle was heard in her land, *her* love-note was sweeter than either, as she sang, "*My beloved* is mine and I am His: He feedeth among the lilies." Ever in her song of songs doth she call Him by that delightful name, "My beloved!" Even in the long winter, when idolatry had withered the garden of the Lord, her prophets found space to lay aside the burden of the Lord for a little season, and to say, as Esaias did, "Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching His vineyard." Though the saints had never seen His face, though as yet He was not made flesh, nor had dwelt among us, nor had man beheld His glory, yet He was the consolation of Israel, the hope and joy of all the chosen, the "beloved" of all those who were upright before the Most High. We, in the summer days of the Church, are also wont to speak of Christ as the best beloved of our soul, and to feel that He is very precious, the "chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." So true is it that the Church loves Jesus, and claims Him as her beloved, that the apostle dares to defy the whole universe to separate her from the love of Christ, and declares that neither persecutions, distress, affliction, peril, or the sword have been able to do it; nay, he joyously boasts, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

O that we knew more of Thee, Thou ever precious one!

My sole possession is Thy love; In earth beneath, or heaven above, I have no other store; And though with fervent suit I pray, And importune Thee day by day, I ask Thee nothing more.

"Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away."

--Song of Solomon 2:10

Lo, I hear the voice of my Beloved! He speaks to *me*! Fair weather is smiling upon the face of the earth, and He would not have me spiritually asleep while nature is all around me awaking from her winter's rest. He bids me "Rise up," and well He may, for I have long enough been lying among the pots of worldliness. He is risen, I am risen in Him, why then should I cleave unto the dust? From lower loves, desires, pursuits, and aspirations, I would rise towards Him. He calls me by the sweet title of "My love," and counts me fair; this is a good argument for my rising. If He has thus exalted me, and thinks me thus comely, how can I linger in the tents of Kedar and find congenial associates among the sons of men? He bids me "Come away." Further and further from everything selfish, grovelling, worldly, sinful, He calls me; yea, from the outwardly religious world which knows Him not, and has no sympathy with the mystery of the higher life, He calls me. "Come away" has no harsh sound in it to my ear, for what is there to hold me in this wilderness of vanity and sin? O my Lord, would that I could come away, but I am taken among the thorns, and cannot escape from them as I would. I would, if it were possible, have neither eyes, nor ears, nor heart for sin. Thou callest me to Thyself by saying "Come away," and this is a melodious call indeed. To come to Thee is to come home from exile, to come to land out of the raging storm, to come to rest after long labour, to come to the goal of my desires and the summit of my wishes. But Lord, how can a stone rise, how can a lump of clay come away from the horrible pit? O raise me, draw me. Thy grace can do it. Send forth Thy Holy Spirit to kindle sacred flames of love in my heart, and I will continue to rise until I leave life and time behind me, and indeed come away.

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

Sweet is the season of spring: the long and dreary winter helps us to appreciate its genial warmth, and its promise of summer enhances its present delights. After periods of depression of spirit, it is delightful to behold again the light of the Sun of Righteousness; then our slumbering graces rise from their lethargy, like the crocus and the daffodil from their beds of earth; then is our heart made merry with delicious notes of gratitude, far more melodious than the warbling of birds--and the comforting assurance of peace, infinitely more delightful than the turtle's note, is heard within the soul. Now is the time for the soul to seek communion with her Beloved; now must she rise from her native sordidness, and come away from her old associations. If we do not hoist the sail when the breeze is favourable, we shall be blameworthy: times of refreshing ought not to pass over us unimproved. When Jesus Himself visits us in tenderness, and entreats us to arise, can we be so base as to refuse His request? He has Himself risen that He may draw us after Him: He now by His Holy Spirit has revived us, that we may, in newness of life, ascend into the heavenlies, and hold communion with Himself. Let our wintry state suffice us for coldness and indifference; when the Lord creates a spring within, let our sap flow with vigour, and our branch blossom with high resolve. O Lord, if it be not spring time in my chilly heart, I pray Thee make it so, for I am heartily weary of living at a distance from Thee. Oh! the long and dreary winter, when wilt Thou bring it to an end? Come, Holy Spirit, and renew my soul! quicken Thou me! restore me, and have mercy on me! This very night I would earnestly implore the Lord to take pity upon His servant, and send me a happy revival of spiritual life!

"Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines."

--Song of Solomon 2:15

A little thorn may cause much suffering. A little cloud may hide the sun. Little foxes spoil the vines; and little sins do mischief to the tender heart. These little sins burrow in the soul, and make it so full of that which is hateful to Christ, that He will hold no comfortable fellowship and communion with us. A great sin cannot destroy a Christian, but a little sin can make him miserable. Jesus will not walk with His people unless they drive out every known sin. He says, "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." Some Christians very seldom enjoy their Saviour's presence. How is this? Surely it must be an affliction for a tender child to be separated from his father. Art thou a child of God, and yet satisfied to go on without seeing thy Father's face? What! thou the spouse of Christ, and yet content without His company! Surely, thou hast fallen into a sad state, for the chaste spouse of Christ mourns like a dove without her mate, when he has left her. Ask, then, the question, what has driven Christ from thee? He hides His face behind the wall of thy sins. That wall may be built up of *little* pebbles, as easily as of great stones. The sea is made of drops; the rocks are made of grains: and the sea which divides thee from Christ may be filled with the drops of thy little sins; and the rock which has well nigh wrecked thy barque, may have been made by the daily working of the coral insects of thy little sins. If thou wouldst live with Christ, and walk with Christ, and see Christ, and have fellowship with Christ, take heed of "the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes." Jesus invites you to go *with Him* and take them. He will surely, like Samson, take the foxes at once and easily. Go with Him to the hunting.

"My Beloved is mine, and I am His: He feedeth among the lilies. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved, and be Thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether."

--Song of Solomon 2:16-17

Surely if there be a happy verse in the Bible it is this--"My Beloved is mine, and I am His." So peaceful, so full of assurance, so overrunning with happiness and contentment is it, that it might well have been written by the same hand which penned the twenty-third Psalm. Yet though the prospect is exceeding fair and lovely--earth cannot show its superior--it is not entirely a sunlit landscape. There is a cloud in the sky which casts a shadow over the scene. Listen, "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away."

There is a word, too, about the "mountains of Bether," or, "the mountains of division," and to our love, anything like division is bitterness. Beloved, this may be your present state of mind; you do not doubt your salvation; you know that Christ is yours, but you are not feasting with Him. You understand your vital interest in Him, so that you have no shadow of a doubt of your being His, and of His being yours, but still His left hand is not under your head, nor doth His right hand embrace you. A shade of sadness is cast over your heart, perhaps by affliction, certainly by the temporary absence of your Lord, so even while exclaiming, "I am His," you are forced to take to your knees, and to pray, "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved."

"Where is He?" asks the soul. And the answer comes, "He feedeth among the lilies." If we would find Christ, we must get into communion with His people, we must come to the ordinances with His saints. Oh, for an evening glimpse of Him! Oh, to sup with Him to-night!

"I sought him, but I found him not."

