

The Song of Solomon (3)

Geoff Cave

In Scene 3 the bride hears the voice of her beloved, but she is not united with him. He “standeth behind our wall,” shows himself “through the lattice” and speaks to her there. The message he brings speaks of the time when the winter is past and the fruits appear in the land, a time when all is well. He invites her to “come away” with him and share in this time. The Lord Jesus invites his bride to come with him and share in the glories of the future age; on numerous occasions in the final letter to his bride he describes the visions of future glory. Here in the Song the bride is given a glimpse of the end result of her union with her beloved.

“THE VOICE of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills” (2:8).

He comes to be near and encourage, “for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5). Here is both comfort and warning.

The vigour of the beloved enables him to leap and skip. He has leaped over the wall dividing Jew and Gentile (Ps. 18:29; Eph. 2:14). On a number of occasions in the Song the beloved is ‘on the mountains.’ Our Lord resorted to the mountains to be nearer to his Father and get away from the clamour and temptations of the world (Mt. 14:23; Jno. 6:3).

“My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall” (v. 9).

The roe and hart are noted for beauty and agility in hills and mountains. He does not enter her house, but she can see him through the window. He does not enter because she has not yet pledged herself to him. The Lord Jesus says to those who are betrothed to him, “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” (Rev. 3:20).

“My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away” (v. 10).

Now he speaks his message about the new beginnings of spring with the invitation to “Rise up . . . and come away.” The phrase “come away” (Heb. *yalak*) appears in Genesis 12:1 as “get thee out”: “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee.” The first thing for the bride to do is to leave the things of this life behind and to set her sights on future glory.

The picture painted in verses 11-13 is of the Kingdom; springtime speaks of resurrection, a time of rejoicing

when the curse is lifted, and a fruitful earth with pleasant scents from the flowers.

“O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs” (v. 14).

The beloved sees his bride as timidly hiding in the clefts of the rock, not daring to show herself, and overawed by the sound of his voice; she is speechless. This is only right, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It is only when we are invited to share the company of the Father and the Son that we dare to accept the gracious invitation. It is because the bride shows this timidity that she is appealing to the beloved.

“Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes” (v. 15).

The beloved ends his words to the bride by giving her a warning. If she is to attain to this time of blessing the foxes must be ‘taken’, they ‘spoil’ the vines and the tender fruit will not mature. “O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts” (Ezek. 13:4). The same warning applies to believers of any age; if false teachers are allowed to remain amongst the believers the fruit will be ‘spoiled’, which will result in rejection at the judgement seat when the heavenly bridegroom appears: “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Mt. 7:19).

"My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies" (v. 16).

"Feedeth" (Heb. *ra'ah*) is translated as 'shepherd' on sixty-three occasions. Considered this way, the bride is saying that her beloved is the shepherd who is feeding his flock among the lilies. He is the good shepherd, in contrast to the false shepherds, whom he has likened to the foxes.

"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" (v. 17).

"Bether" means 'division.' Until the millennial morn we are separated, while our beloved is in heaven. Till then the saints must bear their tribulation, with only the voice of the beloved to encourage them. When the shadows of the Gentile night have passed away and the glories of the new day dawn the separation will be over.

Another aspect is seen in the first occurrence of the Hebrew word in Scripture: "And he [Abram] took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece [*bether*] one against another: but the birds divided he not" (Gen. 15:10). The actions of Abram here point forward to the sacrifice of Christ and the sealing of the covenant between the Almighty and His people. The cutting or dividing of the sacrifice was to unite the two parties in the covenant. In ancient times the slaughtered animal was cut in two, and the parties to the covenant passed between the severed parts. As the divided parts belonged to the same animal, so the parties would be united in the covenant.

Scene 4

The fourth part of the song shows the bride alone, having lost contact with her beloved. This is a situation which can occur at any time in the life of the believer when attendance to the voice of the Beloved in the Word of life is neglected.

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

As events unfold in this scene, it becomes clear why she cannot find him. She is looking in the wrong places, and it is the watchmen who guide her in the right direction.

"I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth" (v. 2).

Cities built by men are dangerous places for the believer to frequent; the beloved will never be

found there. They are places where sin reigns supreme, where the worst excesses of human pride and rebellion are concentrated. A quick look in Genesis at the word 'city' endorses this conclusion. The first city mentioned in Scripture was built by the son of Cain; next mentioned are Nineveh and Calneh, and then Babel and Sodom. By contrast, while men were building cities Abraham lived in tents; the only things he was recorded as building were altars to his God.

Returning to the song, the Beloved is never in the city; he is either in the garden or on the mountains (more about this in a later article). The bride was looking in the broad ways of the city, but the Beloved has said, "broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (Mt. 7:13). Providentially for the bride, there were watchmen encircling the city, who were able to guide her to where she could find her Beloved.

"The watchmen that go about the city found me" (v. 3).

If they 'found' her they must have been looking for her. It may be argued that the watchmen here represent the Lord Jesus Christ, for he came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10). But he uses other disciples to fulfil that role. A notable example in this respect is the Apostle Paul, who was a chosen vessel for this purpose. There are times when any disciple may fulfil this role: "he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (Jas. 5:20).

"I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go . . ." (v. 4).

Again she is determined not to let him go; and again she does let him go, as the Song reveals. Such are the double-minded ways of the flesh.

". . . until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me" (v. 4).

The mother of the bride here most likely represents the ecclesia. It is in the ecclesia that individual members learn of Christ and are succoured. We must bring only Christ into the ecclesia and not the world if this is to be achieved.

"I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem . . . that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please" (v. 5).

See notes on 2:7 (Oct. 2010, page 312).

[\(To be continued\)](#)