

# ADDRESSES ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON

by

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## CHAPTER THREE

### SONG OF SOLOMON 3:1

“**I sought him whom my soul loveth; I sought him, but I found him not**” (Song of Solomon 3:1).

THE third chapter of this exquisite book is divided into two parts; the first comprises verses 1 to 5, and the second, the balance of the chapter, verses 6 to 11. The opening section which we now consider sets before us communion interrupted and renewed.

We are not told just what it was that had disturbed the fellowship of the lovers. It may have been the absence of the Beloved, resulting in a temporary lethargic condition on the part of his espoused one.

Possibly the entire section is to be treated as a dream.

In fact, this seems the most likely explanation. But dreams often reflect the disturbed state of the heart. “**A dream cometh through the multitude of business**” (Ecclesiastes 5:3).

The opening verse depicts the restlessness of one who has lost the sense of the Lord’s presence. What saint has not known such experiences? David once exclaimed, “**Lord, by Thy favor Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled**” (Psalm 30:7).

This withdrawal of the light of His countenance is not necessarily in anger. Sometimes it is admonitory. It is love’s way of bringing the soul to a realization of something cherished or

allowed that grieves the Holy Spirit of God. Or it may be the testing of faith to see whether one can trust in the dark as well as in the light Rutherford's experience is depicted thus:

“But flowers need night's cool sweetness,  
The moonlight and the dew;  
So Christ from one who loved Him,  
His presence oft withdrew.”

To His disciples He said, when He announced His going away, “**Ye believe in God, believe also in Me.**” That is to say, “*As you have believed in God whom you have never seen, so when I am absent believe in Me. I will be just as real—and just as true—although to sight unseen.*” For though the soul lose the sense of His presence nevertheless He still abideth faithful.

He never forsakes His people though He seems to have withdrawn and He does not manifest Himself. This is indeed a test of faith and of true-hearted devotion. We say, “Absence makes the heart grow fonder,” but there is often greater truth in the old proverb, “Out of sight, out of mind.”

When the Lord as a boy stayed in the temple, even Mary and Joseph went on “**supposing Him to be in the company,**” not realizing the true state of affairs.

Here the bride feels her loss. She seeks for him; he is not there. There is no response to her cry.

For her, rest is impossible with this awful sense of loneliness upon her. She must seek until she finds; she cannot be contented without him. Would that this were always true of us! But, alas, how often we go on bereaved of the assurance of His presence, yet so insensate that we scarcely realize our loss.

Here there is energy—determination—action! She must find him who is all in all to her. Love abhors a vacuum. Only the sense of his presence can fill and satisfy her heart.

In her dream—or possibly in reality—she leaves her mountain home and goes forth in search of the object of her deep affections. To the city she wends her way, and wanders about its streets and peers into every hidden place, looking only for him!

But at first her search is unrewarded. In fact it is not until she bears witness to others of his preciousness that he gladdens her vision. Note the terms used: “**I sought him; I found him not; I will seek him; I found him not.**”

The watchmen, guarding the city at night, are surprised to see a lovely and yet apparently respectable woman going about at such an hour. But she turns eagerly to them ere they can reprove her, crying in the distress of her soul, “**Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?**”

The abrupt question conveyed little information in deed. To the prosaic guardians of the peace, it must have sounded almost incoherent. But to her it was all that was necessary. There was only one for whom her soul yearned. Surely they too would know his worth! But, from them, she gets no response.

Leaving them, she has scarcely gone from their sight ere she comes upon the object of her search. In an ecstasy of rapture she lays hold of him, and clinging to him as to one who might again vanish away, she brings him into her own home where she first saw the light of day.

The more the passage is pondered, the more evident it seems to be that all this happened in a dream. But it tells of the deep exercises of her soul. She misses him; she cannot be happy without the sense of his presence. Her only joy is found in abiding in his love. She finds him when she seeks for him with all her heart.

This is what gratifies him. And so again we have the refrain of satisfied love. **“I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up nor wake my love until she please”** (ver. 5), for, as previously mentioned, the expression here is in the feminine in the Hebrew language. Nothing gives our Lord more delight than to find a heart that joys in Him for what He is in Himself. Too often we think rather of His gifts, the gracious favors He bestows. It is right and proper that these should stir us to thanksgiving; but it is as we get to know Himself and to joy in His love that we really worship in blissful communion.

“The bride eyes not her garments,  
But her dear Bridegroom’s face;  
I will not gaze at glory,  
But on my King of Grace!  
Not at the crown He giveth,  
But on His pierced Hand;  
The Lamb is all the glory  
Of Immanuel’s land.”

