

## CHAPTER XLI

### THE BRIDE HAS ABUNDANCE OF FRESH AND PRESERVED FRUIT FOR THE BRIDEGROOM. 7:10-13

**7:10** “**I am my Beloved’s; and His desire is toward me.**” The daughters of Jerusalem and the bride are now speaking, and we see that they have become one. It is, indeed, a new song that has been put in the mouths of the daughters of Jerusalem. No tongue can describe the joy and rejoicing that fills the soul that has really come to the Lord and tasted of this uttermost salvation; into whose heart and life the Lord has come and taken full possession, taking up His abode there that He may work out His will in the life.

There was a time when we did not want the Lord, when He had no beauty that we should desire Him, and we could see no form or comeliness in Him. As soon as we really accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, our hearts rejoice that; “My Beloved is mine, and I am His” (ch. 2:16); our first joy is in the consciousness that He is ours. There is such satisfaction in knowing that He is ours in as real a way as though there were none else to claim Him and His love; although we know and rejoice that He is in the Lord and Saviour of all other believers. And we not only rejoice that He is ours, but we rejoice that we belong to Him. We rest down in the satisfaction of calling Him for our own, and we draw on His protection and working in our behalf.

This is our first joy; and the joy of belonging to Him comes as the next precious thought. As we go on with the Lord, the relation between us grows more intimate; our love is drawn out because of Himself rather than because of what He does for us, and because of our possession of Him; and our hearts cry out: “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine” (ch. 6:3). We begin to see that we have given ourselves to the Lord to be forever His. That He has not only given Himself to us, but that He requires from us yieldedness and separation, with the consciousness that we are no longer our own, but have been bought with a price. Only this attitude can bring us under His control so that His purpose can be carried out and His Name glorified.

It is precious to know that the Lord is ours; in the first days of our Christian life, this thought fills us with rejoicing and praise. We are not unmindful that we are His, but this has not yet entered into our consciousness as it does afterward. It is when we have been dealt with, and when we have passed through hard things; it is when, through some dealing of God, our responsibility towards Him breaks more fully upon our understanding, that the fact that we are His, also begins to fill our spiritual horizon.

We are seeing more clearly that though Jesus Christ has bought us with His blood, and has given Himself to us it is God’s supreme purpose that we shall be given over to Him. He has stretched forth His hand and laid it upon us, He is separating us from the world, and we begin to enter into the precious work of God in making us His own possession. These two passages (ch. 2:16; 6:3) set forth the first two steps in the life of communion between the soul and God.

It is after the bride has been caught up into an abiding place of communion with the Lord. “Among the chariots” of the Prince; and those about her have seen the glory of the Lord resting upon her; it is when they have seen the martyr’s crown upon her head

and have beheld her eyes with Heaven's peace and depth reflected in them, that she says: "I am my Beloved's; and His desire is toward me."

These are the three wonderful and mysterious steps in the life of communion between the bride and Christ. First, we rejoice because He is ours; then, as we draw nearer, there is a deep joy and rest in the consciousness that we are His in life or death, for all His will to be done in our lives. Finally, our consuming satisfaction is, that we are not only His, but that His desire is toward us. Though we know from the first that we are His, we have not entered into it until we have partaken in His sufferings. At the beginning, we have rejoiced that He is ours, we have known that we were His, but we have not entered into it.

Much of the time in our spiritual babyhood, we have girded ourselves and have gone where we desired; we have not yet apprehended what it means to take up our cross and follow after Him; we have not yet yielded to Him, the Crucified, that He may take out of us every movement of our own desires. We do not yet discern that we are girding ourselves and going whithersoever we will, and that if we join the blest company of the bride of the Lamb, our own girding must forever cease, and His girding must begin and go on until He decides all things for us, and we have no way nor say in our lives.

Truly does another, gird us and carry us whithersoever we would not. Oh, what joy does this girding bring us as He carries us where He wills, and we begin to understand it. Though it is not where we would go ourselves, it is whithersoever *He* wills to take us. We begin to realize that we belong to Him, as His constraining love and hands are stretched out and laid upon us until we have decreased and He has increased.

We enter into the rest and satisfaction of belonging to Him, and we begin to taste the sweetness of suffering for His sake. We have proved that even one curl of our locks of separation can hold the King of Glory. We are walking along the narrow way with eyes fixed upon Him, with the reflection of His glory and image becoming more apparent upon us at every step.

We have been bought with a price, not with silver or gold, but with the precious blood as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, even the Blood of Christ. Very close must we approach unto Him, with all our hearts must we yield to Him at every step, if we would apprehend that His desire is toward us. God would have us abiding in this place.

What one of God's children that has followed Him with any depth of love and obedience, cannot recognize the milestones that mark the progress of the soul in its journey, from the first day of salvation, to that day when the work is done and all prepared for the Coming of the Lord. It is only on the strait and narrow way, that we shall find these milestones. If we do not journey along that path all the time, there are some of these precious experiences that we shall miss, and we shall have to retrace our steps if we would have all that the Lord has for us.

**7:11, 12 "Come, my Beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see whether the vine hath budded, and its blossom is open, and the pomegranates are in flower: there will I give thee my love."**

THE GARDEN OF THE FIELDS. This is the fourth garden that is mentioned in this book; and, as we have said in the introduction, the gardens and vineyards are synonymous, meaning "The Kingdom of God." We see that at this time, there is the bud

and the flower, the newly ripened fruit, and the old preserved fruit. Everything is found in his garden excepting spices. In the first chapter of Acts, Christ tells His followers that they shall be His witnesses, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

One meaning of the word, “witnesses,” is, “martyrs.” There is significance in here, which shows that it is not over an easy and smooth path that the Spirit-filled and Spirit-called servant of God walks as He preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is with suffering and persecution, that God’s faithful servants proclaim and gospel. Only as the mouth of the bride is as the best wine that moveth, or goeth down, smoothly; only as it is kept for her Beloved alone, with the power and life-giving stream in it that will make the lips of those that are dead or asleep to speak, can the bride go forth with the gospel message and have her Beloved with her.

First, she brings Him home to her mother’s house, she proclaims the glad tidings to those in Jerusalem, then to Judea and to Samaria; but as she draws closer to Him, her soul goes out to the uttermost parts of the earth. Her heart goes out for the Vineyard of the Lord, and she cries: “Come, my Beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages.” She does not say, “let *me* go forth,” but “let *us* go forth.” Even in going forth into His vineyard, the thought and desire that are uppermost in the consecrated soul, are the communion, which she will have with her Lord in her labors.

She is not going forth for a short time, she is not going for a visit, but she is going forth to remain and to lodge in the villages. It is not that part of the vineyard, which is near her home but it is far away among the fields. Her heart is longing that all others may know her Beloved and love Him as she loves Him. She would publish to the ends of the earth and to all peoples and tongues, the glad tidings of this great salvation, and what the Lord has done for her. She would so make Jesus Christ her righteousness, that she may shine, as the brightness of the firmament, in the darkest places, through personal work and prayer, through imparting to the support of the Lord’s work both at home and abroad, she would be instrumental in turning many to righteousness, that she may shine as the stars forever and ever (Dan. 12:3).

The thought in these verses is not only of the Lord’s great Vineyard; but the life and soul for every child of God is a vineyard within God’s Vineyard. There is a deep love expressed in the application of this passage to the individual soul, and there are many precious lessons to be learned. Every Christian must partake of God’s Word and must live it until it is being manifested in the life, before God can use him to lead others to the Lord and into deeper experiences and knowledge of God. With deep intent does the bride call upon her Beloved to go forth with her that she may give Him her life; HE must go with her, HE must walk with her, HE must work with her. HE must work within her, revealing Himself and leading her on to partake in the fellowship of His sufferings. At every step, He must help her test the power of His resurrection that she may become conformed to His death.

She would have Him go forth with her, not only to those parts of her life which are plainly seen and manifested, but she would have Him go with her to those recesses and places that are hidden away; to those places in her life that seem distant and covered up. She would have Him go with her that He may see if the fruit of the Spirit is growing there. She would have Him make manifest the true condition of her own life and soul.

Many times we judge our own lives and our progress by a few signs of attainment or of shortage. But if we would ask the Lord to go with us in the fields, to hold us still in the by-places and in the villages, we would discover those spots in our lives that need His discerning and quickening power. How many times we should find that it was not as it appeared on the outside. We should find that the plants needed attention, and that the little foxes were hiding away, injuring and destroying the vine.

It is so easy to see the parts of the other people's vineyards that are not flourishing, but God wants us, first of all, to behold the undergrowth and weeds in our lives. We cannot stop with that which is the most easily searched out, but we must search out the distant parts; those places that need much searching and conviction by the Power of God, for us to see them just as they are.

"The pomegranate" is a symbol of humility (ch. 4:3). It is one of the most beautiful and delicious of all natural fruit, and it is one of the rarest and most precious of all spiritual fruit. Without this beautiful fruit of humility, none of us shall enter in; and we must carefully watch, and pray for every blossom. How often we find, lurking in hidden places and distant corners of our lives, the damnable pride that will devour every pomegranate blossom of dealing from the Lord, through which He would give us an abundant fruitage of Humility.

Not only this, but the bride desires to see if the beautiful attributes of Jesus Christ have budded and are thriving and growing in her life; she would have all the graces and fruit of the Spirit flourishing and bearing an hundredfold fruit to the glory of God. She beseeches her Beloved to go forth with her through her vineyard. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

It is not the things that lie on the surface of her life, that she would have Him search out, but those things that He alone can find. They are hidden away in the byways and hedges; and sometimes they are in what is, figuratively, a distant part of her vineyard. It is not only the little fields in her life that she mechanically tends every day that she would have Him search out, but those fields require a real spiritual journey, a long course of dealing and uncovering to reach. Then must she abide there with her precious Lord in submission and communion, until every condition is discerned and made right.

As she yields to His voice, He points out all that must be done, and deeper thoughts and yearnings are planted in her heart; new plants of adoration towards Him, of obedience and separation. As she abides with Him, submissive and yielded to every dealing, no matter how keen the pain, or how low she is brought, she finds that the pomegranate is in flower and is giving promise of abundance of fruit. It is for this that the Lord has chosen us to go and bear fruit, and that our fruit should abide, and that it may be treasured and preserved for our Beloved.

As is brought out in this portion of the Song of Solomon, with the individual soul, there is the cry in the heart, that the Lord shall go forth and make manifest the true condition of the life; that He will stir us up to greater zeal in carrying out His will, and give greater strength to live for His glory alone. When the Lord answers our cry and goes out with us, we find that there is no way of covering up any portion of the vineyard of our lives, or protecting that which is not to His glory so that it shall not be dealt with. How we praise God for His faithfulness. How we thank Him that He does not allow us to cover

up and adorn with flowers, some ill-conditioned and ill-smelling place in our vineyards, which must be dug up and perhaps carried far, far away, out of the enclosure of our lives.

Though the buds and blossoms are much to rejoice over, we must watch these promises of fruit and tenderly care for them. We must let no neglect and failure to water them with our prayers, no rough handling and picking them in order to make a display, blast the fruit. Without fruit, the blossoms are in vain and their beauty of no profit either to God or to us. Our hearts should continually cry: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Let us rejoice when there is bud and blossom; let us thank Him when he lets us see the little green fruit; let us humbly give Him the glory when there is ripe fruit in our lives. Let us not be discouraged if we do not find fully ripened fruit on the vine that He has just pruned, or upon the plants that our Heavenly Father has just planted. The bud must come before the blossoms; the blossom must come before the tiny, immature fruit appears; the little green fruit must come before it can ripened and perfected, and the fruit must be ripe and perfect before we can preserve it for the Master's use and for His glory.