--Song of Solomon 3:1

Tell me where you lost the company of Christ, and I will tell you the most likely place to find Him. Have you lost Christ in the closet by restraining prayer? Then it is there you must seek and find Him. Did you lose Christ by sin? You will find Christ in no other way but by the giving up of the sin, and seeking by the Holy Spirit to mortify the member in which the lust doth dwell. Did you lose Christ by neglecting the Scriptures? You must find Christ in the Scriptures. It is a true proverb, "Look for a thing where you dropped it, it is there." So look for Christ where you lost Him, for He has not gone away. But it is hard work to go back for Christ. Bunyan tells us, the pilgrim found the piece of the road back to the Arbour of Ease, where he lost his roll, the hardest he had ever travelled. Twenty miles onward is easier than to go one mile back for the lost evidence.

Take care, then, when you find your Master, to cling close to Him. But how is it you have lost Him? One would have thought you would never have parted with such a precious friend, whose presence is so sweet, whose words are so comforting, and whose company is so dear to you! How is it that you did not watch Him every moment for fear of losing sight of Him? Yet, since you have let Him go, what a mercy that you are seeking Him, even though you mournfully groan, "O that I knew where I might find Him!" Go on seeking, for it is dangerous to be without thy Lord. Without Christ you are like a sheep without its shepherd; like a tree without water at its roots; like a sere leaf in the tempest--not bound to the tree of life. With thine whole heart seek Him, and He will be found of thee: only give thyself thoroughly up to the search, and verily, thou shalt yet discover Him to thy joy and gladness.

"I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held Him, and would not let Him go." --Song of Solomon 3:4

Does Christ receive us when we come to Him, notwithstanding all our past sinfulness? Does He never chide us for having tried all other refuges first? And is there none on earth like Him? Is He the best of all the good, the fairest of all the fair? Oh, then let us praise Him! Daughters of Jerusalem, extol Him with timbrel and harp! Down with your idols, up with the Lord Jesus. Now let the standards of pomp and pride be trampled under foot, but let the cross of Jesus, which the world frowns and scoffs at, be lifted on high. O for a throne of ivory for our King Solomon! let Him be set on high for ever, and let my soul sit at His footstool, and kiss His feet, and wash them with my tears. Oh, how precious is Christ! How can it be that I have thought so little of Him? How is it I can go abroad for joy or comfort when He is so full, so rich, so satisfying. Fellow believer, make a covenant with thine heart that thou wilt never depart from Him, and ask thy Lord to ratify it. Bid Him set thee as a signet upon His finger, and as a bracelet upon His arm. Ask Him to bind thee about Him, as the bride decketh herself with ornaments, and as the bridegroom putteth on his jewels. I would live in Christ's heart; in the clefts of that rock my soul would eternally abide. The sparrow hath made a house, and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God; and so too would I make my nest, my home, in Thee, and never from Thee may the soul of Thy turtle dove go forth again, but may I nestle close to Thee, O Jesus, my true and only rest.

*"When my precious Lord I find, All my ardent passions glow;
Him with cords of love I bind, Hold and will not let Him go."*

"Thou art all fair, my love."

--Song of Solomon 4:7

The Lord's admiration of His Church is very a wonderful, and His description of her beauty is very glowing. She is not merely *fair*, but "*all fair*." He views her in Himself, washed in His sin-atoning blood and clothed in His meritorious righteousness, and He considers her to be full of comeliness and beauty. No wonder that such is the case, since it is but His own perfect excellency that He admires; for the holiness, glory, and perfection of His Church are His own glorious garments on the back of His own well-beloved spouse. She is not simply pure, or well-proportioned; she is positively lovely and fair! She has actual merit! Her deformities of sin are removed; but more, she has through her Lord obtained a meritorious righteousness by which an actual beauty is conferred upon her. Believers have a positive righteousness given to them when they become "accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6). Nor is the Church barely lovely, she is *superlatively* so. Her Lord styles her "Thou fairest among women." She has a real worth and excellence which cannot be rivalled by all the nobility and royalty of the world. If Jesus could exchange His elect bride for all the queens and empresses of earth, or even for the angels in heaven, He would not, for He puts her first and foremost--"fairest among women." Like the moon she far outshines the stars. Nor is this an opinion which He is ashamed of, for He invites all men to hear it. He sets a "behold" before it, a special note of exclamation, inviting and arresting attention. "*Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair*" (Song of Sol. 4:1). His opinion He publishes abroad even now, and one day from the throne of His glory He will avow the truth of it before the assembled universe. "Come, ye blessed of my Father" (Matt. 25:34), will be His solemn affirmation of the loveliness of His elect.

"There is no spot in thee." --Song of Solomon 4:7

Having pronounced His Church positively full of beauty, our Lord confirms His praise by a precious negative, "There is no spot in thee." As if the thought occurred to the Bridegroom that the carping world would insinuate that He had only mentioned her comely parts, and had purposely omitted those features which were deformed or defiled, He sums up all by declaring her universally and entirely fair, and utterly devoid of stain. A spot may soon be removed, and is the very least thing that can disfigure beauty, but even from this little blemish the believer is delivered in his Lord's sight. If He had said there is no hideous scar, no horrible deformity, no deadly ulcer, we might even then have marvelled; but when He testifies that she is free from the slightest spot, all these other forms of defilement are included, and the depth of wonder is increased. If He had but promised to remove all spots by-and-by, we should have had eternal reason for joy; but when He speaks of it as already done, who can restrain the most intense emotions of satisfaction and delight? O my soul, here is marrow and fatness for thee; eat thy fill, and be satisfied with royal dainties.

Christ Jesus has no quarrel with His spouse. She often wanders from Him, and grieves His Holy Spirit, but He does not allow her faults to affect His love. He sometimes chides, but it is always in the tenderest manner, with the kindest intentions: it is "my love" even then. There is no remembrance of our follies, He does not cherish ill thoughts of us, but He pardons and loves as well after the offence as before it. It is well for us it is so, for if Jesus were as mindful of injuries as we are, how could He commune with us? Many a time a believer will put himself out of humour with the Lord for some slight turn in providence, but our precious Husband knows our silly hearts too well to take any offence at our ill manners.

"A spring shut up, a fountain sealed."

--Song of Solomon 4:12

In this metaphor, which has reference to the inner life of a believer, we have very plainly the idea of *secrecy*. It is a spring *shut up*: just as there were springs in the East, over which an edifice was built, so that none could reach them save those who knew the secret entrance; so is the heart of a believer when it is renewed by grace: there is a mysterious life within which no human skill can touch. It is a secret which no other man knoweth; nay, which the very man who is the possessor of it cannot tell to his neighbour. The text includes not only *secrecy*, but *separation*. It is not the common spring, of which every passer-by may drink, it is one kept and preserved from all others; it is a fountain bearing a particular mark--a king's royal seal, so that all can perceive that it is not a common fountain, but a fountain owned by a proprietor, and placed specially by itself alone. So is it with the spiritual life. The chosen of God were separated in the eternal decree; they were separated by God in the day of redemption; and they are separated by the possession of a life which others have not; and it is impossible for them to feel at home with the world, or to delight in its pleasures. There is also the idea of *sacredness*. The spring shut up is preserved for the use of some special person: and such is the Christian's heart. It is a spring kept for Jesus. Every Christian should feel that he has God's seal upon him--and he should be able to say with Paul, "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Another idea is prominent--it is that of *security*. Oh! how sure and safe is the inner life of the believer! If all the powers of earth and hell could combine against it, that immortal principle must still exist, for He who gave it pledged His life for its preservation. And who "is He that shall harm you," when God is your protector?