The latter part of the chapter is of an entirely different character, and sets forth the truth of union rather than of restored communion. It is a little gem, complete in itself. The espoused one has waited long for the return of the shepherd whose love she has prized above all else. His promise to return for her has been cherished and relied upon, even though at times his continued absence has made the heart sick with yearning and even overwhelmed the drooping spirit with fear. But never has she really lost confidence in his plighted word. Eagerly she has awaited the fulfillment of his promise.

One day all the simple folk of the countryside are astir and filled with interest and wonder as they behold a grand procession wending its way along the highway up from the glorious city of God. Outriders and trumpeters on prancing chargers herald the approach of a royal equipage.

**“Who is this that cometh?”** This is the question raised by every onlooker. Whose progress is this? Who travels in such grandeur and splendor? One can imagine the scene, and none can blame the curious conjectures as the peasants of the hills gaze with wonder upon the advancing cavalcade. In the Hebrew the question is really, **“Who is she that cometh?”** It is a bridal procession. But who is the honored maiden called to share the love of the King? Evidently at first they look in vain for a sight of her. Everything proclaims a nuptial parade, but no bride is really seen.

The bridegroom, however, is clearly in evidence. It is the son of David himself. In excited admiration the wondering people exclaim: “**Behold his bed, which is Solomon’s!**” The royal conveyance is recognized. Sixty valiant soldiers guard their king as he journeys through the country. Clad in armor, each with his sword ready to defend his sovereign against any lurking traitorous foes, they move on in orderly array, as the excitement among the shepherds and vinedressers grows ever more intense. Not often have their eyes been regaled by such a scene as this! Perhaps they will never see its like again!

How magnificent, how costly is that royal palanquin! It is the King’s provision for the comfort of his bride. And that bride is half-hidden among the rest of the country-folk, not daring to believe that such honor is for her. All eyes are on the King. It is his crowning day—his nuptial hour—the day of the gladness of his heart. He has come forth to seek and claim his spouse whom he won as the shepherd, and to whom he now reveals himself as the King.

There is no actual mention of the claiming of the bride and bringing her to the King, it is true. But it is clearly implied. He has come to fulfil his promise to make her his own. With deep and chastened joy she responds to the royal summons and takes her place at his side, and so the procession sweeps on, leaving the bewildered on-lookers gasping with startled amazement at the sudden change in the estate of her who had been through the years but one of themselves. It is a worthy theme for a Song of Songs! And most graphically it portrays the glorious reality which the Bride of the Lamb shall soon know when the Shepherd-King comes to claim His own.

“He is coming as the Bridegroom,  
Coming to unfold at last  
The great secret of His purpose,  
Mystery of ages past;  
And the bride, to her is granted,  
In His beauty now to shine,  
As in rapture she exclaimeth,  
**‘I am His, and He is mine!’**  
Oh, what joy that marriage union,  
Mystery of love divine;  
Sweet to sing in all its fulness,  
**‘I am His, and He is mine!’”**

How short then will seem the waiting-time; how trifling the follies of earth which we gave up in order to be pleasing in His sight! How slight too will the sufferings of the present time appear, as compared with the glory then to be enjoyed.

If some fancy we have drawn too much upon imagination as we have sought to picture the real background of these lovely lyrics, let me ask, Is it possible to mistake the picture when all Scripture tells the same story?

What was the marriage of Adam and Eve intended to signify? What shall be said of the servant seeking a bride for Isaac, and what of the love of Jacob as he served so unweariedly for Rachel?

Of what “**great mystery**” does Asenath, the Gentile wife of Joseph, speak? And what shall be said of the love of Boaz for Ruth?

Hosea who bought his bride in the slave-market gives a darker side of the picture, yet all is in wonderful harmony. All alike tell the story that “**Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word, and present it unto Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing**” (Ephesians 5:26,27).

“All fair” indeed will she then be in His eyes, and one with Him forever, for, “**It is written, For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church**” (Ephesians 5: 31, 32).

Surely all this should speak loudly to our hearts, we who through grace have been won for One we have never yet seen, but of whom we read, “**Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.**”

What will it be when we behold Him coming in royal array to claim us as His very own, when we discern in the King of kings, the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep, and who, ere He left this scene, gave the solemn promise, “**If I go . . . I will come again and receive you unto Myself.**”

That glad nuptial hour draws on apace. Well may our hearts be stirred and our spiritual pulses quickened as we join the wondering cry, “**Who is this that cometh?**”

When the bride is caught away, what will the astonishment be on the part of those who had never understood that she was the loved one of the Lord Most High? When they realize that the Church is gone and the heavenly procession has passed them by, what will be their thoughts in that day? But we must pause here for the present.

The next chapter gives us the glad recognition and the happy response.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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