The bud and blossom, the green and partly ripe fruit, are all perfect if they are growing and going on in God's way, although none of these are fit to pick except the fully ripened fruit. But if there is nothing but buds and blossoms, God is robbed of the glory, and we are as barren as though they had not appeared. It is precious and encouraging to remember that every attribute of our dear Lord, and every fruit and grace of the Spirit along every line, must begin with the bud and blossom. Their growth is slow and imperceptible, and there is no way to force them to mature before God has fully pruned and tended them.

How our hearts long that we may nourish the buds until they flower, and guard the flowers until the fruit appears; that we may protect the fruit until it is ripe, and carefully gather and preserve it. How we yearn to have all manner of fruits, both new and old, both fresh and preserved laid up for our Beloved. Our precious Lord is the True Vine in our souls, and the bride should have an abundance of fruit laid up for Eternity. She should have fruits of repentance, which need not to be repented of; this precious fruit comes from the dealing of God, and it leads to humility and doing His will.

There is the fruit of faith working by love, which binds us to the Lord and opens the way for us to possess all that He has for us. As we watch and tend this and all other fruit that should be growing upon the vine in our vineyards, our love is drawn out more fervently to the Lord of the Vineyard. Do we realize that we are laying up fruit in Eternity, and that God has put it away and preserved in His storehouse?

**7:12, 13 "There will I give Thee my love. The mandrakes give forth fragrance."** The mandrakes are love apples, and also are said to increase fruitfulness. It is when the bride has gone forth with the Lord through the length and breadth for the vineyard of her own life, that she gives Him her love and adoration, and the fragrance of the fruit of love (symbolized by the mandrake, or the love apple) goes forth continually. It is not the words of the flesh that are fragrant, but the fruit of pure divine love. When she has let the Lord deal with her until the pleasant plants and vines are thriving and bearing fruit for His glory, He can trust her to go forth with Him in His great Vineyard and be a co-worker together with Him in the lives of others. It is when He has laid His pruning and dealing hand upon her, that her love goes out more fervently; and it is then,

that the mandrakes, or love apples, give forth their fragrance; and as she partakes of His love, her fruitfulness is increased and multiplied for His glory.

She is eager to go forth, she would go when the dew is on the grass, she would go “early,” which means with fervent love and alacrity. She would not be negligent in doing the work of the Lord, for, “Cursed is he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently.” It is a joy to go forth from all other interests and follow the Lord through His Vineyard, whether it is on the foreign field or in the home field. There is the sweetness of His presence and of being drawn nearer to Him, which the earnest soul feels, and which is past expression or understanding. But that which really increase this joy and soul happiness, are the hardships and the persecution, the hard things through which we must pass, as we leave all and go out to lodge with Him alone; and to work for, and with Him alone.

The keen suffering does not come from the separations, but from being misunderstood by those who have loved us, and who perhaps also love the Lord. It is the suffering, caused by the dying out through which most of us go when we relinquish all hope of having those about us understand the call, which we have received, and the ministry for which our dear Lord has chosen us. Only through love can we lay up fruit for our Beloved, for it is through love alone that we can bear fruit. As we abide in Him and He abides in us, as His word in us and is made flesh in our lives, we ask whatsoever we will and it is done for us; and we bear much fruit for His glory.

One of the most precious thoughts in here is, that all the fruit that is brought to maturity is carefully taken care of and preserved for our Beloved. Many of God’s children make the mistake of considering the fruit-bearing as all-important; and when they have ripe and partly ripe fruit in their lives, they sit down and rejoice over this, becoming puffed up because of what the Lord has done for them. In the place of diligently preserving the fruit through faith in Christ, so that it shall remain for the glory of God, to be used for Him and offered to Him; it is left without care until it either falls off altogether, or decays on the vines.

We see and hear evidences of this neglected fruit in the assemblies of God’s people, as the testimonies go forth concerning what God did in their lives five, ten, or twenty years ago. But it is easily seen that whatever fruit they had, or however great the dealing of God was at that time (and many times, distance has multiplied the experience entirely out of proportion to the facts in the case), they have not even a small sample preserved. They have nothing to show as proof of the handiwork of God.

God would have us carefully preserve every dealing and everything He has done in our lives, that nothing be lost. There is not only preserved fruit of many days past in this vineyard, but there is green fruit that will soon ripen, there is also the bud and the blossom. There is fruit in all stages of growth; from the dealing of God which makes the little shoot push its head through the soil of our lives, to the perfect, ripe fruit ready to be offered to our Beloved; and which we are carefully watching lest it should spoil or sour, even after it is preserved.

If we get our eyes upon that which has been perfected in our lives, we shall become puffed up; we shall lose the zeal and determination to press on unto the perfection, for which we must strive as long as we are in these bodies of our humiliation. If we look at the buds alone, we shall become discouraged because they are not perfected, and we see that there is no perfect fruit to offer to our Beloved.

God would have us keep our eyes upon Jesus; though there may be much fruit, ripe and preserved, we must not cease for a moment in our earnest determination to press forward and enter into all God is willing to do for us. We must have our eyes fixed upon the Lord of the harvest, we must apprehend that He alone knows how much He is able to work out in our lives. Though there is nothing ripe and ready to preserve, though there is nothing worthy to offer to Him, He who has begun the good work will also finish it.

## CHAPTER XLII

## LONGING FOR THE PRESENCE OF THE BRIDEGROOM. 8:1-4

**8:1 “Oh that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! When I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, and none would despise me.”**

Historically, this is immediately after the Lord's ascension, and sets forth the fervent love and desires of those whom He had left behind. They longed for His return, and the renewal of the personal contact and companionship, which they had had with Him before His death. The disciples of Jesus Christ had had the sweetest and most intimate companionship with Him while He was here on earth; they had lived with Him day by day, remonstrating with Him, and even taking Him to task when they could not understand His words. This intimacy never passed the tomb in which He lay.

While He was on earth, He was in the body of His humiliation and so were they, therefore, they could meet upon a common ground. After He came forth from the tomb, His body was a spiritual human body; and they could not meet Him on the same ground until they, too, should lay aside the mortal and put on their spiritual body. We believe that this is one reason why He was never in the same relation to the disciples after He arose from the dead.

Many of God's children swing over too far one way or the other in this matter of the resurrection. Some believe that Jesus is a Spirit, and that since His resurrection, there is nothing about Him that partakes of humanity. Others go too far in recognizing His humanity. If we get to the Word of God it will always set us right concerning everything we need to know. “Resurrection” always signifies the raising of the *body* from the tomb, and does not apply a person's spirit, which goes to God who gave it as soon as it leaves the body. It was not the Spirit of Jesus Christ but His body that was raised from the dead. Even the marks of the nails and of the spear remained, although His body had become spiritual.

When the Lord was received up into Heaven, it was a spirit that ascended, but it was the same Jesus who had appeared to the disciples, and had eaten with them since His resurrection. As the disciples stood listening to the words of Jesus Christ, as they saw the marks of the nails in His hands and feet, as they beheld the mark of the spear in His side, which proved Him to be their beloved, crucified Lord, suddenly He was caught away from them; and two men stood by them in white apparel. These angels, or messengers of God, said to them: “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into Heaven, *this Jesus*, who was received up from you into Heaven, shall so come IN LIKE MANNER as ye beheld Him going into Heaven.”

Many years after Christ ascended to the Father, we are told that “There is one God, one mediator also between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all” (I Tim.2:5). We are not told that He *was* a mediator or that He *was* a man, but that He *is* a mediator and that He *is* a man.

Whatever changes took place in His body, from the time He died to the time He ascended to the Father, we know that it was a human body that came forth out of the tomb, and yet it was spiritual body; it was not circumscribed by any limitations, to which it had been subject before His death. The same body that came forth out of the grave went up into Heaven. And as soon as He was received into Heaven and took His place at

the right hand of God, He was again clothed in His glory and majesty, which were afterward seen by Paul, John and others.

During the time He was on earth after His resurrection, He wrapped Himself in His majesty in such a way, that awe and reverence filled the hearts of His disciples. When they would have entered into closer intimacy, or would have constrained Him to be to them as He was before His death, He vanished out of their midst.

This verse also finds response in the hearts of God's children who are upon earth today, as an expression of their fervent love and longing for the return of Christ. Those who are following hard after Him are looking forward to the time when they shall forever be with the Lord and shall enter into an intimacy with Him, which will be as much beyond the love and relation between the disciples and Christ before His death, as Heaven is higher than earth. We shall see Him as He is and we shall be like Him. The body of our humiliation shall be conformed to the body of His glory through the working of His power, but which He is able even to subject all things to Himself. There will be no limitations nor weaknesses then, nothing to hinder nor mar our relation with our precious Bridegroom.

Though we find deep satisfaction in the sweet communion that we have with Him, and the secret converse we have together as He journeys with us through the wilderness, many times our hearts long for a closer touch with our dear Lord. No words can express the rapture that is ours as we walk and talk with Him by the way; but we yearn for the Eternal Day when time shall be no more, and all veils of flesh and earth shall forever pass away.

There are times when He makes Himself so real that our small capacity can hardly stand the strain of such revelations. It is as though we were bringing a pint cup to receive the waters of Niagara; even the earthen vessel is almost carried away. But a day is coming when our capacity shall be so enlarged, that we can receive the full revelations of our dear Lord and the glories that are His; and He will give us such revelations of the Father that we shall indeed enter into His joy and glory. Then we shall see Him face to face, and shall behold all things clearly, with nothing between to obscure the vision.

There has never been a child of God that has been hungry for the Lord and has desired to go on with Him, who has not had times of keen longing for a closer touch, and a clearer revelation of Him as the suffering Saviour; they have longed to behold Him as "The Man Christ Jesus." Not only did those who beheld Him and walked with Him while He was on earth feel this desire to see Him again and talk with Him face to face; but the human heart always craves a clearer revelation of Jesus Christ that can be discerned even now and here. It is when we have this hunger, this reaching out and striving to pass the veil that hides Him from our eyes, and covers Him from our touch, that we cry: "Oh that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother!"

The bride would have Him in the nearest relation, even that of a brother who is the son of the same mother and has been nourished from the same breast. Truly, we are going on to know our dear Lord as God and as the mighty Word of God; we are beginning to know Him as our Saviour and as our Heavenly Bridegroom. But when the burden is heavy, and we cannot understand the mists that settle around us, and the storms that sweep our paths, our hearts cry out for a clearer revelation of "The Man Christ Jesus." We would know Him as the "One that hath been in all points tempted like as we are;" the One that can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," because of that

which He passed through for our sakes. Our souls long for a deeper revelation of Jesus Christ as our Great High Priest who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Because of these heart-cries, our Lord sometimes reveals Himself to us more clearly in this manward relation; and this comforts and encourages us to endure for His sake, and to press on despite all opposition of the enemy. Only those who have drawn near and are abiding in touch with Jesus Christ, can know the bliss of that inward communion that the Christian enjoys who is following hard after the Lord. Eye hath not seen, neither ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them who love Him. There are deep things and experiences for us while here on earth; and there are exceedingly great things that will be ours in the ages to come.

When the Lord had ascended, the disciples felt the separation between themselves and their Lord, who had gone away and left them here in the wilderness. When He laid aside His mortal body, He laid aside all the limitations He had taken upon Himself, but His disciples were left with all their imperfections and limitations. We can but feel the difference between our dear Lord and ourselves. This hunger and desire merge into the longing for His Second Coming, when this intimacy will be renewed and entered into with greater vigor, not through Christ becoming like the bride (which alone made the first intimacy possible), but through the bride becoming like Christ.