"My sister, my spouse."

--Song of Solomon 4:12

Observe the sweet titles with which the heavenly Solomon with intense affection addresses His bride the church. "*My sister*, one near to me by ties of nature, partaker of the same sympathies. *My spouse*, nearest and dearest, united to me by the tenderest bands of love; my sweet companion, part of my own self. *My sister*, by my Incarnation, which makes me bone of thy bone and flesh of thy flesh; *my spouse*, by heavenly betrothal, in which I have espoused thee unto myself in righteousness. *My sister*, whom I knew of old, and over whom I watched from her earliest infancy; *my spouse*, taken from among the daughters, embraced by arms of love, and affianced unto me for ever. See how true it is that our royal Kinsman is not ashamed of us, for He dwells with manifest delight upon this two-fold relationship. We have the word "my" twice in our version; as if Christ dwelt with rapture on His possession of His Church. "His delights were with the sons of men," because those sons of men were His own chosen ones. He, the Shepherd, sought the sheep, because they were *His* sheep; He has gone about "to seek and to save that which was lost," because that which was lost was *His* long before it was lost to itself or lost to Him. The church is the exclusive portion of her Lord; none else may claim a partnership, or pretend to share her love. Jesus, thy church delights to have it so! Let every believing soul drink solace out of these wells. Soul! Christ is near to thee in ties of relationship; Christ is dear to thee in bonds of marriage union, and thou art dear to Him; behold He grasps both of thy hands with both His own, saying, "*My sister, my spouse.*" Mark the two sacred holdfasts by which thy Lord gets such a double hold of thee that He neither can nor will ever let thee go. Be not, O beloved, slow to return the hallowed flame of His love.

**"Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden,
that the spices thereof may flow out." --Song of Solomon 4:16**

Anything is better than the dead calm of indifference. Our souls may wisely desire the north wind of trouble if that alone can be sanctified to the drawing forth of the perfume of our graces. So long as it cannot be said, "The Lord was not in the wind," we will not shrink from the most wintry blast that ever blew upon plants of grace. Did not the spouse in this verse humbly submit herself to the reproofs of her Beloved; only entreating Him to send forth His grace in some form, and making no stipulation as to the peculiar manner in which it should come? Did she not, like ourselves, become so utterly weary of deadness and unholy calm that she sighed for any visitation which would brace her to action? Yet she desires the warm south wind of comfort, too, the smiles of divine love, the joy of the Redeemer's presence; these are often mightily effectual to arouse our sluggish life. She desires either one or the other, or both; so that she may but be able to delight her Beloved with the spices of her garden. She cannot endure to be unprofitable, nor can we. How cheering a thought that Jesus can find comfort in our poor feeble graces. Can it be? It seems far too good to be true. Well may we court trial or even death itself if we shall thereby be aided to make glad Immanuel's heart. O that our heart were crushed to atoms if only by such bruising our sweet Lord Jesus could be glorified. Graces unexercised are as sweet perfumes slumbering in the cups of the flowers: the wisdom of the great Husbandman overrules diverse and opposite causes to produce the one desired result, and makes both affliction and consolation draw forth the grateful odours of faith, love, patience, hope, resignation, joy, and the other fair flowers of the garden. May we know by sweet experience, what this means.

"I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse."

--Song of Solomon 5:1

The heart of the believer is Christ's garden. He bought it with His precious blood, and He enters it and claims it as His own. A garden *implies separation*. It is not the open common; it is not a wilderness; it is walled around, or hedged in. Would that we could see the wall of separation between the church and the world made broader and stronger. It makes one sad to hear Christians saying, "Well, there is no harm in this; there is no harm in that," thus getting as near to the world as possible. Grace is at a low ebb in that soul which can even raise the question of how far it may go in worldly conformity. A garden is *a place of beauty*, it far surpasses the wild uncultivated lands. The genuine Christian must seek to be more excellent in his life than the best moralist, because Christ's garden ought to produce the best flowers in all the world. Even the best is poor compared with Christ's deservings; let us not put Him off with withering and dwarf plants. The rarest, richest, choicest lilies and roses ought to bloom in the place which Jesus calls His own. The garden is *a place of growth*. The saints are not to remain undeveloped, always mere buds and blossoms. We should grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Growth should be rapid where Jesus is the Husbandman, and the Holy Spirit the dew from above. A garden is *a place of retirement*. So the Lord Jesus Christ would have us reserve our souls as a place in which He can manifest Himself, as He doth not unto the world. O that Christians were more retired, that they kept their hearts more closely shut up for Christ! We often worry and trouble ourselves, like Martha, with much serving, so that we have not the room for Christ that Mary had, and do not sit at His feet as we should. The Lord grant the sweet showers of His grace to water His garden this day.

"I sleep, but my heart waketh." --Song of Solomon 5:2

Paradoxes abound in Christian experience, and here is one--the spouse was asleep, and yet she was awake. He only can read the believer's riddle who has ploughed with the heifer of his experience. The two points in this evening's text are--a mournful sleepiness and a hopeful wakefulness. I *sleep*. Through sin that dwelleth in us we may become lax in holy duties, slothful in religious exercises, dull in spiritual joys, and altogether supine and careless. This is a shameful state for one in whom the quickening Spirit dwells; and it is dangerous to the highest degree. Even wise virgins sometimes slumber, but it is high time for all to shake off the bands of sloth. It is to be feared that many believers lose their strength as Samson lost his locks, while sleeping on the lap of carnal security. With a perishing world around us, to sleep is cruel; with eternity so near at hand, it is madness. Yet we are none of us so much awake as we should be; a few thunder-claps would do us all good, and it may be, unless we soon bestir ourselves, we shall have them in the form of war, or pestilence, or personal bereavements and losses. O that we may leave for ever the couch of fleshly ease, and go forth with flaming torches to meet the coming Bridegroom! *My heart waketh*. This is a happy sign. Life is not extinct, though sadly smothered. When our renewed heart struggles against our natural heaviness, we should be grateful to sovereign grace for keeping a little vitality within the body of this death. Jesus will hear our hearts, will help our hearts, will visit our hearts; for the voice of the wakeful heart is really the voice of our Beloved, saying, "Open to me." Holy zeal will surely unbar the door."

