

Verse 12. For the significance of *my son* see the comments at Prov. 1: 8. *By these* denotes the words of wisdom referred to in vs. 10, 11 and offered for the guidance of the youth. Solomon bids the *son* to be admonished by these words and not have his mind all worn out with many books of man's production.

Verse 13. *Hear the conclusion* means to give attention and the writer will sum up all of the truths and principles he has been giving in the book. The sum of it is that if one fears or respects God so that he will keep his commandments, he will be discharging the duty of man to the Lord.

Verse 14. *Judgment* is from an original that has a wide range of meanings. Its central thought is a sentence or verdict, and its application is not restricted to any particular time or place. The force of this verse is that God will decide as to the right or wrong of all things pertaining to the conduct of man. The verse is offered as a concluding exhortation and in conjunction with the preceding admonition to do the commandments of God.

SONG OF SOLOMON 1

General remarks: This book describes conversations and visits between Solomon and his favorite wife, the daughter of Pharaoh. (1 Ki. 3: 1.) These associations could have been supposed or actual or both as far as their nature is concerned. However, the probability is that Solomon really put the words into the mouth of his beloved wife to represent what he believed should at least have been her own sentiments. He might have been somewhat disappointed in her final reaction to his ardent advances, and if that is the case, it will throw some light on his statement about women in Eccl. 7: 28. At any rate, whether Solomon actually had such experiences, or if the "wish was father to the thought," he enlarges on the subject and puts it down in his writing to give the reader a view of the love that should exist between a man and his wife. If the reader will keep this in view he will not be confused as to the propriety of the intimate expressions made between the two parties. As a guide in properly classifying each part of the various conversations between this husband and wife, I suggest the reader mark his Bible as follows: Ch. 1: 1-7 is the wife, and ch. 1: 8-11

is the husband. From now on the initial letter of husband and wife only will be used: ch. 1: 12-3: 11, w; ch. 4: 1-15, h; ch. 4: 16, w; ch. 5: 1, h; ch. 5: 2-8, w; ch. 5: 9, daughters of Jerusalem; ch. 5: 10-16, w; ch. 6: 1, daughters of Jerusalem; ch. 6: 2, 3, w; ch. 6: 4-7: 9, h; ch. 7: 10-8: 14, w.

Verse 1. *Song of songs*. In many works of reference this book is called Canticles, abbreviated Cant. It is from the English word canticles which means "A song or hymn." The wife regards a song about Solomon as a song *OF* songs, or a song of special importance.

Verse 2. *Kiss* is from NASHAQ and Strong's lexicon says it is a primitive root and that it is identical with another Hebrew word through the idea of "fastening up," and which has been defined, "to catch fire." The word of our verse is defined, "To kiss, literally or figuratively (touch); also (as a mode of attachment), to equip with weapons." In view of the wide meaning of the word, we can appreciate the ardor in the request of the beloved wife. She was not asking merely for an indication of affection of some kind, which could be truly considered as a form of kiss, but she longed for the literal kiss in all of its possible intensity, and that would need to be performed with *his mouth* as it is worded here. Such an act would be an expression of deepest love and would be more exhilarating than wine, because its thrilling effect would not merely move the physical and nervous sensations, but would set into vibration every chord of the affections.

Verse 3. See the comments at Prov. 17: 17 on the subject of perfumes, and its relation to the passionate affections between the sexes.

Verse 4. *Draw me* is an affectionate appeal that any wife would have the moral right to make of her husband. *We will run after thee* has been rendered "let us haste" in another translation. The wife is eager for the company of her mate. *The king hath brought me*, etc. Let it be remembered that many a man in olden times had a plurality of wives. It would be understood that he would not live with any one of them continuously, and this would be especially true of kings. Hence when a husband wished to visit one of his wives he would need to make a call on her at her apartment, or have her go with him to his. (See Gen. 30: 14-16.) This will account for

the frequent passages in this book that represent the wife as longing for and even seeking the opportunity for the intimacies with her husband. When these customs of those times (as to plurality of wives), which were suffered (not "permitted"), are considered, we will understand the many passionate scenes in the story to be perfectly proper and right. I earnestly request the reader to keep the comments on this verse in mind and refer to them frequently.

Verse 5. Solomon's favorite wife being an Egyptian (1 Ki. 3: 1) she would naturally have a dark skin. She is represented as taking an attitude of self-pity and pleading that notwithstanding being dark she was beautiful. *Kedar* is from *QEDAR* and means "dusky," and she compared herself to that, which she claimed was an attractive color, also the curtains in the palaces of Solomon were a beautiful dark color.