In this first verse, the bride says that if she finds Him, she will bring Him home to her mother's house and that she will kiss Him. Sometimes we get a human idea of the language used in the Bible to describe our relation to God and to His Christ. It is because the kiss is the token of the closest relation and intimacy between human beings, that the Holy Spirit uses it here of the Bridegroom and the bride. It is a figure of the tender relation and love that are between the bride and Jesus Christ even in this life; and which will be given and received in perfection throughout eternal ages. At some time or another, whether understood or not there is in every human heart a hunger for divine love and a closer relation and vision of God and the eternal things. Those who know God understand this hunger; and as they yield to it, God works in their souls.

The wife has a right to kiss her husband, and the wife of the Lamb has a right to kiss her Husband. It is at His Second Coming that the marriage supper will take place, and then none shall be able to despise her when she kisses her Heavenly Bridegroom. Only one person is recorded as kissing the Lord's face while He was here upon earth, and that was Judas. Some of the virgins of the bride kissed His feet, but there was not this intimate spiritual relation, which was ushered in at the crucifixion, when Jesus Christ betrothed His bride unto Himself, and of which His last discourse to them so strongly savors. This foretaste of intimacy, together with that communion which is between every virgin of the bride and her Lord, will merge into the close and perfect love and oneness, which will bind the bride and Christ together at His Second Coming.

8:2 **“I would lead Thee, and bring Thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me (or “that Thou mightest instruct me”); I would cause Thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate.”** The bride longs for the presence of her Beloved, not only for her own sake, but also that she may bring Him home to her mother's house, and that others may know the joy that is hers. This refers both to the human race, or sinners; and to those whose mother is the Jerusalem that is above, but who have not gone on into the deep things of God. When we feed upon the Lamb and partake in His sufferings, when we draw close enough to Him to hear His voice and enter into the

hunger here set forth, we long for others to taste of the joy that is ours. When we see God's children who are shallow and have not had deep experiences and communion with Him, our hearts long for them to be deepened into Him and for them to enter into that communion and fellowship with Him, which all shall have, who are ready at His Second Coming, and who will go in to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Only Jesus Christ can instruct and guide us in the way in which we should go. If we would be instructed by Him, we must bring Him home to live with us continually; we must walk with Him by the way, and He will teach us and open up the Scriptures to us. In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in Him we are made full. He not only teaches and instructs us, but He is our example. As we listen to His voice and His instructions, as we follow Him, we find that He is all we need.

He is the Wisdom of God and He is made unto us wisdom from God. If we would have Him instruct us, we must watch with unslumbering eyes and unabated zeal before His gates; we must wait untiringly before the posts of His doors, hearkening continually to His voice and obeying His words. How careless we are about knowing and listening to the voice of the Lord. We can hardly realize how our onward progress has been hindered by this slothful indifference. Many of God's children take it for granted that they can never know the voice of God, and they depend upon others for their guidance. This is most dangerous. Those who know God the most intimately, who listen and recognize His voice the quickest, are the most loath to give advice and direct others.

Others think that every thought and imagination that comes into their minds is God speaking; and these are they who always get leadings and messages for those about them, and are most self-confident in giving them out, solicited or unsolicited. The condition and result in the one case are as lamentable as in the other; for neither really gets what God has for them, and they are deceived and cheated by the enemy.

In this longing for the Second Coming of the Lord, the bride declares that she would cause Him to drink of her spiced wine, which refers to the marriage supper. When the Lord instituted the last supper just before He was crucified, He commanded us to eat and drink it in remembrance of Him and to observe it until He comes again. Most solemnly does He declare that He will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when He will drink it new with His disciples in His Father's Kingdom (Matt. 26: 29). Only these two suppers are mentioned; the one is the betrothal supper, the cup of union with Him, which looks forward to the marriage. The other is the marriage supper of the Lamb.

It is for the marriage that the bride is longing, and for the day when He will drink the cup new with her in His Father's Kingdom. There is every fragrance and perfume in this spiced wine. All spices of His attributes and of the incense, which were His before the Father's face, have been added to this New Wine of the Kingdom.

Together with these spices which come to her, and which He will drink with her in the New Wine of the Kingdom, she will give Him the juice, or "the sweet wine," of her pomegranate. The "pomegranate," used as the precious symbol of the bride's humility in both the descriptions of the bride by the Bridegroom, is the incorruptible apparel of meek and quiet spirit. And the word, "juice," comes from a root, which means "to trample, squeeze, to bruise." This describes the process of extracting the juice from the fruit,

preparatory to making wine. The value and life of all fruit is in the juice; when that is extracted, the pulp that remains is not edible and is soon discolored and decays.

But there is a deep spiritual meaning in here, and that is the description of the process through which the precious vintage of inward humility is brought forth for her Lord. It is through many hard things, through much bruising and bringing down, that this costly wine of humility is made and perfected for our Beloved. If the bride of the Lamb would offer to her Beloved the vintage of this eternal fruit, she must pass through the hard processes, which alone can bring forth the life of pure humility.

There will be the pressure and bruising that come from the people and things around her. There will be the purifying pressure that God's hand will bring to her as He chastens and brings her low. It is the trampling and bruising that almost presses out life itself, which brings forth the sweet wine of the pomegranate.

When wine is made from any fruit, it requires large quantities of the fruit to make a small quantity of juice. So it is with the wine of the pomegranate. All the fiber and hard particles must be taken out, so that only the pure juice remains, which symbolizes the pure humility that is unmixed with fleshly humility; or with any pride because of the work that the Spirit has done upon us; or with any other adulteration.

How little God's children have understood what the humility of Jesus Christ really means. There has been much voluntary humility and doing penance; much self-effort in striving to be humble. But the humility that comes from Jesus Christ begins within. Those in whom God is working and perfecting this precious fruit, are unconscious of that which God is doing. They only see the instruments He is using, and the need of meekness and contrition. Nothing is as essential to receiving all God has for us, as this incorruptible robe of humility. Whatever else we must have, and whatever other relation we must enter into, this is indispensable.

Not only natural and worldly pride hinders us entering in, but the worst of all is spiritual pride. This has caused more of God's people and servants to fail Him, than all else combined. Although God may have used some of His servants or children and done much for them along every line, it is fatal to any further working and entering in, for them to take a place of superiority, as though they have attained to more than any one else, and are especially favored from God.

It is not by chance, that, in the words the Spirit puts into the mouth of the bride of Christ, He thinks together the spiced wine of the marriage supper and the sweet wine of the pomegranate; for they cannot be separated. The fruit of the pomegranate must be perfected in our lives, and the pure juice extracted through much testing and suffering, if we are to partake of the spiced wine, which symbolizes the marriage supper of the Lamb.

**8:3, 4 "His left hand should be under my head, and His right hand should embrace me. I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my live, until He please."** This entreaty to the daughters of Jerusalem occurs three times in this book; but this relation between the Bridegroom and the bride is only experienced once in the Song of Solomon (ch. 2:6). In the passage we are now considering, the bride is not experiencing the support of His left hand and the working of His right hand as she did when He took her into His Banqueting House. She is longing for a closer touch, and to again enter into this experience. She is longing for the return of her Beloved, which really means the Second Coming of Christ, when she will enter into the fullness of the presence of the Lord.

Many times the Lord takes us into a close relation with Him, even when we have not reached maturity. It seems to me that it is thus the Lord woos us on to greater abandonment and speed. There have been times when we have gone far beyond the place where He first met us in some special way, and we really know Him much better than we have ever known Him, but we look back and long for the experience He gave us at some time in the past. We have become more humble; we have seen our shortage so much greater, that it appears as though we had made little, if any progress. We have beheld the needs in our lives more clearly with every onward step, and as we remember our first deep experience of His love and presence, it seems as though we had gone back rather than forward, and we long for the return of that first experience when we tasted and found that the Lord was good.

When He took the bride into His Banqueting House, He revealed to her that she need not fear, for the left hand of His support and providence was under her head; while the right hand of His working, dealing, and manifest undertaking for her, was carrying out His will upon her and in her life. It is no less so now. Far more is His hand of providence upholding her now, and His dealing and protecting hand working in her life. She may never again enter into the same realization of it that she experienced in the Banqueting House (ch. 2:4-7), until He comes and takes her unto Himself. Then, if she should be permitted to trace the way over which she has passed, she will find that His hands have never been withdrawn, though she has not always discerned them and has been constrained to walk by faith rather than by feelings or by sight.

There is a cry and feeling of homesickness in the hearts of God's earnest children, which is really a longing and watching for the Coming of the Lord. Many do not understand the meaning of this feeling, but I believe this will be the experience of every one who is in the bride, and that it will increase as His Coming draws near.

How often, when our hearts long for a closer, more tangible touch from our Lord, when we reach out with our hands that we may touch Him, that we may cling to Him more closely, that He may be more real to us, do we suddenly apprehend that though we see Him not, though we feel Him not, though we hear Him not, we are really beholding Him who is invisible. We really feel His left hand upholding us and know that His right hand is molding and shaping us; we hear His steppings and His voice that is as the sound of a gentle stillness.

To the purified soul, this spiritual relation is as real and satisfying as that which is more perceptible to the senses and to the natural. The rest and peace that are wholly in the Spirit, are manifold more real and more precious than all else into which we have ever entered; and we only enter it as we walk by faith. We know, also, that it is but the beginning of that which will only find in fruition in those ages that are to come.

It is because of this, that the bride again adjures the daughters of Jerusalem not to stir up nor awake her Lord until He pleases. She has been longing for a repetition of that first ecstatic experience in the Banqueting House, when He revealed Himself to her. But she is beginning to apprehend that He is the same, yesterday, today and forever; He changes not though the consciousness of His presence and of His love may fluctuate with her faithfulness, her progress, her faith. With Him there is no variableness nor shadow that is cast by turning.

We may not feel His hand of providence supporting us while we are in the midst of suffering, and when we are going through hard things. We may not know it is His hand

that is molding and chiseling us, that is shaping and purifying us. We do not always apprehend these precious things. But blessed is that child of God who knows that the hand of his Beloved is sustaining him, though he may not feel its pressure. Blessed is that one who sees back of all that touches his life, the hand of God working out His will and purifying him for His glory.

Though we do not feel His hand under us, let us adjure all around us that they shall not stir up nor grieve Him. Though we do not have the ecstasy that we have had at other times, let us believe that He is there and that He is working just as much as though we could see Him, and let us fear lest we hinder or stop that which He is doing in our lives.

## Canticle Five. Ch. 8:5-14

### CHAPTER XLIII

THE BRIDE, WEAK IN HERSELF, BUT STRONG IN HIM,  
IS GIRDED AND CARRIED BY HER BELOVED. 8:5, 6

**8:5** “Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?” We cannot too insistently and repeatedly impress upon the reader, that, whether it be with the individual soul, or with the company of virgins who make up the bride, the whole motive and theme of the Song of Solomon is the relation and communion between Christ and His bride.

Historically, we have come to the call of the Gentiles and setting aside, for a season, of the Jewish people. This Canticle begins at the fifth verse, and describes the manifestation of the first fruit of the Church and of God’s chosen vessels.

What wonder and amazement seized upon all who behold the Apostolic Church in the first days of its power, beginning with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon believers. Which commenced on the day of Pentecost; and the manifestation of the mighty working of God that followed. All who behold three thousand added to the church in the one day, inquired: “Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?” Just as this question was asked concerning the Lord Jesus Christ when He came back from the wilderness full of the Holy Spirit and power, after having been tempted of Satan, (ch. 3:1 ff) so was the same question asked concerning the early church and the apostles.