*Oh lovely attitude! He stands With melting heart and laden hands;
My soul forsakes her every sin; And lets the heavenly stranger in."*

"My Beloved put in His hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for Him." -- Song of Solomon 5:4

Knocking was not enough, for my heart was too full of sleep, too cold and ungrateful to arise and open the door, but the touch of His effectual grace has made my soul bestir itself. Oh, the longsuffering of my Beloved, to tarry when He found Himself shut out, and me asleep upon the bed of sloth! Oh, the greatness of His patience, to knock and knock again, and to add His voice to His knockings, beseeching me to open to Him! How could I have refused Him! Base heart, blush and be confounded! But what greatest kindness of all is this, that He becomes His own porter and unbars the door Himself. Thrice blessed is the hand which condescends to lift the latch and turn the key. Now I see that nothing but my Lord's own power can save such a naughty mass of wickedness as I am; ordinances fail, even the gospel has no effect upon me, till His hand is stretched out. Now, also, I perceive that His hand is good where all else is unsuccessful, He can open when nothing else will. Blessed be His name, I feel His gracious presence even now. Well may my bowels move for Him, when I think of all that He has suffered for me, and of my ungenerous return. I have allowed my affections to wander. I have set up rivals. I have grieved Him. Sweetest and dearest of all beloveds, I have treated Thee as an unfaithful wife treats her husband. Oh, my cruel sins, my cruel self. What can I do? Tears are a poor show of my repentance, my whole heart boils with indignation at myself. Wretch that I am, to treat my Lord, my All in All, my exceeding great joy, as though He were a stranger. Jesus, thou forgivest freely, but this is not enough, prevent my unfaithfulness in the future. Kiss away these tears, and then purge my heart and bind it with sevenfold cords to Thyself, never to wander more.

"I called Him, but He gave me no answer."

--Song of Solomon 5:6

Prayer sometimes tarrieth, like a petitioner at the gate, until the King cometh forth to fill her bosom with the blessings which she seeketh. The Lord, when He hath given great faith, has been known to try it by long delayings. He has suffered His servants' voices to echo in their ears as from a brazen sky. They have knocked at the golden gate, but it has remained immovable, as though it were rusted upon its hinges. Like Jeremiah, they have cried, "Thou hast covered Thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through." Thus have true saints continued long in patient waiting without reply, not because their prayers were not vehement, nor because they were unaccepted, but because it so pleased Him who is a Sovereign, and who gives according to His own pleasure. If it pleases Him to bid our patience exercise itself, shall He not do as He wills with His own! Beggars must not be choosers either as to time, place, or form. But we must be careful not to take delays in prayer for denials: God's long-dated bills will be punctually honoured; we must not suffer Satan to shake our confidence in the God of truth by pointing to our unanswered prayers. Unanswered petitions are not unheard. God keeps a file for our prayers--they are not blown away by the wind, they are treasured in the King's archives. This is a registry in the court of heaven wherein every prayer is recorded. Tried believer, thy Lord hath a tear-bottle in which the costly drops of sacred grief are put away, and a book in which thy holy groanings are numbered. By-and-by, thy suit shall prevail. Canst thou not be content to wait a little? Will not thy Lord's time be better than thy time? By-and-by He will comfortably appear, to thy soul's joy, and make thee put away the sackcloth and ashes of long waiting, and put on the scarlet and fine linen of full fruition.

"I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love." --Song of Solomon 5:8

Such is the language of the believer panting after present fellowship with Jesus, *he is sick for his Lord*. Gracious souls are never perfectly at ease except they are in a state of nearness to Christ; for when they are away from Him they lose their peace. The nearer to Him, the nearer to the perfect calm of heaven; the nearer to Him, the fuller the heart is, not only of peace, but of life, and vigour, and joy, for these all depend on constant intercourse with Jesus. What the sun is to the day, what the moon is to the night, what the dew is to the flower, such is Jesus Christ to us. What bread is to the hungry, clothing to the naked, the shadow of a great rock to the traveller in a weary land, such is Jesus Christ to us; and, therefore, if we are not consciously one with Him, little marvel if our spirit cries in the words of the Song, "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, tell Him that I am sick of love." *This earnest longing after Jesus has a blessing attending it*: "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness"; and therefore, supremely blessed are they who thirst after the Righteous One. Blessed is that hunger, since it comes from God: if I may not have the full-blown blessedness of being filled, I would seek the same blessedness in its sweet bud-pining in emptiness and eagerness till I am filled with Christ. If I may not feed on Jesus, it shall be next door to heaven to hunger and thirst after Him. There is a hallowedness about that hunger, since it sparkles among the beatitudes of our Lord. But the blessing *involves a promise*. Such hungry ones "*shall be filled*" with what they are desiring. If Christ thus causes us to long after Himself, He will certainly satisfy those longings; and when He does come to us, as come He will, *oh, how sweet it will be!*

"His head is as the most fine gold, His locks are bushy, and black as a raven." --Song of Solomon 5:11

Comparisons all fail to set forth the Lord Jesus, but the spouse uses the best within her reach. By *the head* of Jesus we may understand His deity, "for the head of Christ is God" and then the ingot of purest gold is the best conceivable metaphor, but all too poor to describe one so precious, so pure, so dear, so glorious. Jesus is not a grain of gold, but a vast globe of it, a priceless mass of treasure such as earth and heaven cannot excel. The creatures are mere iron and clay, they all shall perish like wood, hay, and stubble, but the everliving Head of the creation of God shall shine on for ever and ever. In Him is no mixture, nor smallest taint of alloy. He is for ever infinitely holy and altogether divine. *The bushy locks* depict His manly vigour. There is nothing effeminate in our Beloved. He is the manliest of men. Bold as a lion, laborious as an ox, swift as an eagle. Every conceivable and inconceivable beauty is to be found in Him, though once He was despised and rejected of men.

*"His head the finest gold; With secret sweet perfume,
His curled locks hang all as black As any raven's plume."*

The glory of His head is not shorn away, He is eternally crowned with peerless majesty. *The black hair* indicates youthful freshness, for Jesus has the dew of His youth upon Him. Others grow languid with age, but He is for ever a Priest as was Melchisedek; others come and go, but He abides as God upon His throne, world without end. We will behold Him to-night and adore Him. Angels are gazing upon Him--His redeemed must not turn away their eyes from Him. Where else is there such a Beloved? O for an hour's fellowship with Him! Away, ye intruding cares! Jesus draws me, and I run after Him.

"His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers."

--Song of Solomon 5:13

Lo, the flowery month is come! March winds and April showers have done their work, and the earth is all bedecked with beauty. Come my soul, put on thine holiday attire and go forth to gather garlands of heavenly thoughts. Thou knowest whither to betake thyself, for to thee "the beds of spices" are well known, and thou hast so often smelt the perfume of "the sweet flowers," that thou wilt go at once to thy well-beloved and find all loveliness, all joy in Him. That cheek once so rudely smitten with a rod, oft bedewed with tears of sympathy and then defiled with spittle--that cheek as it smiles with mercy is as fragrant aromatic to my heart. Thou didst not hide Thy face from shame and spitting, O Lord Jesus, and therefore I will find my dearest delight in praising Thee. Those cheeks were furrowed by the plough of grief, and crimsoned with red lines of blood from Thy thorn-crowned temples; such marks of love unbounded cannot but charm my soul far more than "pillars of perfume." If I may not see the whole of His face I would behold His cheeks, for the least glimpse of Him is exceedingly refreshing to my spiritual sense and yields a variety of delights. In Jesus I find not only fragrance, but a bed of spices; not one flower, but all manner of sweet flowers. He is to me my rose and my lily, my heart's- ease and my cluster of camphire. When He is with me it is May all the year round, and my soul goes forth to wash her happy face in the morning-dew of His grace, and to solace herself with the singing of the birds of His promises. Precious Lord Jesus, let me in very deed know the blessedness which dwells in abiding, unbroken fellowship with Thee. I am a poor worthless one, whose cheek Thou hast deigned to kiss! O let me kiss Thee in return with the kisses of my lips.