Verse 6. The brothers and sisters would naturally be black also since they were Egyptians, yet the wife complains that she was darker than the others. She explains that she was compelled to do the rough work for the family. That exposed her to the sun which caused her to be darker than the others who had only their nationality to blame for their complexion. *My own vineyards have I not kept* is a figure of speech, meaning she was kept so busy slaving for the others she had no time to take care of her own personal interests. We should bear in mind that Solomon was the composer of all this language. He represented his beloved wife as having been mistreated by her family, and he was championing her interests because of his love for her.

Verse 7. A person in love wishes to be near the object of that love. This wife could not always be near him (see v. 4), so she inquires where he will be at the noon hour when she would find him somewhat at leisure and could give her some attention. (Ruth 2: 14.) *Why should I*, etc. This means she was not interested in his flocks but in him, therefore she did not wish to spend the time near any other flocks.

Verse 8. The preceding verses were the first speech of the wife and the husband answered her earnest inquiries with replies equally warm. He began his answer with a compliment and said she was the *fairest among women*.

He did not use the first word with reference to the complexion as we use it, for he had just represented her as being darker than the others of her race. It is from *YAPHEH*, which Strong defines, "beautiful." He told her she could meet him if she would trace the tracks of the sheep until they reached the tents of the shepherds. Thus a meeting place was arranged for these two lovers.

Verse 9. *Company* is not in the original as a separate word. The original for *horse* is in the feminine gender. The strange comparison is due to the fact that a creature regarded as good enough to be attached to the chariot of Pharaoh must not only be full of life, but be very attractive.

Verse 10. Solomon means her cheeks and neck are as beautiful as if decorated with gold and jewels.

Verse 11. *Borders* is from a word that is defined "a string." Solomon promised to give his wife a strand of gold and silver beads.

Verse 12. The wife now takes up the conversation, but it is not all addressed directly to the husband. Much of it is in a meditative form as if she were talking about him rather than to him. *Table* is from *MECIBBOWTH* and Strong defines it, "a divan." *Sitteth* is not in the original. The verse means that while the king is on his divan she will treat him to the odor of her ointments.

Verse 13. *Bundle of myrrh* is a figure of speech as if she would compare her husband to a packet of the most delightful perfume. And just as a woman would wear such an article on her bosom, so she would receive her husband's presence all the night long.

Verse 14. This is another comparison made by the wife about her husband, likening him to some object that is pleasant to the sight and has a pleasing odor.

Verse 15. *Fair* does not necessarily refer to the complexion, but is defined in the lexicon with the simple word "beautiful." According to Strong's lexicon, the reference to *doves* is because of "the warmth of their mating." The same author says it is derived from another Hebrew word that means something that is intoxicating. It means she regarded her husband's eyes as being intoxicating to her.

Verse 16. The wife again declares her husband is beautiful and pleasant.

Bed is green means their associations are always agreeable.

Verse 17. *Cedar* and *fir* are woods that are beautiful in texture and have a pleasant odor. The verse is a figure of speech to mean the luxuriousness of their dwelling.

SONG OF SOLOMON 2

Verse 1. We might think of this speech as being vain or boastful were it not really the composition of Solomon. He is putting these words in her mouth because he thinks that about her from his heart.

Verse 2. In the preceding verse the wife is compared to some of the most beautiful flowers. In this the other women are compared to thorns and the husband a lily.

Verse 3. Switching from flowers to trees for her comparisons, she likens her husband to the apple tree, which was one of the most desirable because of its delicious fruit. The contrast between it and the common trees of the forest is like the difference between her husband and other men. Continuing her imagery, she sees herself sitting under the shaded protection of the foliage, and partaking of the fruit which is sweet and delightful in its fragrance.

Verse 4. A true lover would entertain his beloved by taking her to the most desirable places of joy and pleasure. While doing so he should act the part of a true escort by guarding her honor and sense of security. The most assuring symbol of protection in this case was the banner or ensign of love.

Verse 5. Of course we will understand the house of pleasure presided over by Solomon would be one that afforded the enjoyment of tender love scenes between him and his favorite wife. With such a vision before her she becomes very affectionate and longs for the return of his affection. To *stay* means to comfort or support. *Flagons* means some kind of compressed fruit and *apples* were noted for their fragrance. The wife is so overcome with sentimental emotions that she pleads for the stimulation of these products of the fruits which would serve as a tonic to a bewildered nerve system.