The other apostles asked this question concerning Paul when he came from Arabia where he remained three years, being taught of the Lord so that he might bear His name, “before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel.”

There is a meaning of this fifth verse that applies to every one who goes through with the Lord. God leads us through many testings in order to perfect our faith and reliance upon Him. Like Jacob, when we begin to follow the Lord, we are not afraid to wrestle with an angel or even the Lord Himself. But as the night advances, and we see the approach of Eternal Day, as we realize that there is much to be done, and that our efforts are getting us nothing, we cry to God for help. He gives us the greatest boon He can give us; He touches the seat of our strength, and we find that power of our own goings has been taken away. Helpless, limping where we were once strong, we hold on to the skirts of His garments with our prayers, with love for our precious Lord, and with a consuming desire for God to be glorified, which prayers and longings are all we have left; and we receive His blessings.

That for which we are wrestling and striving, is given us when we reach the end of ourselves. We are never strong again in the place where God touched our strength; but limping and helplessly leaning upon our Beloved, we realize that “the lame take the prey.” When we are weak, then we are strong.

Do we not hear one virgin of the bride beseeching the Lord that He will remove the messenger of Satan, which was given him that he might not be exalted? The Lord said to him: “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness;” and

this virgin of the bride-chamber replied: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong."

It was because this virgin was leaning on this Beloved that he suffered such great things for His sake. "In labors more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Cor. 11:23-33). "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound; in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. I CAN DO ALL THINGS IN HIM THAT STRENGTHENETH ME" (Phil. 4:11-13).

How weak and yet how strong was this virgin of the bridechamber as he came up from the wilderness leaning on his Beloved. "At my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account. *But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me.*" as he reaches the last stage of his journey, and the shore of the Home-country is already in sight, we hear him say as he leans more heavily upon his Beloved: "I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

It is not in the first days of our Christian life that we lean hard upon our Beloved and are willing and glad to be helpless and weak. It was not in babyhood, that we have learned to lean upon God alone. Although our love goes out to Him, and we want Him to have His way, we have girded ourselves too long and gone whithersoever we desired. We have not leaned to glory in our weakness, we have not learned to become weak that His strength may be made perfect.

The bride followed hard after her Beloved before she was enticed into slumber and grew indolent; although her heart did not sleep. But here we find her restored and purified; we find her beauty increased and her gaze fixed more steadfastly upon her Lord, as she yields more fully to the girding of His hand, and lets Him carry her whithersoever He wills. Her eyes are fixed upon Him more continuously; she has less confidence in herself and less will or wish of her own. Nothing matters if He is girding her, if His will is being done in her life, if He is supporting and guiding her every step.

She can decide nothing for herself, neither can she go where she pleases for she cannot walk alone. She has passed through many testings and trials, she has had deep fellowship with Him in His sufferings, and her strength has decreased. The self-reliance and self-sufficiency, which were hers in the first days of her walk with Him, have been gradually broken down.

How dismayed we are when the hand of our Beloved begins to work upon us in this way. With what despair do we see our strength, our sufficiency, all in which we trusted and which we fondly hoped would be service to the Lord, collapse and despair under His dealing hand. Through what humiliation do we go as we fail in all our efforts and in all our projects. We do not at first discern that God is bringing us to the place

Where we can do nothing of ourselves, where we can speak nothing of ourselves. He would bring us to the place where we are not sufficient to determine our decide anything, but ever cling to His arm and lean upon His breast in helpless abandonment.

Not only each individual comes up thus from the wilderness, but the company of virgins who make up the bride of Christ, finds that the world has more and more become a wilderness. The path grows more rugged as the bride journeys along, her strength becomes less and her weakness increases. She is looking upward with vision that is more purified, with heart set more fervently upon Heavenly things. The earth and the earthly are fading away; she is not looking at the things that are seen nor desiring aught that the world can give; but she is beholding the things that are unseen and eternal, and she is enduring as beholding Him who is invisible.

Her ears have heard the wafted strains of Heavenly music, her eyes have caught a gleam from the lights of the Eternal City; by faith she beholds the Lamb who is the light thereof. The hand of her Beloved is holding her more firmly and tenderly as her strength is growing less, and she leans upon Him with increasing weakness and distrust in herself, and with increasing love and faith in the strength of the right arm of His righteousness.

As the bride of Christ is made to lean more helplessly upon the arm of God, and trust in His strength alone, there is a sweetness in this helplessness which is past expression; and her love goes out to Him as it has never done before. She glories in her weakness, she rejoices in every hard thing that His strength may be made perfect in her weakness. The bride has reached the place where she can say: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

She realizes that every joy and desire of her life, every sin and working is coming down from above. So entirely have her interests and desires, her love and longings been severed from the world and all about her; so perfectly have they been fixed upon the heavenly and eternal things, that it only needs a word from her Beloved for her spirit to joyfully follow the treasure of love and adoration, which she has laid up in Heaven. Her soul is going out for her Beloved. Already has the sound of the midnight cry gone forth: "Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him."

She realizes that she is not at the beginning of her homeward journey, neither is she at the middle of her course, but she has reached the last stage of her journey, she is nearing the end of the wilderness. She is already hastening to pack up the possessions God has given her and enabled her to acquire as she passed through the wilderness. She has rejected all that cannot pass over with her, and is guarding and adding to that which she will need when she reaches the end. She has carefully preserved the fruit God has given her that she may offer it to her Beloved; she has obeyed and communed with Him until the air about her is heavy with the fragrance of the love apples.

As her Lord gathered spices in this wilderness to carry up to His Father, so she has gathered spices and precious powders of the merchantman, to carry up to her Lord. The precious fruits and wine of the pomegranate, the precious spices and powders, she has jealously stored away to bring out at the end of the journey. All who come near the bride of the Lamb smell the fragrance that continually goes out from this heavenly cargo.

She not only has gathered these fruits and spices, but she has put on her sandals of the preparation of the gospel of peace; she has made herself ready and arrayed herself in

the pure white linen; she has put on Jesus Christ so perfectly that His image is shining out from every part of her life. She is crowned with the beautiful locks of separation to Him; she is crowned with the purple hair of the martyr and of the overcomer; she is looking with the eyes of the dove for the first ray of the dawn of His Coming.

Because of thus following on, her head is resting upon the breast of her Beloved, which is more precious than aught else. She is leaning upon His arm and relying upon His strength and love to protect and support her. She can do nothing of herself, but she can do all things in Him who strengthened her. She is all weakness and fainting in herself, but she has found His strength sufficient. She is pressed on every side, but He has not let her be straitened. She has been perplexed many times, but it has not been unto despair. Though the enemy has pursued her, her dear Lord has not forsaken her, neither has He let her be destroyed though she has been smitten.

She has borne about in her body the dying of her Lord until His life has been manifested, and she is coming up out of the wilderness with His image stamped upon her words, her actions, upon her whole being. She is ready to be changed and glorified at the first glance she shall catch of Him who has thus wrought for her and in her.

**“Under the apple tree I awakened thee; there thy mother was in travail with thee, there was she in travail that brought thee forth.”** This is the only time the Bridegroom has spoken to the bride since she went to the garden of nuts. The bride was once under the tree of disobedience in the wilderness of sin. Through the drawing of God she sought salvation, and under the shadow of Christ, who is the only Apple Tree among all the trees of the forest of men (ch. 2:3), she found life when Christ found her.

As the sinner comes to Christ and to the foot of the cross, he partakes of the one fruitful Tree and receives life everlasting. Only when he is sheltered in Christ and in His finished work, is he safe from the wrath of God. When he is dead through his trespasses and sins, he is awakened to newness of life by the voice of Christ speaking peace to his soul. As he lay under the tree of disobedience, he was helpless and could do nothing for himself; but Jesus Christ went out and found him in the wilderness of sin, and brought to him life more abundant. Near the end of the believer’s journey through the wilderness, we again see him weak and helpless, not because of sin and death, but because of having died in Christ, to sin, death, and self. Though he is weak in himself at the end of his pilgrimage, he is strong in the One upon whom he is leaning.

It was when Christ hung upon the tree, that He became the one fruitful Tree. He tasted death for every man and was made perfect through sufferings in order that He might lead many sons to Glory. It was under the shadow of His cross, that we were found and were born again. It was there He found us, and it is there we found Him, the Man who is our hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest. It was there, that streams of living water were poured out in the dry place; from that moment the Rock followed us, and out of it, living streams are flowing more abundantly. This precious Rock became a shade in a weary land, and we hide away in the Rock, Christ Jesus as we press forward on our Heavenward journey.

Sometimes our dear Lord takes us over those past experiences when He would have us “Remember all the way which Jehovah thy God hath led thee in the wilderness, that He might humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments or not” (Deut. 8:2). Not when we are disheartened because of our blackness and lack of likeness to our Lord, does He remind us of where

He found us; but as we journey along, He lets us see more clearly our undone and lost condition when He found us. He also takes us over the path that we may see how little we have apprehended and appropriated that which He has offered us.

**8:6** “Set me as a seal upon Thy heart, as a seal upon Thine arm.” For a fleeting moment, the Bridegroom is with the bride, but there is a deep fellowship that now binds them together, which does not depend upon conscious presence or absence. This passage is one of the most intense and passionate expressions of the love of the bride that is found in the whole book. It is evident that her words in the sixth verse look forward to a prolonged absence; and she is clinging to Him as love ever clings to the adored object when it is faced with an indefinite separation.

All her strength has gradually disappeared, and she is leaning upon His breast; her arm, or strength, finds support only in His arm, or strength. She would have the pressure of her head upon His bosom, remain ever before His eyes as the impress of a seal upon His heart and affections. She would have the pressure of her dependence upon Him remain as a seal upon His arm, or strength. As she looks forward to His departure to His Father’s house, whither He goes to prepare a place for her, she implores Him to uphold her by His arm and to hold her in His heart, so that upon His breast and upon His arm shall she ever appear as He stands before God in her behalf.

In the Jewish Tabernacle, the high priest always bore the names of the tribes of Israel upon his shoulders and upon his breastplate. The shoulders of arms are symbolic of strength, and the breastplate is symbolic of the heart and the affections. Whenever he went in and appeared before Jehovah, his shoulders and his breast were adorned with the precious stones, upon which were engraven the names of the tribes of Israel. This was a symbol of our High Priest, who bears us upon His heart and upholds us by His strength as He stands before God, for “Christ has entered into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us.”

The bride prays that she may be so engraven upon His heart and cherished within His affections that she shall be before His eyes continually. There is also an allusion to the graven tablets which in those days were worn upon the breast, and to the seal worn upon the arm or hand, which were highly cherished and prized (Jer. 22:24; Hag. 2:23).

It is as our Beloved is continually in our minds and hearts, as our love goes out to Him in adoration and obedience, as we lean upon Him harder and harder, that we apprehend and enter into the rest and sweetness of being engraven upon His heart and shoulders. Upon His heart, that we may receive and rejoice in all His infinite love and faithfulness, with which He would surround us, and which He would extend in our behalf. Upon His arm, that all His power and strength may operate in our behalf and may work in our lives. He would have us so trusting Him that we should never be dismayed, knowing that whatever came He would take care of it. He would have the communion between us unbroken; then can we say that we are set as a seal upon His heart and arm.

None who are allowing any other to fill their hearts, shall be engraven upon the heart of their Lord. None who are trusting to any but their Lord shall be set as a seal upon His arm. For the Lord is not going to bear about as a seal upon His heart and arm those who do not bear Him about in their hearts, and those who are serving Him with divided affection and strength. Not only is the bride a seal upon His arm and heart, but He has promised to set His seal upon her. “He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more: and I will write upon him the

name of my God, and the name of the city of my God... and mine own new name” (Rev. 3:12).