"Yea, He is altogether lovely."

--Song of Solomon 5:16

The superlative beauty of Jesus is all-attracting; it is not so much to be admired as to be loved. He is more than pleasant and fair, He is lovely. Surely the people of God can fully justify the use of this golden word, for He is the object of their warmest love, a love founded on the intrinsic excellence of His person, the complete perfection of His charms. Look, O disciples of Jesus, to your Master's lips, and say, "Are they not most sweet?" Do not His words cause your hearts to burn within you as He talks with you by the way? Ye worshippers of Immanuel, look up to His head of much fine gold, and tell me, are not His thoughts precious unto you? Is not your adoration sweetened with affection as ye humbly bow before that countenance which is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars? Is there not a charm in His every feature, and is not His whole person fragrant with such a savour of His good ointments, that therefore the virgins love Him? Is there one member of His glorious body which is not attractive?--one portion of His person which is not a fresh loadstone to our souls?--one office which is not a strong cord to bind your heart? Our love is not as a seal set upon His heart of love alone; it is fastened upon His arm of power also; nor is there a single part of Him upon which it does not fix itself. We anoint His whole person with the sweet spikenard of our fervent love. His whole life we would imitate; His whole character we would transcribe. In all other beings we see some lack, in Him there is all perfection. The best even of His favoured saints have had blots upon their garments and wrinkles upon their brows; He is nothing but loveliness. All earthly suns have their spots: the fair world itself hath its wilderness; we cannot love the whole of the most lovely thing; but Christ Jesus is gold without alloy-light without darkness--glory without cloud--"Yea, He is *altogether* lovely."

"Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field . . . let us see if the vine flourish." --Song of Solomon 7:11-12

The church was about to engage in earnest labour, and desired her Lord's company in it. She does not say, "I will go," but "let us go." It is blessed working when Jesus is at our side! It is the business of God's people to be trimmers of God's vines. Like our first parents, we are put into the garden of the Lord for usefulness; let us therefore go forth into the field. Observe that the church, when she is in her right mind, in all her many labours desires to enjoy communion with Christ. Some imagine that they cannot serve Christ actively, and yet have fellowship with Him: they are mistaken. Doubtless it is very easy to fritter away our inward life in outward exercises, and come to complain with the spouse, "They made me keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept:" but there is no reason why this should be the case except our own folly and neglect. Certain is it that a professor may do nothing, and yet grow quite as lifeless in spiritual things as those who are most busy. Mary was not praised for sitting still; but for her *sitting at Jesus' feet*. Even so, Christians are not to be praised for neglecting duties under the pretence of having secret fellowship with Jesus: it is not sitting, but sitting at Jesus' feet which is commendable. Do not think that activity is in itself an evil: it is a great blessing, and a means of grace to us. Paul called it a grace given to him to be allowed to preach; and every form of Christian service may become a personal blessing to those engaged in it. Those who have most fellowship with Christ are not recluses or hermits, who have much time to spare, but indefatigable labourers who are toiling for Jesus, and who, in their toil, have Him side by side with them, so that they are workers together with God. Let us remember then, in anything we have to do for Jesus, that we can do it, and should do it in close communion with Him.

"Pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved." --Song of Solomon 7:13

The spouse desires to give to Jesus all that she produces. Our heart has "all manner of pleasant fruits," both "old and new," and they are laid up for our Beloved. At this rich autumnal season of fruit, let us survey our stores. We have *new* fruits. We desire to feel new life, new joy, new gratitude; we wish to make new resolves and carry them out by new labours; our heart blossoms with new prayers, and our soul is pledging herself to new efforts. But we have some *old* fruits too. There is our first love: a choice fruit that! and Jesus delights in it. There is our first faith: that simple faith by which, having nothing, we became possessors of all things. There is our joy when first we knew the Lord: let us revive it. We have our old remembrances of the promises. How faithful has God been! In sickness, how softly did He make our bed! In deep waters, how placidly did He buoy us up! In the flaming furnace, how graciously did He deliver us. Old fruits, indeed! We have many of them, for His mercies have been more than the hairs of our head. Old sins we must regret, but then we have had repentances which He has given us, by which we have wept our way to the cross, and learned the merit of His blood. We have fruits, this morning, both new and old; but here is the point--*they are all laid up for Jesus*. Truly, those are the best and most acceptable services in which Jesus is the solitary aim of the soul, and His glory, without any admixture whatever, the end of all our efforts. Let our many fruits be laid up only for our Beloved; let us display them when He is with us, and not hold them up before the gaze of men. Jesus, we will turn the key in our garden door, and none shall enter to rob Thee of one good fruit from the soil which Thou hast watered with Thy bloody sweat. Our all shall be Thine, Thine only, O Jesus, our Beloved!

"Love is strong as death."

--Song of Solomon 8:6

Whose love can this be which is as mighty as the conqueror of monarchs, the destroyer of the human race? Would it not sound like satire if it were applied to my poor, weak, and scarcely living love to Jesus my Lord? I do love Him, and perhaps by His grace, I could even die for Him, but as for my love in itself, it can scarcely endure a scoffing jest, much less a cruel death. Surely it is my Beloved's love which is here spoken of--the love of Jesus, the matchless lover of souls. His love was indeed stronger than the most terrible death, for it endured the trial of the cross triumphantly. It was a lingering death, but love survived the torment; a shameful death, but love despised the shame; a penal death, but love bore our iniquities; a forsaken, lonely death, from which the eternal Father hid His face, but love endured the curse, and gloried over all. Never such love, never such death. It was a desperate duel, but love bore the palm. What then, my heart? Hast thou no emotions excited within thee at the contemplation of such heavenly affection? Yes, my Lord, I long, I pant to feel Thy love flaming like a furnace within me. Come Thou Thyself and excite the ardour of my spirit.

