

Garments covering sin

I would like to thank Sister Liz Robinson for her interesting article, "The robe without a seam" ([Dec. 2007, p. 434](#)), which referred to "garments affording a covering for sin", and to add a little more on the subject.

In the Song of Songs we have the greatest of all songs; I do not believe it is about Solomon and his somewhat sordid love life, but consists of God's words about the love of Jesus for his bride and how that love is reciprocated. They are one together in spirit, just as David is described as "a man after [God's] own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14). The name 'Shulamite' in chapter 6:13 of the Song is the feminine form of Solomon and therefore shows their oneness.

In 5:1 I believe we have portrayed the sacrifice of Jesus and his resurrection from the dead. He is now in his garden, he has gathered his myrrh and spice, he has eaten his honeycomb and drunk his wine and milk, and so he says to us, "eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved [literally beloveds]". But then in verse 2 the bride speaks, saying, "it is *the voice* of my beloved that knocketh". Then the bridegroom speaks and calls her "my dove, my undefiled", and his "head is filled with dew", which reminds us of the resurrection morn.

Most commentators take verse 3 to be the bride somehow dreaming and, as it were, too lazy to get out of bed to open the door, but there is no indication of that in the Hebrew. In fact the bridegroom speaks to her directly, "my sister, my love", in verse 2 and carries on speaking in verse 3. So in verse 3 it is Jesus who says, "I have put off my coat". This, I suggest, is his *covering of mortality*, which, of course, he cannot put back on. Also he says, "I have *washed my feet*"—in other words he has served his Father, as he taught his disciples in John 13—and he cannot now "defile them". As Sister Robinson said, "God would put off his sackcloth and gird him with gladness, clothe him with the garments of salvation, and cover him with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself". Then the bride speaks from verse

4 onwards and talks about the myrrh that reminds us about the birth and death of the Lord Jesus (Mt. 2:11; Jno. 19:39). She answers the door, but of course he is now with his Father and so he has gone. The knocking reminds us of Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me". See also John 14:23.

Later on in the Song two questions are addressed to the bride. One is in 5:9: "What is thy beloved more than *another* beloved?". This is a question that has been asked of the saints all down the ages, but sadly not much these days: "Why do you worship this man?". She replies with the most beautiful description of Jesus in verses 10-16. I am sure these words have many connections throughout all Scripture, and we too, as the Apostle Peter said, must be "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh [us] a reason of the hope that is in [us] with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15).

The second question is in 6:1: "whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee". There are two things here. The first is related to our interested friends who have heard of the hope that is in us; the second to the sceptic, who asks, "If Jesus is alive where is he?". The answer is in verse 2: "My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies". The saints are the lilies (2:2), and as we feed daily upon him he also must be fed by us, by our faith and our love for him who loved us and gave himself for us. He is, of course, "altogether lovely" (5:16).

As the bride says in 2:4, "He brought me to the house of wine [the literal Hebrew according to the margin], and his banner over me was love". This is the greatest song of all. Let us pray that we may be accounted worthy to be "called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:9).

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