## CHAPTER XLIV

## DIVINE LOVE AND JEALOUSY. 8:6, 7

**8:6, 7 “For love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as Sheol; the flashes thereof are flashes of fire, a very flame of Jehovah. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it; if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, he would utterly be contemned.”** This passage is often used to describe human love and jealousy. While human jealousy is cruel as Sheol, the meaning expressed here is altogether different. The literal translation of this passage is: “For love is mighty as death; jealousy is as exacting, or relentless, as Sheol.”

There is much that is comforting and reassuring in the little word, “for,” which introduces this description of divine love and jealousy. The bride has been imploring the Bridegroom to set her as a seal upon His arm and upon His heart. She knows that if she is as a seal upon His heart, His love, which is as strong as death, will ever hold her and uphold her. Nothing can snatch her from this tender place of privilege. She knows that if she is set as a seal upon His arm, His strength will support her, and His arm will fight all her battles. She also knows that the jealousy as exacting and unyielding as Sheol, He will hold His own possessions and protect His own seal, He will suffer neither man nor devil to use or mar or have any part in those who have become a seal upon His heart and arm.

That this is a description of divine love cannot be doubted when we are told that it is “a very flame of Jehovah.” (R.V.) When the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, it was with tongues of fire. We are told in Deut. 4:24 that “Jehovah is a devouring fire, a jealous God;” also in Exodus 34:14, “Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” In many other places we are warned that God is a jealous God, and that He will avenge every infidelity of His people toward Him. He gives all, and He demands all. The love of Christ is stronger than death: “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, no height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. “

Do we not know with how strong a grasp, death holds its victim? Have we not experienced this when our loved ones have lain dead before us? Neither tears nor cries, neither prayers nor groans, could bring back from that silent, relentless grasp, the one who had been with us but a little while before. So it is with the love of God for His children; and so it should be with the love of His children for Him. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ Jesus our Lord; none can snatch from His hand, those who obey and hide away in Him; those who are faithful unto the end.

This divine love appears cruel when it separates us from father and mother, from brother and sister, yea, from every earthly tie and dear one that comes between our precious Lord and ourselves. This love is cruel to all who would steal away even a little place in the life that belongs to God; and it is cruel most of all to the self-life of the believer himself.

It is the divine love, which has been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us, that makes the bride of the Lamb cast aside all other ties that demand of her anything that is the right of her Lord alone. As we read the pages of God’s Word, we see the holy Zeal, which is the working of holy love toward God,

denying all others and all else a place when there is a choice between God and them. The tribe of Levi was chosen to minister before Jehovah in a special way because their love for Him moved them to destroy their brethren after the flesh.

When Jeremiah would not make mention of Jehovah nor speak in His Name. It was divine love in his heart that was as a burning fire shut up in his bones. It was this holy zeal and love that constrained him to speak all the words Jehovah commanded him to speak, and to obey Him though his life was one long span of persecutions and dungeons, of opposition from his people. It was this love and jealousy for the glory of God that moved upon Elijah to slay the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel. It was this love for Jehovah that is as strong as Sheol, and the jealousy for His glory and honor, which is a very flame of Jehovah, that constrained Samuel to hew Agag in pieces before Jehovah in Gilgal.

Thus could we multiply the instances that are given of the love of God towards His people, and the jealousy of God for His honor and His holy Name. The same strong love and relentless jealousy for God's honor and glory were manifested over and over in His faithful servants. God will not give His glory to another. He will not share our affections and our allegiance with any one or anything else.

How many times, when there is a choice between God and a dear one, between pleasing Him and pleasing another, God's people give less to Him than they do to their earthly friends. How often when there is a choice between giving to Him or to a dear one, between going to his house or remaining at home with a dear one who does not love Him, the allegiance is given to the earthly tie and against God. Those who will not pay the price to go through with Jesus may do this and be saved as by fire; but God will not suffer this in the lives of those who get His best, and are chosen to be the bride of His Son.

Christ's love for those whom He has chosen to be His bride, is as strong as death or the grave. Not one right will He relinquish in favor of the dearest earthly tie; not one shade of love and fidelity will He share with any one or anything else. All we have and all we are, must be given to Him and must be for Him alone. Let us always remember that this description will not apply to the experiences and relation between *every* believer and the Lord; but only to those who go through with Him, to those who become overcomers and sit with Him upon His throne (Rev. 3:21).

This love and jealousy are found not only with God toward His people, but the same love and jealousy take possession of all who yield to it, and make them jealous for Him and His glory. The word translated: "flashes," has the significance of flashes of lightning that strike an object; or sparks that strike, and either set on fire or consume the object struck. Thus it is with the divine love and jealousy the vehement flame, which is constrained in the flashes and sparks that are sent out from divine love and jealousy, will consume all that opposes God, and will set on fire with divine fire and zeal, those who receive and yield to Him.

We can see here why it is that: "We love because He first loved us." The fire of God's love ignited these poor, cold hearts of ours; and kindled within us flames of love and zeal toward God. When the love of God is burning in our hearts, it not only goes out to God, whom we have not seen, but it leaps out to our brother, whom we have seen. It is like a mighty forest fire; it consumes and puts away all underbrush of earthly relations

and useless growth of the flesh in our lives. It springs from branch to branch and kindles divine love and holy zeal in those about us.

The love of God is mighty and mysterious, not only when manifested from Him to us, but when found in His children. Those who could never love each other in the natural, nor find anything in common with one another, are drawn together by bands that are woven from the everlasting love of God; bands that will abide throughout Eternity. Human love and ties, human relationships will pass away with earth and time, but this love and relationship comes from the infinite God, and it is infinitely stronger than any human tie. It will never pass away, but will bear eternal fruit for the glory of God.

This “Flame of Jehovah” that is kindled in our hearts, is beginning of the sweet unity and fellowship, the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit, which will bind us together in a bundle with our Lord, and will forever abide in perfection throughout endless ages. Let us ask God to take all human touch or taint out of our love for one another; thus shall we way up in store this precious deposit received from the flames and sparks of divine love. And it shall be with us as it was with our precious Lord, the zeal for our Father’s house and business will eat us up.

**8:7 “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.”** In the Scriptures, the word “water” is often used as a figure of God’s wrath and the visitations of His displeasure; also for trials and afflictions (Ps. 69:1); 42:7; 88:7). The word “floods” is used as a figure of extreme dangers (Ps. 69:15), also of the violent assaults of the devil (Isa. 59:19).

When we remember what our Lord passed through as He came and died for us, we see that many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. As He hung upon the Cross of Calvary, all the waves and the billows of God’s wrath went over His head. All the floods of the devil and his hosts came up against Him as He wrought out the redemptive work which God had given Him to do. But none of these things quenched His love.

The prophetic words of the twenty-second Psalm concerning the sufferings of Jesus Christ sound forth the heart-cries of our Lord as He hung upon the Cross of Calvary. In the twentieth verse we read: “Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling (or “my only one”) from the power of the dog.” The word, “darling,” in this verse, and the word, “one,” which is applied to the bride of the Lamb of Song of Solomon 6:9, have the same meaning in the original text, although the same word is not used. The literal meaning is “beloved, the united one, the one joined together.” the darling one is a company composed of many, united into an “only one.”

This significance has much depth and preciousness in it, when we remember that the bride of the Lamb is made up of many virgins; and that they are joined together as one. His body is one, but the many members. There is only one Church, which is “the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in Heaven;” but there are many millions who make up this Church.

All the waves and billows of God’s wrath went over Jesus Christ when He hung and died upon the cross; and He cried to the Father: “Deliver my only one from the power of the dog,” or the devil, which the word, “dog,” means in this place. “I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me. . . I pray not that thou shouldst take them from the world, but that thou shouldst *keep them from the evil one,*” or as expressed in the twenty-second Psalm: “Deliver my darling from the power of the dog.”

Again we hear our precious Lord praying: "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word... that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one." It was as He poured out His life, that He bore His darling one through the waves and billows of God's broken law and His wrath, and planted her upon the Rock of Ages. Now is her head lifted up above her enemies round about her, and she shall offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy. Throughout endless ages she will sing praises unto the Lamb that was slain.

**"If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, he would utterly be contemned."** This is true only of the love of God for us, and our love toward God. The same love that is in the Bridegroom is in the bride, and though one gave all the substance of his house in exchange for this love, he would be utterly contemned.

Though we speak with the eloquence of an Apollos, though we have the tongues of the archangels, without love we are become sounding brass and a clanging cymbal. Though we prophesy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, though mountains remove and vanish before our faith, without love we are nothing. Though we give our substance in small portions so as to make it reach as many poor as possible, though we give our body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth nothing.

As set forth in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, how many are rejoicing in their knowledge and wisdom; how many are giving their substance to feed the poor; how many are doing penance and practicing austerities; how many are pouring out their lives in all kinds of "Works," but they have neither love for God nor for man. They are trying to work their way into Heaven, and in the place of living confidence and trust in God, there is a slavish fear. They look upon God as a hard taskmaster, and imagine that He is watching to catch them in some delinquency, delighting to visit them with severe punishment. Their God is like unto themselves.

There is a peculiar condition that reveals how the love of God dwelleth in our hearts. When our love is burning strong and bright, and our hunger for our Beloved is deepening, we are more concerned to have Him work in us and make us to His glory, than we are to work for Him.

The children of God are so busy! So busy! They are running here and there as though the Lord could not get along without their officious help. One would think that the Lord is not as interesting His own Vineyard as they are. They are organizing, and bringing together all kinds of machinery to run the Lord's business; they are inventing intricate and clever systems to get men saved, and to entertain them so that they will remain saved (?). They find no time to pray; they spend no time in becoming acquainted with the Lord of the Vineyard.

The Spirit would woo them to draw close to the Lord, to learn to love Him; God would have them love Him with all their hearts and strength, and Jesus Christ is waiting to fill their lives so that naught could gain access to their hearts excepting that which comes from Him. He waits for them to give Him some of their time, He waits to be gracious to them; but they always put Him off, and while they are busy here and there He is gone (1 Kings 20:40).

After He is gone, they hardly know what happened. They know that God is not wooing them as He once was; and they work for Him with increased zeal and energy in order to fill the vacancy that has been left in their lives by their disobedience and neglect of "the better part." They are deluded by the false hope that their fleshly energy and self-

activities can take the place that has been left by the cooling off of their love, and the withdrawal of their Beloved. It would be profitable and wholesome to read the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians in the light of this condition just mentioned. God may reveal to us the cause of our increased activity for Him; we may find that it began when we drifted away from the place where He was working for us.

Child of God, if you feel that something has gone out of your life, if there seems to be a barrenness, do not try to work harder for the Lord than you have ever done before; do not try to occupy all your time in self-appointed tasks in His Vineyard, or in caring of the souls about you. Let the conviction sink into your heart that your greatest need is to let God do something for you. *You* are the one who is in need of having something done, and not God. He is not in need of your sacrifices, for every best of the forest is His and the cattle on a thousand hills. If He were hungry He would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are His. It is the sacrifice and service of thanksgiving and worship, which alone are acceptable to Him. It is not in the life of some one with whom you think God is using you, that something needs to be done; but in *your own life* there is dire need and shortage, which only God can remedy.

Without exception, this barrenness and void in our lives is a sure proof that we are in great need of God's dealing hand, and that something is wrong with us. Therefore, let us leave everything that we can leave; let us leave the "Christian work," let us drop the busy overseeing of those about us, and let us get still before God that He may speak to us and work in us, and for us, to His glory. Then shall we go forth with the presence and power of God upon us, and while we shall be used of Him with those about us, we shall have learned to watch for His movings and dealings upon our own souls, and to always yield for Him to work in us first.