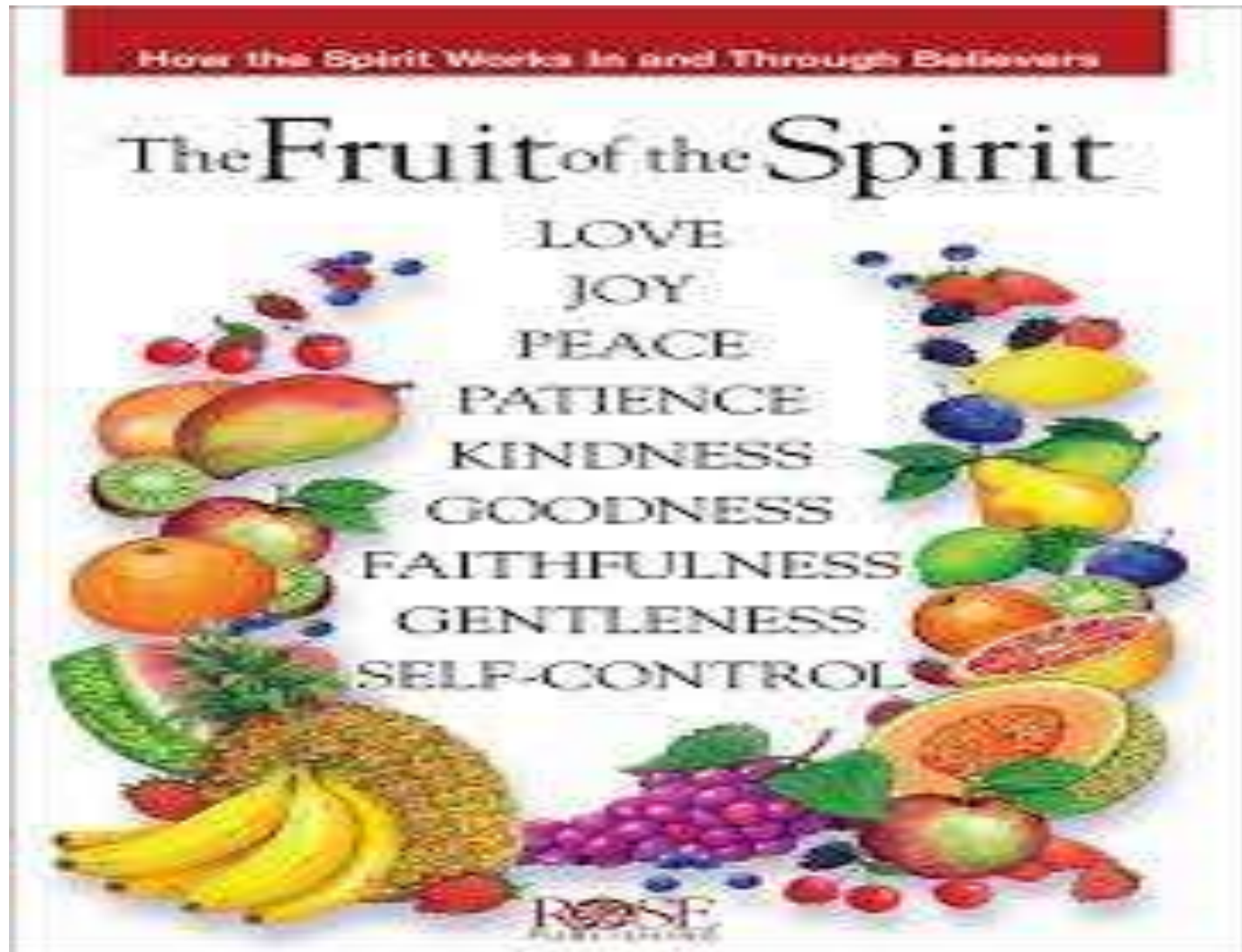
*"For every drop of crimson blood, Thus shed to make me live
,O wherefore, wherefore have not I, A thousand lives to give?"*

Why should I despair of loving Jesus with a love as strong as death? He deserves it: I desire it. The martyrs felt such love, and they were but flesh and blood, then why not I? They mourned their weakness, and yet out of weakness were made strong. Grace gave them all their unflinching constancy--there is the same grace for me. Jesus, lover of my soul, shed abroad such love, even Thy love in my heart, this evening.

**"Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to
Thy voice: cause me to hear it." --Song of Solomon 8:13**

My sweet Lord Jesus remembers well the garden of Gethsemane, and although He has left that garden, He now dwells in the garden of His church: there He unbosoms Himself to those who keep His blessed company. That voice of love with which He speaks to His beloved is more musical than the harps of heaven. There is a depth of melodious love within it which leaves all human music far behind. Ten of thousands on earth, and millions above, are indulged with its harmonious accents. Some whom I well know, and whom I greatly envy, are at this moment hearkening to the beloved voice. O that I were a partaker of their joys! It is true some of these are poor, others bedridden, and some near the gates of death, but O my Lord, I would cheerfully starve with them, pine with them, or die with them, if I might but hear Thy voice. Once I did hear it often, but I have grieved Thy Spirit. Return unto me in compassion, and once again say unto me, "I am thy salvation." No other voice can content me; I know Thy voice, and cannot be deceived by another, let me hear it, I pray thee. I know not what Thou wilt say, neither do I make any condition, O my Beloved, do but let me hear Thee speak, and if it be a rebuke I will bless Thee for it. Perhaps to cleanse my dull ear may need an operation very grievous to the flesh, but let it cost what it may I turn not from the one consuming desire, cause me to hear Thy voice. Bore my ear afresh; pierce my ear with Thy harshest notes, only do not permit me to continue deaf to Thy calls. To-night, Lord, grant Thine unworthy one his desire, for I am Thine, and Thou hast bought me with Thy blood. Thou hast opened mine eye to see Thee, and the sight has saved me. Lord, open Thou mine ear. I have read Thy heart, now let me hear Thy lips.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT



(i) ALOES: Fruit of Self-Control <4:14>

(ii) Ahaliym (174) - of foreign origin; aloe wood (i.e. sticks):

Two plants, one a tree and the other a flower

The aloes mentioned in <Psalm 45:8; Proverbs 7:17>, and <Song of Solomon 4:14> came from a large tree known as "eaglewood," a plant native to India. The wood of the aloe tree is fragrant and highly valued for perfume and incense. Many authorities believe the lign aloe to be the same tree <Num. 24:6> (KJV).

The aloes brought by Nicodemus to wrap the body of Jesus <John 19:39> were probably the true aloes of the lily family, a beautiful plant with thick, fleshy leaves and red flowers. The aloin derived from the pulp of the aloe leaf was an expensive product used in embalming.

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(ii) CALAMUS: Fruit of Kindness <4:14>

(that which makes us upright & creates uprightness in others)

(ii) Qaneh (7070) - a reed (as erect); by resemblance a rod (especially for measuring), shaft, tube, stem, the radius (of the arm), beam (of a steelyard):

a primitive root; to erect, i.e. create; by extension, to procure, especially by purchase (causatively, sell); by implication to own:

A fragrant, reed-like grass growing along streams and river banks <Song 4:14>, also referred to as sweet cane <Is. 43:24; Jer. 6:20>. Calamus leaves are fragrant and ginger-flavored when crushed. It is named with other aromatic substances <Ezek. 27:19> and as one ingredient for the anointing oil <Ex. 30:23>. It is believed to be a plant native to India <Jer. 6:20>.

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(iii) CINNAMON: Fruit of Goodness <4:14>

**(ii) Qinnamown (7076) - from an unused root (meaning to erect);
cinnamon bark (as in upright rolls):**

A member of the laurel family, the cinnamon tree grew to be more than 9 meters (30 feet) tall with white flowers and wide-spreading branches. A native of Ceylon, the cinnamon tree produced bark and oil which was used for the anointing oil <Ex.30:23> and as perfume <Prov. 7:17; Rev. 18:13>.

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(iv) FRANKINCENSE: Fruit of Faithfulness

<3:6; 4:6,14>

(ii) Lebownah (3828) - frankincense (from its whiteness or perhaps that of its smoke): -frank- incense. From root meaning 'white'.

Frankincense was part of the sacred anointing oil <Ex. 30:34>. It was used in sacrificial offering <Lev. 2:1>, as a fumigant during animal sacrifices <Ex. 30:7>, and as perfume <Song 3:6>. It was a gift to baby Jesus <Matt. 2:11>.

The trees are native to India, Arabia, and Africa. Palestine probably obtained this product through foreign trade <Is. 60:6>.