Verse 6. This verse pertains to some of the sacred intimacies that are permitted between a husband and wife. The second clause refers to the same

thought expressed in Prov. 5: 19, second clause.

Verse 7. *Roes* and *hinds* are graceful creatures but possess no supernatural power by which to enforce an oath. The reference to them in this instance is a friendly but earnest request (almost demand) for the *daughters of Jerusalem* to refrain from disturbing her loved one while he wishes to be resting.

Verse 8. She imagines hearing her husband's voice and seeing him springing over the hills toward her.

Verse 9. Her imagination continues and she fancies seeing her loved one standing by the wall and peering at her through the opening. There could be nothing improper in such conduct, for he is her husband. While he has other wives whom he could legally visit, yet it would be thrilling to detect him taking these liberties with her.

Verse 10. But he did not stop at these informal approaches to her place of retirement. He called for her to come out and go with him.

Verse 11. The weather had changed for the better so nothing should prevent them from taking a stroll together.

Verse 12. Spring time had come as indicated by the appearance of the flowers. *Turtle* is a short form for turtle-dove, a bird of the pigeon family. It makes a plaintive sound when it sings, and is suggestive of some sweetly-sad love expression.

Verse 13. This verse is still on the subject of the advanced season, and the conditions such as lovers would appreciate while wandering together.

Verse 14. *Dove* is from the same original used in ch. 1: 15. Strong explains the reference to it "from the warmth of the mating." Having used the dove for her comparison, the wife thinks of her beloved husband as hiding in secluded places such as clefts of rocks or covered angles of the stairs. She wishes for him to come out from his cover that she may see him and hear his voice. By *countenance* she means his form of body and says it is comely or beautiful.

Verse 15. This verse may be considered as a little song which the wife sings chiefly for the ears of her husband. She chooses for her little ditty the subject of the foxes that destroy the tender vines. A vineyard of grapes would be an inviting place to loiter,

therefore the plea is for the foxes to be taken or seized.

Verse 16. This is another declaration of the mutual love that exists between the two. *Feedeth among the lilies* is only a sentimental expression because she wants to say something sweet about her lover. Lilies are delicate and beautiful flowers, and her associating him with them is a way of showing her tender regard.

Verse 17. *Until the day break* indicates she wishes them to wander like some care-free creatures over the mountains of *Bethel*. This was a craggy place in Palestine, and she thinks of her lover as being so sprightly in his love for her that he could successfully meet all obstacles, even as do the fleet and nimble creatures mentioned scamper over the rough places of the country.

SONG OF SOLOMON 3

Verse 1. Men with a plurality of wives did not live with any one of them continuously. That explains the circumstance where a wife would not have her husband with her. *Sought* is from BAQASH and is defined, "a primitive root; to search out (by any method, specifically in worship or prayer; by implication to strive after)."—Strong. In the night the wife had a desire for her husband who she realized was not with her.

Verses 2-4. She decided to leave her apartment and go out onto the streets; she might find him out there somewhere. But no, she was disappointed at first and did not see him. Meeting the night watchmen she asked if they had seen him, we are not told what they said to her. She continued her search after leaving the watchmen and lo, she soon came upon him somewhere on the street. Being his wife, and not finding him in the company of any other of his wives, she had a perfect right to act as here described. The wives did not live continuously with their husbands, and many of them had their apartments in their original homes. Hence this wife, having made friendly contact with her husband (who especially loved her above his other wives), had no difficulty in persuading him to spend the remainder of the night with her.

Verse 5. As they were making their way to her apartments, she warned the women of the city not to make any disturbance to inconvenience her husband until morning.

Verse 6. The wife now goes into a meditative form of speech about her husband. (See the comments at ch. 1: 12.) Reference is again made to the relation of perfumes to love. (See the comments at Prov. 7: 17.) In the present instance the wife imagines so much of it having been procured from *the merchant* that the burning thereof produces great pillars of smoke.

Verse 7. In her imagery of the beloved husband she sees him with an honorary guard of 60 men about his bed; that is, about the house containing the king's bed.

Verse 8. Each of these armed men is ready for action if it becomes necessary.

Verse 9. *Bed* is from a word that means a portable litter that is borne on the shoulders of men. This conveyance might contain room for two, although it usually had but one occupant. A rich and powerful king like Solomon would have frequent use for such a piece of service, and he would have it made of the choicest kind of wood, such as the *wood of Lebanon*.