Though we give God all else, though we give Him our times, our money, our faculties and members; though we deprive ourselves of all but the bare necessities of life in order that we may impart to Him and to His work, and withal have not learned to love Him and to give Him the first place in our hearts and lives, we shall be utterly contemned. The Lord does not ask for anything excepting our affections and allegiance: "Give me thy heart" is the call of the Spirit to every soul. When we give all else excepting our love, we are always moved by slavish fear instead of love. It is this same spirit that moves the heathen women to sacrifice their babies to their heathen gods.

God has made us for Himself. First, and above all else, He wants our love; and when we give Him our hearts and our undivided affections, all else will follow. It depends entirely upon how fully our hearts are given to Him as to how we give along other lines. Though we give Him everything else excepting our hearts, though we give all else with a divided heart, we are to be utterly contemned. "What doth Jehovah thy God require of thee, but to fear Jehovah thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve Jehovah thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deut. 10:12). "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, he would utterly be contemned."

## CHAPTER XLV

### “MY VINEYARD WHICH IS MINE IS BEFORE ME.” 8:8-12

**8:8** “We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts; what shall we so for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?” Historically, this refers to the concern and perplexity of the early church concerning the Gentiles being brought in, after there was undeniable proof that they were included in God’s plan. In Ezekiel 16:46, the Gentiles are called the sister of the Jew. The Gentiles, as yet, have had the gospel only in scattering instances; and the Jewish believers, seeing that God has visited the Gentiles too, are perplexed to know how they are to bring the gospel to them, and what they are to do with them. How many questions of Jewish ceremonial laws come up. How the question of circumcision convulsed the whole church, until through Paul, God revealed to the early church the mystery of the gospel; namely, “That the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, the fellow-members of the body, and the fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” (Eph. 3:6).

Then was the question asked, what shall we do with our little sister in the day in which she is asked for? Only through hearing the Word come faith and love, and the Gentiles have not heard the gospel as yet. They had not put on the breastplate of faith and love; their breasts were unformed, they were not ready for either marriage or bearing children. Because of their deep prejudice, which the very law of Jehovah had fostered in them, none but the Jews can know the perplexity that this question caused in the early church.

The Jewish people were forbidden by the law, which God gave them through Moses, to have any dealings with the Gentiles unless the latter were circumcised and became proselytes. When they were faced with the revelation that the Gentiles were fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body, and also fellow-partakers of the promises in Christ Jesus, the very foundation of their religious worship seemed to drop from beneath their feet. The Jews had not yet fully apprehended that the law, with all its rights and ceremonies, was done away. They would have required the Gentiles to enter the Church of Christ through the Jewish door of circumcision, and become approved through diligently keeping the law. Hence came contention, and the question was anxiously asked: “What shall we do with this little sister, now that we see she is spoken for?”

**8:9** “If she be a wall, we will build upon her a turret of silver; and if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar.” The wall and the door are two principal parts of a building. The wall is a symbol of strength, and in Isa. 26:1 we are told that in that day we shall have a strong city, and Jehovah will appoint Salvation for walls and bulwarks. In this verse of the Song of Solomon, the Jewish believers say that if the Gentiles prove to be a wall, they will build upon her a turret of silver. As we have said before, “silver” is a symbol of the atonement through which God brought salvation to the world. Comparing the verse in Isaiah with the verse, which we are now considering, we see that the walls are to be Salvation, which means that the strength and protection shall be Salvation; and Salvation came only through the atonement of Jesus Christ.

The converted Hebrews determine that if the Gentiles receive the gospel and turn away from idols to serve the living God, thus becoming a wall, they will not build upon

her the Jewish rites and ceremonies. Peter, in the conference concerning this matter, gave the following decision: “Now, therefore, why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they” (Acts. 15:10-11).

All the dead works must be done away, there can be no wood, hay nor stubble built upon that wall; no meats, and drinks, and Sabbath days, no ceremonial laws (Col. 2:16, 17). This wall of Salvation as to be built through simple faith in Jesus Christ, and in the atonement He wrought upon Calvary. This, indeed, would be a tower or turret of silver, which would be as strong as the One who brought salvation to us; it would be as high as Heaven, and as pure as the Word of God, which is fulfilled.

The wall symbolizes strength and protection; but upon this wall, adding to its strength and being a part of it, is a turret or battlement erected through faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ. This battlement is impregnable to the enemy; none can tear it down, neither can any come up against it and not be brought to naught.

Not only must the little sister be a wall, but she must be a door, which is the only entrance into the building. “God opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles” (Acts 14:27). Christ is the door of the sheep, and we see this meaning beautifully set forth here, but the little sister being enclosed with boards of cedar, which is a symbol of Christ’s sinless manhood. The Church of Christ shall be protected and clothed with Him who did this work.

**8:10 “I am a wall, and my breasts like the towers thereof; then was I in His eyes as one that found peace.”** She was established and grew so rapidly, that in a short time she was a wall, and her faith and love were like the turrets of the walls. It is through faith that we put on Jesus Christ; it is through faith that the boards of cedar enclose us, as we are clothed in Him. But faith works only through love. The little unformed sister soon exceeded her elder sister in strength and beauty, and we now see her joined to the bride.

Most wonderful were the faith and love that were perfected in these heathen converts! Paul speaks of the faith and love of the Colossians toward the saints, and He rejoices in the work of faith and labor of love and of the Thessalonians. The faith and love, shown by the early church, as recorded in the New Testament, show that the Gentile church was indeed a wall, crowned with the beauty and power of the finished work of the atonement of Jesus Christ.

Her breasts, or her faith and love, were like beautiful turrets, and through this faith and love did she put off all unworthy things and put on Jesus Christ; and thus she was enclosed in Him. It was then that she found peace with her Beloved, and with all who had been brought nigh to Him before she was spoken for. She too became a part of the company of the bride of Christ, which is elsewhere called the Shulamite, or the daughter of peace.

**8:11, 12 “Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.”** The literal meaning of Baal-hamon is “the owner of a multitude.” Not only is the Lord Jesus Christ the owner of a multitude, but He was planted His Vineyard in the midst of this multitude; and the multitude are planted in His Vineyard. In the Old Testament, the people of God were as the sands of the sea; and throughout the Book of Revelation,

we see that the Redeemed throng is pictured as a great multitude which no man can number.

Under the law, the Vineyard of the Lord was conditionally given to the Jews. This is represented in different places of both the Old and the New Testaments as a vineyard that is let out to keepers. A Scripture that vividly portrays the unfaithfulness of the Jewish nation and the transference of the Vineyard of the Lord to the Gentile church, is given in Matt. 21:33, 44. The householder planted a vineyard and set a hedge about it; he let it out to husbandmen and went to another country. The treatment of the servants perfectly sets forth the way the Jews persecuted and killed the prophets of God; and finally they killed the heir, Jesus Christ. We are told that, "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

In this portion of the Song of Solomon, which we are now considering, it is the bride that is speaking; and she is made up of both Jew and Greek, of both bond and free. The vineyard has been taken away from the Jewish nation or the unfaithful keepers, and given to the Gentile church. The bride earnestly covenants that she will be faithful to render unto Solomon the thousand, which is His due, and to those who keep the fruit shall be given two hundred. "They that minister about sacred things eat of the things of the temple, and they that wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar. Even so did the Lord ordain that they proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor 9:13, 14).

In the Song of Solomon, the keepers were to bring to Solomon a thousand pieces of silver for the fruit of the vineyard; and the silence that follows this statement, shows that they were not faithful in giving to the owner of the vineyard the revenue thereof. That this was true, is clearly brought out in the passage in Matthew, and is also a matter of Jewish history. This fidelity was the cause of God setting them aside for a season; and scattering them throughout the nations, while He turned to the Gentiles.

**8:12 "My vineyard, which is mine, is before me; thou, O Solomon, shalt have the thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred."** Though the Lord may let us tend a portion of His great Vineyard, though He may let us minister to other souls in different ways, there is a part of the Vineyard of the Lord, which He actually gives to each one of us; and that is the vineyards of our own lives. In this way He gives His Vineyard to the bride, each virgin receiving a portion.

He would have us guard our hearts about all that we treasure and protect, for out of them are the issues of life. It is this hidden place that must be watched and tended more than all that appears on the outside. We cannot judge the condition within, by the exterior; but many times, the outward appearance is either better or worse than appears before the face of God. We must guard and protect the roots and hidden fibers of our beings, our thoughts, our impulses, our desires.

We must put away everything that is not of God that is hidden and unseen, as zealously as we put away the defects that appear upon the outside, which humble us when they are seen by others. It is *our* Solomon who has entrusted to us the care of our lives and hearts; it is the Lord Jesus Christ who has warned us to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation.

Historically, we see the Apostolic Church longing for the presence of the Lord, and yet rejoicing in the confidence He has in them and the sacred trust He has bestowed upon them. With faithfulness did they work and tend the Vineyard of the Lord, and especially that part of it comprised in their own lives. So faithfully did they watch their

own vineyards that over and over the Apostle Paul exhorted his followers to follow and imitate him.

As the early church saw the full import of the setting aside of the Jews as a nation, and as they apprehended how God's people had failed Him and crucified their Messiah, with the more vehement zeal did they tend the Lord's flock, pouring out their lives even unto death. They counted nothing in any way as dear unto themselves, so that they finished their course and the ministry, which God had entrusted unto them. These first virgins of the bridechamber were indeed faithful unto death.

This precious ending of the Song of Solomon applies not only to the early church, but it applies most solemnly to every virgin, every overcomer that has joined the Bloodwashed throng since those early days. Not those that do the King's business negligently, shall be in this company. Not those who pamper their flesh and let it overrun their lives, shall appear in this company. Not those who examine their vineyards only now and then shall bring up to the Heavenly Solomon an increase of a thousand.

It is those who dwell in their gardens and tend them day and night, those who ever keep them before their eyes, that shall be well-pleasing to the Owner of the Vineyard. Thieves do not always come in the night to steal, but sometimes they come in the middle of the day when it is the lightest. This is frequently the case in spiritual things. When everything is going smoothly and the sun seems to be the brightest, there is the most danger of the husbandman letting down, and lying down to rest. We may be sure if the enemy comes and finds us slumbering, and trusting the prosperity of circumstances rather than obeying our Lord and watching, he will not be so considerate as to wait until the night of affliction arouses us, before he attacks us.

When prosperity surrounds us, when we seem to be going on with leaps and bounds, then must we be more watchful and diligent. It is when the way is easy, when the sun is shining as though no cloud ever again cover it, that self-confidence creeps in; and the blight of carelessness and indolence strikes the vines. When the enemy seems to have forgotten us, it is a sure indication that we must arm ourselves with "All prayer" and keep our shield of faith in readiness.

We must be on the alert when the waves are going over our heads and the darkness of affliction and trial encompass us, for it is then that fear and doubt attack us. It is then that despair and questionings arise, which will devastate a beautiful vineyard more than all the tempests and cyclones that can strike it. With the earnest children of God, trials and suffering always drive them closer to Christ's bleeding side, and they lean harder upon Him as the storms and persecutions increase. Their hearts cry: "Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee" (Ps. 73:25).

It is with great joy, that the bride receives this sacred charge from her Beloved. He has left her for the Mountain of Spices, where He will remain until the day breaks, and the shadows flee away; and He has told her to occupy until He comes. The last and most precious charge He gave her, was to watch and tend the vineyard of her own life. This is first mentioned in ch. 1:6, where we find her tending the vineyard of the world and neglecting her own vineyard. In ch. 2:15 and ch. 4:16, her vineyard, which she is beginning to tend, is precious set forth. At the end of this inspiring book, we leave the bride watching for the return of her Lord. She is filled with holy zeal and determination

to so watch and tend her vineyard that she shall have great increase for her Beloved when He comes for His own, and the harvest is gathered home.