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**(v) HENNA: The fruit of Joy (of the Lord)
the Joy of being redeemed (joy of salvation)
<1:14; 4:13; Ps 51:12>**

(ii) Kopher (3724) - a cover, i.e. (literally) a village (as covered in); (specifically) bitumen (as used for coating), and the henna plant (as used for dyeing); figuratively, a redemption-price:

From a primitive root; to cover (specifically with bitumen); figuratively, to expiate or condone, to placate or cancel:

A plant used to produce a valuable orange-red dye. It was two to three meters (seven to ten feet) tall and bore fragrant white flowers. Solomon compared his beloved to a cluster of henna <Song 1:14; 4:13>; (camphire, KJV).

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(vi) MYRRH: Fruit of Meekness

<1:13; 3:6; 4:6,14; 5:5,13>

(ii) More (4753) - or mowr (more); myrrh (as distilling in drops, and also as bitter) From a primitive root; properly, to trickle; to be (causatively, make) bitter (literally or figuratively):

An extract from a stiff-branched tree with white flowers and plum-like fruit. After myrrh was extracted from the wood, it soon hardened and was valued as an article of trade. It was an ingredient used in anointing oil <Ex. 30:23>, and was used as perfume <Ps. 45:8; Prov. 7:17; Song 3:6>, in purification rites for women <Esth.2:12>, as a gift for the infant Jesus <Matt. 2:11>, and in embalming <John 19:39>.

According to the Gospel of Mark <15:23>, the drink offered to Jesus before His crucifixion was "wine mingled with myrrh." Matthew, however, has "sour wine mingled with gall" <Matt. 27:34>.

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(vii) POMEGRANATE: Fruit of Love
(overall characteristic of the Fruit of the Spirit)
<4:3,13; 6:7,11; 7:12; 8:2>

(ii) Rimmown (7416) - a pomegranate, the tree (from its upright growth) or the fruit (also an artificial ornament). From a primitive root; to rise (literally or figuratively): A round, sweet fruit about ten centimeters (four inches) across with a hard rind. It is green when young and turns red when ripe. There are numerous edible seeds inside the pomegranate.

The pomegranate tree has been cultivated in Palestine and Egypt since ancient times <Num. 13:23; Deut. 8:8>. It grew as a bush or small tree, sometimes reaching a height of about 9 meters (30 feet) with small, lance-shaped leaves. The blossoms were bright red. The fruit usually ripened in August or September. Pomegranates were highly esteemed during Bible times. The hem of Aaron's robe was decorated with blue, purple, and red pomegranates <Ex. 28:33-34; 39:24-26>. It was listed among the pleasant fruits of Egypt <Num. 20:5>. Solomon decorated the Temple with the likeness of the pomegranate <1 Kin. 7:18, 20>. A spiced wine was made from the juice <Song 8:2>.

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(viii) Saffron: Fruit of Longsuffering <4:14>

(ii) 3750 Karkom (3750) - probably of foreign origin; the crocus: The product of many varieties of crocus, a flower which grew from a bulb and produced light-blue flowers.

Crocus blooms were gathered, dried, and pressed into cakes of saffron. Saffron was used as a coloring for curries and stews. It was also used as a perfume for the floors of theaters and for weddings. Solomon was the only Bible writer to refer to saffron <Song 4:14>.

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(ix) SPIKENARD: Fruit of Peace

<1:12; 4:13,14>

(ii) Nerd (5373) - of foreign origin; nard, an aromatic:

Spikenard. A costly oil derived from the dried roots and stems of the nard, an herb of Asia. This oil was used as a liquid or made into an ointment. Solomon praised the fragrance of spikenard

<Song 1:12; 4:13-14>.

Spikenard was imported from India in alabaster boxes. These were stored and used only for special occasions. When household guests arrived, they were usually anointed with this oil. Jesus was anointed on two occasions as an honored guest <Mark 14:3; John 12:3>.

Many spikes grew from a single nard root which produced clusters of pink flowers. The stems were covered with hair, giving them a woolly appearance. Some translations of the Bible refer to spikenard as nard.

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PRAYER & PRAISE



KNOWING GOD: The Salvation Message (1)

SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST: A Matter of FAITH: What do you think it takes for someone to get to heaven? Is it luck? Good deeds? Nothing at all? Or is there something more? The Bible has the answer to this question. It's a matter of F-A-I-T-H

“F” stands for FORGIVENESS: We cannot have eternal life without God's forgiveness. Ephesians 1:7a says, “In Him (Jesus Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

“A” is for AVAILABLE: Forgiveness is available for all. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” But forgiveness is not automatic. “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven,” says Matthew 7:21a.

“I” is for IMPOSSIBLE: It is impossible for God to allow sin into heaven because of who He is and because of who we are. God is loving and just, but His judgment is against sin. James 2:13a says, “Because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful.” We are sinful people. Romans 3:23 says, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

“T” is for TURN: To turn means to repent. We can repent – or turn – from our sin and from ourselves. “But unless you repent, you too will all perish,” Luke 13:3b says. We can also turn to Someone. Trust Christ alone. Romans 10:9 tells us how: “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

“H” is for HEAVEN: Heaven is eternal life. Here, that means life “to the full:” “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (John 10:10b).” In the hereafter, it means the promise of heaven: “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am (John 14:3).”

KNOWING GOD: The Salvation Message (2)

Take the step of faith described by another meaning of FAITH:

Forsaking All | Trust Him

To receive God's love and forgiveness, pray the following from the heart:

“Father God, thank You for Your Love. You sent Your Son, Jesus to die on the cross for me. Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner and have displeased You in many ways. I believe You died for my sin, and only through faith in Your death and resurrection can I be forgiven. I want to turn from my sin and ask You to come into my life as my Savior and Lord. From this day on, I will follow You by living a life that pleases You through the Power of Your Holy Spirit. Now, fill me with Your Holy Spirit so I can serve You. Thank you, Jesus, for saving me. Amen.”

Now, have a pastor find you a Godly Christian mentor to help disciple you. Join a church where you worship God, grow in your faith, & attend Bible Study. Begin a daily personal worship experience where you study the Bible and pray.

For more information about JESUS CHRIST, please see the following websites:

[\[http://www.altogetherlovely.org\]](http://www.altogetherlovely.org)

[\http://www.whoisjesusreally.com/index.h

[tm\] \[http://www.whoisiam.com\]](http://www.whoisiam.com)

[\[http://www.historicjesus.com\]](http://www.historicjesus.com)

PRAYER FOR HEALING THE WOUNDED SPIRIT

I SAY IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST THAT MY LIFE IS NOT A MISTAKE. GOD MADE ME OUT OF THE LOVE THAT HE IS. HE CALLED ME INTO BEING AT THE RIGHT TIME AND THE RIGHT PLACE. HE PREPARED A WAY FOR ME AND GAVE HIS LIFE FOR ME. I AM A PRIVILEGE, NOT A BURDEN; A JOY AND A DELIGHT, NOT A DISAPPOINTMENT; I AM NOT AN INTRUSION, I BELONG. I AM A TREASURE JUST BECAUSE I AM, NOT MERELY FOR WHAT I CAN DO. I AM ONE OF GOD'S OWN CHILDREN, AND HE DELIGHTS IN ME. THE LORD IS POURING HIS LOVE IN TO ME. I CHOOSE TO FORGIVE THOSE THAT WOUNDED ME. FORGIVE ME FOR REJECTING THE LIFE YOU PLANNED FOR ME. I ASK, LORD, THAT YOU EMPOWER ME TO CHOOSE LIFE. I CHOOSE LIFE – YOUR LIFE. IN JESUS' NAME I PRAY. AMEN. (Unknown) (MATT.6:12,14-15; 18:21-35; JOHN 20:23)

“BREAKING GENERATIONAL SIN”

Father God, in the mighty name of Jesus Christ,

I come to You now and repent on behalf of my family line.