Verse 10. The *pillars* (corner posts) of Solomon's litter or manual sedan were made of silver, and a part of the interior was of gold. *Covering* is defined in the lexicon as "a seat," and it was upholstered with purple fabric, indicative of royalty and splendor. *Paved* means "embroidered" and it was done *with love*, or because of his love for the women whose eyes he wished to please.

Verse 11. With the above equipment king Solomon would be transported through the streets of Jerusalem in his royal attire. The women of the city were bidden by the admiring wife to go forth that they might behold the king as he is being borne along.

SONG OF SOLOMON 4

Verse 1. See the comments at ch. 1: 15 for *doves' eyes*, which will show why Solomon attributes such a characteristic to his wife. *Fair* means she was beautiful in form and general attractiveness, not necessarily in complexion. There were three kinds of goats in Palestine and one kind had "fine long hair" according to Smith's Bible Dictionary. This accounts for Solomon's comparison of his wife's hair to them.

Verse 2. The teeth of a person otherwise dark in complexion would appear especially white, hence the comparison to sheep just recently washed. *Twins*

would suggest the idea of two of a kind, and Solomon compared the two rows of teeth in that way.

Verse 3. The personal charms of this favorite wife are described by comparison to other things that are known to be beautiful. The rosy brilliance of her lips suggested the color of a scarlet thread, and these would also be set off by the contrasting color of her skin. Everything coming from one who is ardently loved would seem to be just about right, thus the speech of this woman was complimented. *Temples* is from a word that means the side of the head in general. *Locks* refers to the veil that women wore over the face. Solomon saw the beautiful cheeks of his wife through her veil and it reminded him of the attractive fruit of the pomegranate tree.

Verse 4. The towers of kings were ornamented with the trophies won in their many conflicts with the enemy. To Solomon the neck of his beloved wife was as beautiful as was such a tower. And why not—had she not gained the complete mastery over the affections of the most powerful king of that day?

Verse 5. The point in the verse is in the similarity of twins. If the breasts of a woman were materially different either in size or form it would be unfortunate.

Verse 6. The husband proposed to take a nightly stroll with his wife. *Mountain of myrrh* is a figure of speech and used with reference to the perfumes. We have seen the significance of incense and other toilet delicacies in connection with the subject of love between the sexes. (Prov. 7: 17.)

Verse 7. This is a highly complimentary statement. Not only is the wife a beautiful woman, but her beauty is spotless.

Verse 8. The king proposed a stroll with his beloved wife. This "lovers' lane" included the serene areas of the noted mountain region, and the rugged districts of the lions' lairs. The intense love would equalize all of the differences.

Verse 9. *Ravished my heart* means she had completely captured his heart. The original for *sister* is of very general meaning and may be used as any term of endearment. *Spouse* is a special word for a perfect wife. *Chain* and *neck* are from the same original and mean a necklace. The second clause means that one glance from her eye,

together with the decoration about her neck, had completely overwhelmed him and made him to fall "madly in love" with her.

Verse 10. No additional comments will be offered on this verse since it is a repetition of the same "sweet things" he has said about his favorite wife.

Verse 11. This is similar to the preceding verse. He adds the compliment that her lips are as sweet as honey and as dainty as milk.

Verse 12. Exclusiveness is the central idea in this verse. Solomon considered this lovely woman as belonging to him alone, even as a garden would be if walled about against all intrusion.

Verse 13. Frequent comparisons have been made between love and perfumes. In this verse the comparison is to fruits as well as perfume.

Verse 14. This verse is a generous collection of choice perfumes. Seven are specifically named with a reference to perfumes in general.

Verse 15. Some of the attractions of nature are referred to in this verse for comparison to the beloved one.

Verse 16. In this brief speech the wife recognized the comparison her husband made. She called upon the winds to blow upon her garden and thus stir up the perfumes that he so much liked. Then she would have him come and enjoy it to his full content.

SONG OF SOLOMON 5

Verse 1. The husband heard the call of his wife and accepted her invitation. Notice he called it *my garden* although the wife had made the same claim in her last speech. That is very clear because in the case of a husband and wife who truly love each other, what belongs to one belongs to the other. *Sister* and *spouse* are terms of endearment which were commented upon at ch. 4: 10. Having come into *his* garden upon the invitation of his wife, the husband also partook of the delicacies therein. Not only so, but out of the greatness of heart that often possesses a man in love, especially if that love is returned, he extended the favors of these delicacies to his friends.