She rejoices that God has called her to be conformed to the image of His own dear Son; and in order that she may do this, He has given her His Word whereby she may be instructed how to guard and tend every avenue of her life. She rejoices that He has really given her this sacred trust, and she fervently determines that it shall ever be before her eyes; that she will not neglect nor lose sight of it day or night until He comes and receives it from her.

She is not working with the motive of self-interest, nor for what it will bring to her. She is not even thinking of the joy that comes from obeying God and being in His will. We scarcely realize the mixed motives that defile our prayers and even enter into our obedience to God. We think we desire only His glory; but we become taken up with the satisfaction we shall have when we are victorious, and with the joy that will be ours when we reach the place where we live and walk in the Spirit continually. We pray for healing and think that we want it for God's glory, but we are really taken up with the advantage it will bring to us.

There is nothing so deceiving as our motives. We pray that God will save souls, that He will bring us into closer touch and communion with Him, we pray for many things that are right and legitimate and would be to His glory; but if we could analyze our motives, we should be dismayed to find how much of self has entered in. Why do you long for your flesh and the moving of the self-like to be put away? Why are you praying that the Holy Spirit shall take full control of you, enabling you to continually live and walk in the Spirit? Why have you prayed those prayers of the past, which have gone up before the face of God, bearing such great petitions and such unspeakable promises?

Has your motive and desire been that God shall be glorified, or have you looked at the joy and benefit that would come to you? Why have you grieved that there were so many waste places in you life, so many unworthy things, so much that was unchristlike? Has your one sorrow and grief been, that your Lord has not been glorified in you as God had planned? Or was it regret for your own failures and humiliation, because of the effect they had upon your prestige and influence with others?

Too often we are concerned that the thousand shall be ours, and we give the two hundred to the Lord. We want all the joy we are thinking of our own delight and the increase in our own lives, but we forget that all must be given to our Solomon, and He gives back to us the two hundred; for it is the bride who tends the Vineyard of the Lord.

In the place of mourning over the care she must give to the vineyard of her life, and shrinking from the suffering as the great Husbandman prunes and cleanses the vines and plants, the bride rejoices that the Heavenly Solomon has given her this sacred charge to perform while He is absent in a distant country. There is increasing joy and rejoicing as the pleasant plants in this vineyard increase and bear fruit to the glory of God. It is when we desire everything in order that God may be glorified, that our faith grows strong, and springs out and lays hold of God in a way that is impossible when we have our minds set upon what we are going to get out of it. The bride covenants that her Beloved shall have the thousand. What intensity of purpose fills the heart of the bride, as she determines that she will keep this charge continually before her in order that she may no lose any of the increase that God is waiting to give her.

Beloved, how much fruitage have we to offer to our Lord? How much has been to His glory? How many times have we seen and searched out the little foxes, and followed them to their hiding-places? How many times have we destroyed them through faith in the death of Jesus Christ, who was delivered us from all these things? How many large foxes that we cannot get rid of, are holding corners in our lives? When they were small and weak was the time for us to catch and destroy them; but now they are stronger than we are and are sapping the spiritual life out of us.

If we cannot tend the vineyards of our own lives and souls, we must not think that the Lord will entrust us with the oversight of the vineyards of other souls. Although thousands of men and women are out in "The work of the Lord," it is sad to see how many there are among them, who are evidently never called out by the Lord of the Vineyard. The first work in the Lord's Vineyard, which He entrusts to us and calls upon us to do, is to care for our own lives and to first partake of the fruit.

We must put off the flesh, we must put away all error, we must be established and builded upon His Word and upon His Truth. We must be strong and stand for the Truth of the gospel, and in order to do this, we must know what the gospel is in a clear and definite way. Only as we daily put the gospel to the proof by taking up our cross and following our precious Lord, can it be made flesh in us and be quickened to us so that we shall have utterance to give it out.

It is through our union with Christ in His death, that everything that is dishonoring to God is put off; it is through our union with Him in His resurrection, that we are raised to walk in newness of life, and are able to put Him on so that His life is manifested in our mortal bodies. It matters not how far along we are on the Christian journey, nor how much we have attained; constant vigilance is required if we enter into, and abide in this relation. Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, we must watch and pray, we must labor and wait, that when He comes, we shall be found ready and waiting, and shall not be found naked.

There is a significant touch in here, of which we may well take notice. We are told that it was a thousand pieces of silver that the bride was to render to Solomon. Silver is a symbol of the atonement of Jesus Christ; and the word, "thousand," means an infinitely great number. The thought is, that through the work of Jesus Christ, this increase is brought forth for the Owner of the Vineyard. Every time our faith goes out to Christ and his finished work on Calvary, every time we partake in His death and put off the flesh, we add a piece of silver to the revenue that He has a right to expect from the vineyard He has bought.

As we die daily that His life may be manifested, we add piece by piece to the increase we have covenanted to give to Him. Let it encourage our hearts to remember that every time we put to the test our union with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection, we are depositing precious pieces of silver carry up to Him. The two hundred, which is given back to us, is the joy and blessing we receive in our own souls and lives every time we come out victoriously and take an advance step. Our profit depends entirely upon the increase of the pieces of silver that have been won for Solomon.

## CHAPTER XLVI

“EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS!” 8:13, 14

**8:13** “**Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken for thy voice; cause me to hear it.**” Again the voice of the Bridegroom is heard by the bride, and for the last time in this ineffable book, only those who are worthy in His worthiness will hear His voice in this way; only with such a one is there a hearkening of His voice and those who thus hear his voice, are those who continually dwell in the gardens; watching the vineyards of their own souls and attending to the duties that have been entrusted them by the Lord.

They are not staying in the world or living in the flesh part of the time, while the thorns and thistles are overrunning the vineyard the Lord has given them; but they have taken up their abode where they can watch it day and night; and the Lord comes down and walks with them. There is unearthly joy and holy bliss beyond description in walking with the Lord; and many times there is keen pain and abasement.

As He takes us by the hand and leads us up and down the vineyards of our souls and lives; as He points out this fence in His Truth that must be built up and made strong, so that error cannot get in; as He points out another place where, though compromise, we have let a fence fall down that was once high and strong, we are humbled and weep tears of repentance before Him. As His approval rests upon the fruit that is ripening, and the care we have taken of it by His grace, our hearts rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

As He points out this place where some small fox is hiding away; as He shows us another place where some blight is threatening the pleasant plants; as He points out many things that must be taken away or changed, and reveals many precious plants that are lacking in our vineyards, again we rejoice, though with humiliation and sorrow.

When God points out these things to the bride of Christ, she does not rest back satisfied with knowing about them; neither does she mistake the dealing for obedience and possession; but with deep humility, down low at the feet of Jesus Christ, she does “all the Lord hath spoken.” She builds up every fence of God’s Word, that her vineyard may be protected from all error and from man’s theories and teaching. She tries the Spirit and refuses to give place to the new revelations and, so-called new light (properly speaking, new and greater darkness). She keeps herself far from a false matter, rooting up and putting every unworthy thing far out of her life. She searches out every hidden fox, she does not overlook the least blight; and thus she keeps her sacred charge before her continually.

As long as we are in these mortal bodies, with obedient hearts, we must watch the dealings of the Lord, and treasure every conviction and uncovering of our shortage more than blessings. We must refuse to be deceived or lulled into negligence and false peace. How incalculable is the loss we have sustained through the enemy stealing from us the results God intended from His workings and dealings.

It is a wonderful thing to dwell in the gardens; this is where the waters flow, and the Hidden Manna falls. Those who abide there in obedience, learn to know every corner, every distant place, every hidden part; and they are able to tend it so that Solomon receives a thousand increase. They are separated from the world and the flesh, from

people and things. They live like pilgrims and strangers as they walk with Him day by day. He is dealing and revealing the Truth to them. He is purging and cleansing every place in their lives, to the glory of His name. As they dwell and walk with Him, they do not forget His admonitions and dealings; but they hasten to obey so that He need not deal and admonish them over and over concerning the same things.

The closer you draw to God, the more the Holy Spirit will lay hold upon you and control you. The more you are brought to live and walk in the Spirit continually beholding Jesus Christ, the more quickly you will discern those things in your words and actions, in your thoughts and motives, in your appearance and ways, that are unChristlike. This discernment will not come from introspection, from examining and digging around in your vineyard yourself; it will not come from wounded pride because of being discerned by others. It will come from a continual gaze fixed upon Jesus; a continual looking and listening to Him, until every sound of flesh will be like the sound of a cracked bell.

Let us yield to God as He begins to show us anything; let us hasten to be co-workers with Him, as the spade of His dealings digs down into our lives and brings to light all that must be put away. Let us not walk in the natural like men or like children, but let us walk like children of the King; let us walk like heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

**“The companions hearken for thy voice.”** The people around us are watching us, they are looking and examining us to see exactly what we are, regardless of our testimonies. They are hearkening of our voices, not only in the meetings and when we are in the Spirit, but when we are not conscious of their scrutiny. They are measuring our lives and watching us when we do not know it. It is not for our own sakes alone, that God is calling us to walk softly before Him, and admonishing us that our words and actions must be like Jesus Christ. In one sense, our personal interest and profit are of minor importance. The most important thing is that Christ may be honored and not dishonored, that He may be shown forth in our lives in all his beauty and glory. The next important thing is for the sake of those about us who are repelled or drawn to Christ by what they see in the lives of His followers.

Those around us are listening for our voices; they are watching to see if there is eternal fruit in our lives. Many who are hungry for God, who are reaching out their hands for Him if so be they may touch Him, are hearkening for our voices to teach them and guide them to the Fountain where their hunger shall be satisfied and their thirst quenched.

They are hungry for words of life, of edification, of grace seasoned with salt. They are longing for words of comfort and admonition; of warning and advice. Their hearts reach out to those about them to know the Lord better than they do. They would learn of the pitfalls that have been avoided or fallen into by older Christians, that they may escape the danger. They would know how to dwell in the presence of Christ and love Him more.

Beloved, do we realize that, “The companions hearken for thy voice?” What do those around us hear who are hearkening for our voices? When they are hungry for words of life that will point them to He who is the life, do they hear only unworthy words that point out our own defects and lack of entering in? When the babe in the Lord or the discouraged Christian hearkens for our voices to impart edification and encouragement, when they need the grace, well seasoned with salt, do they hearken in vain? Child of

God, you little know how many around you may have hearkened for your voice, and hoped to hear from God through you, and have been disappointed. You little know how many have come to you, attracted by your testimonies and the appearance of spirituality when you were at your best, and they have found only leaves.

When error has arisen, how many of God's children have hearkened for the voice of this or that leader or servant of God? And how many of God's dear children are today in rank error because the watchmen did not know the Truth and warn them? That which is spoken in Isa. 56:10, 11, has come to pass with many of the so-called servants of God. "His watchmen are blind, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber...these are shepherds that cannot understand: they have all turned to their own way, each one to his own gain, from every quarter."

**"Cause me to hear it."** Our Beloved would also hear our voices ascending to Him in praise and worship, in prayer and intercession. He would have us commune with Him continually; for through communion and fellowship with Him, our souls and lives are nourished. When our precious Lord is waiting for us to talk with Him, we are in the flesh chattering with men or women, hindering them and ourselves? Our Lord always covets our confidence. He would have us confide in Him, ask help from Him, talk everything over with Him before we go to any one else.