Lord, whenever there was the sin of (name the sin) on my father’s or mother’s side, I repent of that sin on behalf of myself and my family,

both on the (father’s family name) side and on the (mother’s family name) side.

When ever I or my ancestors yielded to this particular sin, even as far back as Adam,

I ask You to forgive us as a family and to cleanse the family line of this sin by the Blood of Jesus. When ever You see an invisible soul-tie that connects me with any of those people who yielded to this sin, I now take a sword in the spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ and through the Blood of Jesus Christ I sever that connection in the spirit and I break every unholy soul-tie between myself and those previous generations. And I now place a river of the Blood of Jesus Christ and those generations and render myself free from any unholy influence. I also break any curse that has come to me or my children through generational sins and curses.

In Jesus’ name and through His Blood, I ask you to turn the curses into blessings.

In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

***(Pray this prayer as many times as necessary,
each time you identify a generational sin operating in your family).***

From the Book “Spiritual Warfare and Your Children”

by Ray Beeson & Kathi Mills

“A PRAYER FOR BLESSING”

**As I seek to cleanse my hands, O God,
purify my heart and make me acceptable in Your sight.**

I pray that You would look upon me and bless me.

As I humble myself before You, exalt me and let Your favour go before me.

Spread Your goodness before me.

May it accompany Your mercy as it follows me in accordance with Your promises.

Lord, cause Your face to shine upon me.

Let Your blessings overtake me.

**Grant me peace with all who would set their face against me
as I walk in peace and fellowship with You. Let no weapon formed
against me succeed. Equip me with the strength to do Your will.**

**Bless the work of my hands, and cause me to prosper in all my ways,
even as my soul prospers.**

**Order my steps on paths of promotion as I acknowledge You.
Grant me the power to gain wealth as I surrender my all to You.**

Most of all, I pray that You grant me wisdom.

The wisdom to seek You above all things.

Teach me to be a wise steward of all You grant,

and let each blessing that You render,

be an occasion to further glorify Your name in all the earth.

In the matchless and wonderful name of Jesus I pray. Amen.

**From the book “How to be Blessed and Highly Favored”
by Michelle McKinney Hammond**

PRAISE

You are holy, my only God and Your deeds are wonderful. You are strong. You are great. You are the Most Almighty.

You, Holy Father, are King of heaven and earth.

You are Three and One, Lord God, all Good.

**You are Good, All Good, Supreme Good,
Lord God, living and true.**

You are my love. You are my wisdom. You are my humility.

You are my endurance. You are my rest. You are my peace.

You are my joy and my gladness.

You are my justice and my moderation.

You are all my riches, You are my gentleness.

You are my protector, my guardian, and my defender.

You are my courage. You are my haven and hope.

You are my faith, and my great consolation.

**You are my eternal life, Great and Wonderful Lord, God
Almighty, Wonderful and Merciful Savior.**

In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen.

From Agape Banners at: <http://www.agapebanners.com>

ARMOUR OF GOD (1)

Good morning Father! Good morning Jesus! Good morning Holy Spirit!

**Today Heavenly Father, according to Your Word, I
present my body to You as a living sacrifice, holy and
acceptable in Your sight.**

**Because I am not attending against flesh and blood,
but against principalities, powers, world rulers of this present darkness,
and spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places,
I take the whole armour of God so that I am be able to withstand in the evil day.**

So today I stand and gird my loins with truth.

I put on the breastplate of righteousness.

I shod my feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.

Above all these, I take the shield of faith to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one.

I take the helmet of salvation and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

**I pray at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication for
all God's family and for me**

that I may open my mouth boldly to proclaim the Gospel.

**The weapons of my warfare are not worldly but have
divine power to destroy strongholds.**

**Today I destroy obstacles and every proud obstacle
to the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ. 56**

ARMOUR OF GOD (2)

**Thank you Lord, that according to Your Word the
glory of the Lord is my rear guard.**

**I praise You and thank You for the armor of light
You have provided for me this day.**

**I am completely covered now. Upon
Jesus I have built my life.**

**The gates of hell shall not prevail against me.
Jesus I apply Your precious Blood to my life, my
family, my home, and all my possessions. You are
my Shepherd and I shall not want.**

You have supplied all my needs according to Your riches in glory.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

**I praise You for walking in divine health
for You are my God who heals all my diseases. I
praise You and thank You for my prosperity and good
health even as my soul prospers.**

For the joy of the Lord is my strength.

ARMOUR OF GOD (3)

**Father, I have prayed according to Your Word.
You said You would watch over Your Word to perform it.
I am reminded that every word spoken becomes a living thing
– either to minister life or death and destruction.**

**Jesus, let my meditation be sweet to You
as I will rejoice in You all day.**

Just rise up and live big within me.

For I am Yours and You are mine.

In the Mighty Name of Jesus I pray. Amen.

(PRAY THIS PRAYER EVERY MORNING)

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

From Agape Banners at: <http://www.agapebanners.com>

Who is Jesus?

To the artist He is the One Altogether Lovely.

To the architect He is the Chief Cornerstone.

To the astronomer He is the Sun of Righteousness.

To the baker He is the Living Bread.

To the banker He is the Hidden Treasure.

To the biologist He is the Life.

To the carpenter He is the Sure Foundation.

To the doctor He is the Great Physician.

To the educator He is the Great Teacher.

To the farmer He is the Sower and Lord of the Harvest.

To the florist He is the Lily of the Valley.

To the geologist He is the Rock of Ages.

To the horticulturist He is the True Vine.

To the judge He is the Righteous One.

To the juror He is the True Witness.

To the jeweler He is the Pearl of Great Price.

To the editor He is the Good Tidings of Great Joy.

To the oculist He is the Light of the Eyes.

To the philosopher He is Wisdom.

To the Printer He is the True Type.

To the servant He is the Good Master.

To the student He is the Incarnate Truth.

To the toiler He is the Giver of Rest.

To the Sinner He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

To the Christian, He is the Son of the Living God, the Savior, the Redeemer and Lord!

(unknown)

For books, songs, & this teaching on the Song of Songs see:

www.altogetherlovely.org/song-of-songs

Many of the notes in this book have been adapted or used from the book “Song of Songs” by Richard Brooks. We thank the author for his diligent study of this masterpiece. We highly recommend the book (and all his books) as the author is well studied, doctrinally discerning, and has received light from God.

**But most importantly, we thank the Holy Spirit
– we love You Holy Spirit!!**

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- 1 **The Song of Songs** by Richard Brooks
(Christian Focus Publications) www.christianfocus.com
Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, IV20 1TW, Great Britain
[The author highly recommends all books by the author Richard Brooks]
[The author also recommends literature by Christian Focus Publications]
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