Verse 2. The wife will be the speaker in this and several verses following. *Waketh* is from *uwr* and Strong defines it, "to wake (literally or figuratively)." Hence we need not conclude she actually awoke at first but dreamed she did so. In her dream she heard

her husband at the door of her apartment, calling with pleading tones and endearing words for her to let him come in. She dreamed he complained of his head being wet with the dew of night. This item would indicate that it was all a dream with her. The husband would not have waited outside until the dew of night had saturated his hair. Had he decided to make a conjugal call upon his favorite wife he would have immediately knocked for admission.

Verse 3. In her dream she heard him say he had even made preparation for spending some time with her. He had removed his outer garment and washed his feet since he expected to enter presently into her sleeping room.

Verse 4. Not receiving any prompt response the husband decided to open and enter. He put his hand through an opening of the door in order to unfasten it. When *bowels* is used figuratively it means the sympathy or affections. When the wife in her dream heard his hand reaching for the handle of the door, her whole being was stirred up with yearning for his company.

Verse 5. The wife then actually awoke and the dream had been so vivid that she thought it was all a real happening. She arose to let him in and, while the awakening and rising was real, she was still somewhat under the spell of the dream. She imagined that her handles of the door were covered with the perfumes so often connected with love scenes, a subject which we have frequently had brought to our attention.

Verse 6. So real to her was her dream that she opened the door expecting to see her husband standing before it. But O, he was not there and her *soul failed*, or she almost fainted from the disappointment. When *he spake* is still a part of her dream that was so real that she had not fully recovered from its impression although her body was awake and she was actually standing at her door. She left her room and went out in search for him. She called for him in her frantic wandering over the streets, but of course there was no answer for he was not there.

Verse 7. The night watchmen thought there was something wrong with a woman roaming the streets at night and calling after some man. They contacted her because they were keepers of the peace, and had to use force in subduing her. The city was protected

with walls, and when a person with a questionable appearance got near the wall it aroused the suspicion of the guards. In order to obtain a better view of the "intruder" they snatched her veil away from her face.

Verse 8. The wife was so intent in her pursuit for her husband that she exposed her state of mind to the girls whom she chanced to meet on the streets. Thinking they might meet her husband before she did, she asked them to "carry her note" by telling him they had seen his sweetheart who told them she was lovesick for him.

Verse 9. Here the story is interrupted by giving us the reply of the *daughters of Jerusalem* to this lovesick woman. They were not personally concerned with her "heart problems" as yet. They asked her how her lover differed from others to the extent that she would ask them to take part in her pursuit after him.

Verse 10. This and a number of verses following is the wife's answer to the *daughters of Jerusalem*. In v. 9 they asked how he differed from other men and she answered. *White* is used figuratively, and *ruddy* means his face was rosy with the vigor of manhood. The marginal translation says, "standard bearer" for *chiefest*, and Strong's lexicon agrees with it. The verse describes her beloved as a man with a rosy complexion and a dazzling countenance. Her lover was the greatest hero in ten thousand men.

Verse 11. Having been asked to identify her lover, she gave various details of his personality to justify her general description of him in v. 10. His head was like gold in that a crown is frequently made of that beautiful and precious metal. *Bushy* means his hair hung in curls and was of a rich black color.

Verse 12. The comparison to *doves* was explained at ch. 1:15, applying to the bird in general. *Fittily* is from *mil'eth*, which Strong defines, "a plump socket (of the eye)." The expression means his eyes are like those of a dove, with the sockets full and embracing, and possessing the purity of having been bathed in milk.

Verse 13. To be sure, many of the comparisons derive their occasion from the desire of one ardent lover to say sweet things about the other. Over and over we have been reminded of the comparison to various perfumes. It was usual, therefore, for her to men-

tion a bed of spices and flowers, also of lilies with their odor of myrrh.

Verse 14. A devoted wife would admire the body of her husband. In her desire for expression of that admiration she would think of such things as gold and gems.

Verse 15. Many important structures were supported upon marble pillars. That indicated strength as well as attractiveness, and this wife saw her husband as an upright man of physical strength and masculine beauty. Another reference was made to the idea of perfume. The cedars of Lebanon were known to give off a very aromatic odor.

Verse 16. *Mouth* is from CHEK and Strong defines it, "properly the palate or inside of the mouth; hence the mouth itself (as the organ of speech, taste and kissing)." The wife meant his kisses were most sweet, and then she summed up her description of her beloved by the general clause that *he is altogether lovely*. By mentioning the *daughters of Jerusalem* at the conclusion of her speech, it was to notify them that the speech was in the form of an answer to their question in verse 9.