If we do this, many times we would not go to any one else at all, and would be saved much trouble and humiliation. But so often do we speak first with those about us; we confide in them and ask advice of them; we trust in man whose breath is in his nostrils, who is in nothing to be accounted of. We forsake the Fountain of living waters for cisterns broken and dry, unreliable and treacherous.

**8:14 "Make haste, my Beloved, and be thou like a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices."** Again, and for the last time, the bride speaks to the Bridegroom, who is unseen but near. The book opens with the cry of the ancient church for the coming of their Messiah. It sets forth also the hunger of the virgins of the bride of Christ for a clearer revelation of the Lord, and a greater entrance into His chambers and presence. The Spirit has led us over the path the bride's feet have trod, as she has obeyed and ever followed on after her Lord. At the end we find her diligently keeping the garden of her own soul, while she works in the Lord's great Vineyard, and with unslumbering eyes watches and waits for His return.

The Mountains of Spices are the fourth mountains mentioned in the Song of Solomon. Though the mountains of Spices are closely connected and, in a measure, identified with the Hill of Frankincense and the Mountain of Myrrh, they are not the same mountains. The Hill of Frankincense (Calvary) and the Mountain of Myrrh (the tomb), are used as symbols of Christ's redemptive work while it was in process of accomplishment. The Mountains of Spices arise majestic and eternal from the Cross and the Tomb, and are a symbol of the same work fully accomplished and eternal. In other words, "The Mountains of Spices" symbolize His perfected finished work, through which we are redeemed and delivered from the hands of all our enemies; through which we are made worthy to attain to the high calling of God.

Only through the gospel does Christ come to us. As we approach the Mountains of Spices and put His finished work on Calvary to the test, as we yield to the cross daily, Christ comes to us and reveals Himself in the gospel. He is like a roe or a young hart as He comes to us over the Mountains of Spices. It is over these Mountains of Spices

(Christ's finished work on Calvary) that God and His Christ come to us; and it is over these fragrant Mountains that we must pass, in order to have access to God. He reveals Himself to us, He reveals to us the power there is in the gospel, which is nothing more or less than the "Glad Tidings" of Christ's Mountain of Spices, upon which Christ is resting; upon which the salvation of every soul is resting; upon which God's eternal plans and their accomplishment are resting.

Through the work that Christ did upon the cross, we live to the glory of God while here on earth. But eminently above all else, it is through this work that we are prepared for "The appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; which in its own times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable" (1 Tim. 6:14-16). God's supreme purpose is that we may be prepared to dwell forever in His presence, and in this light unapproachable.

Those who are dwelling in the presence of the Lord, have their vision more and more clarified to behold the signs of the times and unseen things. When the light of His countenance is continually lifted up upon us, we begin to discern the lights and shadows about us. Already, the heavy blackness that precedes the dawn, is falling upon the earth; and the faint rays of the morn are discerned by the anointed eye. The hearts of those who are walking closest to God, are already crying day and night for the Lord to hasten His Coming. The signs of His Coming are increasing, and the prophecies are being rapidly fulfilled.

Even since I began to write upon this Exposition, the signs of the Coming of the Lord have increased in a most startling way. Wars and rumors of wars have arisen; but Jesus Christ told us not to be troubled, for these things must needs come to pass. Nation has already risen against nation; kingdom has already risen against kingdom, until nearly every large nation upon earth is either engulfed, or in danger of being engulfed in one of the bloodiest wars the world has ever known. Iniquity is multiplying so rapidly, that it brings fear and apprehension to the heart; and the love of many is waxing cold. The hearts of men are fainting for fear of the things that are coming to pass upon the face of the earth.

With all this, men are saying: "peace and safety!" these words are ominous signs of the end, as it foretold in the Word of God. The words of God are literally fulfilled in these days, and "Peace and safety" face us from buildings and fences, from railroad stations and even from the advertisement bills at the doors of the moving-picture theatres, which abound in every prominent street. "When they are saying, Peace and safety, sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in no wise escape." (1 Thess. 5:1 ff.) But we are not to let these things deceive us, for we are not in the darkness, that that day should overtake us as a thief, for we are sons of light and sons of the day. Therefore let us not sleep as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober.

His Coming is so near that the hard things that face us do not matter, as we lift up our heads and rejoice because our redemption draweth nigh. We do not know at what moment we shall be lifted up out of it all, and be caught way to meet the Lord in the air, and thus shall we be forever with the Lord. He is calling upon us to recognize the signs of His Coming, not setting a day for His appearing, for no man knoweth the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man cometh.

Child of God, do you know that the midnight cry is now going forth without the land? Do you hear it sounding in your heart? “Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him! As you draw closer to Jesus Christ and let Him have His way, you will feel His drawing and wooing, you will receive the conviction and dealing of the Holy Spirit increasing in your heart and life. From your heart will go forth the earnest longing and prayer: “Make haste, my Beloved, and be Thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the Mountains of Spices.”

Has the Holy Spirit stamped upon your heart’s vision the portrait of Beloved and His unspeakable beauties, and the portrait of yourself if you attain to being His bride? Have you received a deeper revelation of the mutual love between Christ and His bride, as you have been meditating upon the Song of Solomon? Has God planted within your heart a hunger for Christ and for His love such as you have never felt before?

God has given us the Song of Solomon with its vivid word-pictures of Christ and His bride, together with its burning revelations of their mutual love in order that we may compare our attainments, or fidelity and love to Him, with the portraits therein set forth.

In this ineffable Song of Solomon, He has given us a strain from the Heavenly choir, the theme of which is “Christ and His bride.” Has this divine music sounded upon your heart until your spirit has been caught away to the Mount of the Lord? Have you received a deeper revelation of your high calling in Him, and has the Spirit revealed clearer visions of those things that mortal eye cannot see nor hear, neither can the human heart contain, even the things that God has prepared for you and me? If you will draw close to God, He will anoint your eyes with Heavenly eye-salve: He will give you an eternal perspective; He will cause you to behold the things that are unseen and eternal as you lose sight of the things that are seen and temporal.

He would have us smell the fragrance of the oils of Jesus Christ and discern the preciousness and power in His Name, which is as oil poured forth. As we apprehend His fragrance, we shall hasten to anoint ourselves with this oil of eternal fragrance. We shall learn to use the Name that is above all names, with holy boldness; and He will be glorified and the enemy will be brought to naught.

Have you felt the drawing of your Beloved and have you yielded to the cords of love, running after Him faster and faster as He has held you up by the right hand of His righteousness? Have you left everybody and everything and hastened after Him with the speed of the horses in Pharaoh’s chariots? Have you yielded to Him so that He could bring you into the chamber of humility? And has He brought you into the other unspeakable chambers of the King of Glory? Have you lain at His feet in abandonment as the revelation of His everlasting love has broken in upon your soul?

It is through obedience alone that we go from chamber to chamber, from experience to experience in our approach and knowledge of Him, and in the realization of His love. Did you let Him woo you on until you sat with Him in the green pastures at His table of communion? As you communed with Him and fed upon the living Bread that He set before you, did He who is the Bread of life and find lodgment in your heart and become to you a precious cruse of myrrh hidden away in your bosom?

Have you yielded to Him until He has so clothed you with Him self that you were decked with the Henna-flowers of His attributes, which took the place of your unlovely attributes? And refreshed with their fragrance and beauty every one that beheld you?

If you have passed through these experiences, suddenly you have been brought into His Banqueting House, and your soul has been ravished with the revelation of His love. You have discerned the support of His left hand under you, bearing you up under all oppression; and His right hand has undertaken for you in the impossible things, to the glory of His name. Your eyes have pierced the darkness, and you have seen His banner, "Love," floating over you, and you have rejoiced in its sweetness and protecting power.

We have followed the footsteps of the bride as portrayed by the Holy Spirit, we have seen her hastening to meet her Beloved as she heard His voice calling her. We have beheld her hidden away in the clefts of the Rock of Ages, and climbing upward upon that stair that was set up when the Rock was rent. We have seen her as she traveled through the wilderness in the Chariot of Salvation, and our hearts have been ravished by the descriptions of the bride, which are so vividly given by the Bridegroom and by the daughters of Jerusalem.

Higher and higher does she climb; faster and faster does she go as though borne upon eagles' wings. The banners of victory that float over her, increase day by day, until suddenly, as she is faithfully performing the ministry that God has entrusted to her in His Vineyard, she is caught away among the chariots of the Prince, in the ranks of the overcomers.

As we read and meditate upon these experiences of the bride, the Holy Spirit will let their preciousness break in upon our understanding. He will lead us to examine our lives and see just where we are in the preparation, and how far we have gone in the race. As we yield to Him, He will square up our lives and all concerning us, to His Word and the requirements therein contained, until we shall be caught away among the chariots of the Prince.

It is not easy to yield to Him and let Him take away all our strength; but as we do this, He will manifest His strength, which is made perfect in our weakness. Harder and harder will we lean upon our Beloved as we become more and more weak in ourselves. Have you commenced to enter into this precious experience, and has the peace of God stood sentinel at the door of your heart as you have seen all in which you trusted, swept away? Have you been undismayed, and have you even rejoiced when you have been shut up to rely upon His everlasting arm in all things small and great?

It is not enough to hear the midnight cry that is now going forth, and to know that it is the midnight cry. We must make sure that we have on the wedding garment and have made ourselves ready; we must see that all things are prepared that we shall need if we are in that blest company. It is only as we love Him, that we shall love His appearing; it is only as we are separated from the earthy and earthly, that we can be caught up with Him when He comes in the clouds for His bride.

Cast everything aside that you cannot take with you, for if it is not cast aside, it will hold you down like heavy weights. Even a small thing will pin you to the earth so that you cannot rise up to meet Him. Count all things but refuse that you may know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death, that you may attain unto the resurrection from among the dead.

There is a remnant of God's people over the whole earth that have taken heed to the word of prophecy as to a lamp shining in a dark place. Already the rays of dawn are appearing upon the horizon; and the day-star has arisen in their hearts, foretelling the

approach of the Eternal Day at the Coming of Him who is the Light. This remnant have fixed their eyes upon Jesus, they are looking away from the earth, from people, from everything to the Everlasting Hills of God. They have not here an abiding city, but they are looking for “The city which hath the foundations whose builder and Maker is God” (Heb 11:10). This city “Hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb” (Rev. 21:23). Into this city, none shall enter, but those that have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.

If your lamps are trimmed and burning; if we have our loins girded with the Truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ; if we are following hard after Him, day and night shall our hearts yearn for His Coming; and we shall not fear to stand before Him because in that day we shall not be found naked. “Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet manifest what we shall be. We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.”

Children of God, followers of the Lamb, the Spirit constrains me to beseech you to give diligence to make your calling and election sure. Hasten! Hasten! Put on the wedding garment! Put off all that is unworthy, and be clothed in Jesus Christ, who is our righteousness. Refuse all slumber and letting down, for the Home-coming is near at hand, and we can have an abundant entrance in, to the glory of our Lord.

BEHOLD! THE COMING OF THE LORD DRAWETH NEAR!

The words of the Bridegroom ring in our ears: “Until the day be cool, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the Mountain of Myrrh, and to the Hill of Frankincense.” With fervent love and yearning for your Lord, our hearts cry out: “Make haste, my Beloved, and be Thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the Mountain of Spices.”

Again we hear the voice of our Bridegroom, and our hearts rejoice as the answer echoes down from the courts of Heaven: “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is. Hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown. He that overcometh, I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and He shall go out thence no more; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from my God, and mine own new name. He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in His throne.”

“EVEN SO, COME LORD JESUS!”