SONG OF SOLOMON 6

Verse 1. This verse is the speech of the girls whom the wife met on the streets. At first they were rather disinterested in her search for her beloved and asked for more information. In answer to them she gave the speech we have read in ch. 5: 10-16. After such a glowing description of him they became interested and offered to help in the search for this unusual lover.

Verse 2. This verse was the answer to the second question of the girls. In a speech prompted by love the wife described her husband's whereabouts in the language of flowers and spices, which has been seen to be a favorite comparison with lovers.

Verse 3. With another reference to flowers, the wife asserted the mutual love that existed between herself and her husband.

Verse 4. We will find ourselves lost in this book unless we keep in mind that Solomon was the composer of the entire piece. In his personal love for his Egyptian sweetheart, and with his inspired qualification for descriptive writing, he produced this great love story. It is a picture of the deep affection that should exist between hus-

bands and wives. It is composed in the form of supposed conversations and dealings between him and this beloved wife. In keeping with that plot he takes up the story at the place he met her after the girls helped find her beloved in the garden of flowers. Meeting her there he resumed his praises, but the language is a mixture of direct speech to her as if "making love," and indirect words of description of his wife's qualities, given for the information of everybody. Smith's Bible Dictionary says of Tirzah, "Its reputation for beauty throughout the country must have been widespread," and it is used to compare the beauty of this woman. To be terrible in a good sense means to overawe one with some sense of dignity or other qualification. This woman had more subduing effect upon Solomon than did all of the mighty armies.

Verse 5. In the preceding verse the wife had overawed her husband more than could have been done by an army. In this place it is represented to have been so strong a sentiment that he pleaded for a short break in the spell so that he might get his breath, as it were. See comments at ch. 4: 1 on the comparison to goat's hair.

Verse 6. This is identical with ch. 4: 2.

Verse 7. Continuing the comparison the reader will find this verse explained by the comments at ch. 4: 3.

Verse 8. Solomon finally acquired domestic relations with a thousand women (1 Ki. 11: 3), but at present he made specific reference to 140, and to an innumerable group of girls. Sixty of these women were in the exalted rank of queens, which shows that the comparison Solomon was about to make for his favorite wife would be elevating to her.

Verse 9. The reader will please consult the comments at ch. 1: 15 on the significance of doves in connection with love. This verse is the language of one who is truly in love with his wife. Such speech generally consists in comparisons and contrasts. Solomon would not have admitted that his estimate of his favorite wife was the result of selfish favoritism natural for a loving husband, but claimed that the queens and other girls praised her. Another thing, he did not account for his wife's special excellence by the fact that she was from a most desirable family (which often does explain

a situation), but she was the choice child in her mother's estimation.

Verse 10. *Fair* means beautiful in general, not with reference to the complexion; *clear* means pure and free from all mixtures. For explanation of "terrible," see the comments on last part of verse 4.

Verse 11. Aside from the sentimental strain running through this whole composition there is nothing special in this verse. A man with the extensive possessions such as were held by Solomon, would frequently look over them by way of inspection.

Verse 12. When used figuratively, chariots indicate a condition of power and honor. *Ammi-nadib* is rendered "my willing people" in the margin, and Smith's Bible Dictionary agrees with it. In the exhilaration of his state of love, Solomon felt that he was a specially-favored man among a willing people.

Verse 13. *Shullamite* is defined in Strong's lexicon, "an epithet [pet name] of Solomon's queen." *Return* is from an original with a very wide and indefinite meaning. As it is used in this place it is an indirect call upon the woman of his choice to favor him with her presence again. The second clause is a meditative form of speech, as if he were talking to himself, but voicing the question he imagined others would ask him upon observing his great interest in this special woman. He answered the imaginary question by making a highly complimentary comparison. *Company* is from *MECHOWLAH*, which Strong defines "a dance." *Armies* is from *MACHANEH* and Strong's definition is, "an encampment (of travelers or troops); hence an army, whether literally (of soldiers) or figuratively (of dancers, angels, cattle, locusts, stars; or even the sacred courts)." Solomon meant his favorite wife was to him as glorious, attractive and awe-inspiring as a couple of dancing groups.

SONG OF SOLOMON 7

Verse 1. Solomon continued his descriptive praise for the wife of his choice. His minute itemizing of the various charms of her body proves the truth of Gen. 2:18. The attractiveness of the female form rounds out the kind of companion needed for the happiness and welfare of the man. By this combination both may live in the enjoyment of each other, and together may fulfill the will of their Creator. The

comparisons made for the various parts of her body are chiefly from the standpoint of things that are both beautiful and useful, not necessarily in view of material likeness.

Verse 2. Solomon believed he could do the attractiveness of his wife the greatest honor by comparing it to objects of merit in other parts of creation.

Verse 3. See the comments at ch. 4:5.

Verse 4. For comments on *tower* see those at ch. 4:4. The comparison to *fishpools* is rather peculiar. There is nothing in the case that calls for any translation but the simple word *pools*. It is from *BEREKAH*, and Strong says the word is derived from another that he defines, "a primitive root; to kneel; by implication to bless God." Robert Young defines it in this place by "blessing." So the thought of Solomon is the eyes of his wife are as gracious and pleasing as the clear pools near the gates of the great city of Heshbon. Towers were structures that stood out before others very prominently, and they were usually built attractively. By comparing his wife's nose to one of them, Solomon meant she did not have the deformity of a flat nose, as so many persons of the dark race had.

Verse 5. *Carmel* was a prominent mountain because of the many noteworthy deeds that were done there, and the important persons connected with its history. The hair of an Egyptian would not be purple as to color. The comparison is made to its rich gloss, and to the fact that purple was often used in connection with royalty. *Galleries* is from a Hebrew word that Strong defines, "a ringlet of hair." The last clause means the king was held or captivated by the beauty of her hair. No wonder Paul said that a woman's hair is a glory to her (1 Cor. 11:15), and strange that any woman would voluntarily sacrifice such a glorious ornament to her person given to her by the Creator.

Verse 6. *Fair* does not refer to the complexion but to the form of her body. She was beautiful in body and delightfully pleasant in spirit.

Verse 7. *Stature* literally refers to height. A palm tree is tall and straight and has a beautiful top. *Clusters* is defined in the lexicon, "a bunch of grapes or other fruit." The comparison was made in the last clause to attractiveness in general.

Verse 8. Having used the palm tree for his comparison, Solomon proposed to go up to it and enjoy its beauties and products.

Verse 9. *Roof* and *mouth* are from the same word, and Strong expresses it as the organ of "taste and kissing." Solomon meant the kisses of his wife were as sweet as the best wine. *Asleep* is from a Hebrew word defined "languid" or "sleepy," not necessarily in sleep. *Speak* is from DABAR, which Strong defines, "to move slowly, i.e. glide." Hence Solomon meant his wife's kisses would cause his own lips to respond even though he was almost asleep.

Verse 10. From here to the close of the book it will be the part of the wife. The idea in this verse is that love between her and her husband was mutual.

Verse 11. The wife wanted to have a general stroll with her husband. They would ramble through the field in the day, and when night came they would go into one of the villages to lodge.

Verse 12. The next morning she would propose that they arise early and start out again. This time they would wander into the vineyards, but this "tour of inspection" would be mainly as an opportunity for another motive. She promised to give him her tokens of love while in the cozy nooks of the vineyard.

Verse 13. Among the tokens mentioned above were the *mandrakes* which Moffatt renders "love apples." It is from *puwdax* and Strong defines it in part as it pertains to this place "the mandrake (as aphodisac [exciting sexual desire])." In connection with this, see the comments at Gen. 30: 14 in Volume 1 of this Commentary. These and *all manner of pleasant fruits* the wife said she had reserved for her beloved.

SONG OF SOLOMON 8

Verse 1. A good woman would not want to be intimate with her fleshly brother. The point in her desire was in the advantage of having her lover always near her, as it would be were he her brother and thus a member of the same household.

Verse 2. Continuing her wishful thinking along the line of family intimacies, she pictured bringing him into the house and treating him to some of her mother's prepared wine and other delectable juices.

Verse 3. This is identical with ch. 2: 6.

Verse 4. And this is the same as ch. 2: 7. I request the reader to consult those two verses in connection with this.

Verse 5. In the preceding verse the daughters of Jerusalem were again brought into this mental drama. Now they call out as if they see this person who had given them the charge just reported, and she is approaching from the wilderness, leaning on the arm of her lover. They did not receive a direct reply to their call, but they heard the voice of her beloved speaking and saying *I raised thee up under the apple tree*. We have seen that the apple was often referred to figuratively in connection with love. *Raised* is from *uwr*, which is defined, "to awake." Figuratively speaking, the lover awakened his darling with his responsive love tokens, and that symbolized the love apple plant. Her mother brought her forth into this world with just such a lot in store, that of a life of love. We will bear in mind this chapter started with the imagery of the family life, and it was repeated somewhat in this verse.

Verse 6. The wife next went to a more direct and literal use of speech. She urged her love upon her husband and wished to be as securely attached to him as a seal would be. The lexicon definition of *seal* is "a signature-ring." This wife had great cause to be jealous if the case should be regarded in the usual sense. Solomon had a great host of women in his group and this Egyptian queen certainly knew something about it. The description of jealousy that Solomon put into the mouth of his favorite wife pictured it as being the cruellest sentiment of the human mind. It was compared to the grave, and well it might be, for it has sent many a man to an untimely grave.

Verse 7. In the mental drama that we are studying the wife was speaking in this verse. However, Solomon was the author and he was inspired, which makes all of his descriptions and other declarations authentic. True love is more overwhelming than a flood, and more valuable than all of a man's material substance. If it were offered in exchange for one's love, it would be *contemned* which means to be disrespected.

Verse 8. This *little sister* had not reached adult age. The question looked forward to the day when she would be old enough to be sought in marriage.

Verse 9. The older sister (Solomon's wife) answered her own question. If the young sister *be a wall*, which means if she will maintain her purity until the age of marriage is attained, then they will encourage and assist her. The latter part of the verse is a figure of speech for the support promised for the young sister.

Verse 10. The wife had proved herself to be just such a *wall* in that she had maintained her virginity until she became the wife of Solomon.

Verse 11. The wife was aware that Solomon had planted great vineyards, but he had leased them to others and was not immediately in use of them.

Verse 12. She still had her vineyard and Solomon was offered it with all of its products. It might be regarded as a sort of loving dowry.

Verse 13. Solomon possessed many gardens and other spots of luxury. He had many friends who were associated with him and gladly listened to all that he said to them. The wife did not object to such friendship from the companions of her husband, but longed to share in the association, and to hear his loving voice.

Verse 14. Make *haste* is an expression of eagerness for the pleasure of her husband's company. See the comments at ch. 2: 17 on the thought of the roe. Many of the comparisons used by both Solomon and his wife were based on the desirable qualities of living creatures and inanimate objects, qualities they possessed aside from their literal natures. *Mountain of spices* is the oft-repeated figure drawn from the relation of perfumes of all kinds to the subject of love, and it was fitting to close the book with this figure, since the leading line of thought through the entire piece is love.

ISAIAH 1

General remarks: The Book of Isaiah is the first of the Major Prophets according to the compilation in the King James version of the Bible. Isaiah began to write near the close of the kingdom of Israel (the 10 tribes), and its national sun went down before he finished his vision. The kingdom of Judah (the 2 tribes) had also become very corrupt, and though it was to continue for over a century its final downfall was certain. The prophet was chiefly concerned in the matter of the kingdom of Judah as regards to the (then) near future.

With regard to the future in general,

he is often styled "the prince of prophets" and also the "Evangelical Prophet," because he said more about the kingdom of Christ than all the other prophets combined. With few exceptions he is cited in every book of the New Testament; in some of them very frequently. His vision included matter pertaining to the Patriarchal, Jewish and Christian Dispensations, and also reached into the eternal state.

There is but one important difference between a prophet and a historian. The one records a fact before it happens, the other records it afterward. If both are inspired of God they are equally authentic since God understands the future as well as the past (Isa. 46: 10). Because of this truth, a prophet does not use the same style of language as does a historian. Being inspired of God as he writes of the future, he often words it as if it were present or even in the past. With God everything is an absolute NOW as far as its certainty is concerned.

An inspired prophet acts as the instrument of God, not always or even often knowing personally "what it is all about." The work and vision of such a writer may well be illustrated by an adjustable telescope. God holds the instrument and adjusts it as to range, according to the nearness or distance of dates he wishes the prophet to see. The prophet is looking through the telescope, at the same time he is speaking or writing. He does not realize when God lengthens or shortens the range of the instrument but only records what he sees. Occasionally God wishes the prophet to write a few words concerning some fact beyond the main subject on which he is supposed to be writing and so will lengthen the telescope until the prophet can see into the time of the Christian Dispensation; or perhaps he may stretch it out still further at rare intervals so that the prophet can see into the Hereafter. Then after his brief "break" from the main subject, God will return the telescope to the regular range so that the prophet will resume his former subject. And we must remember that while the prophet believes in his God and considers that He is the one who is holding the telescope, yet he does not realize the changes and adjustments. This is why we have so much teaching in the Bible showing the prophets did not always understand the meaning of what they were writing. They often wished to know more