

SONG OF SOLOMON 2

UNDER THE BANNER OF LOVE

This chapter opens with the Bride setting forth – by beautiful comparisons – the character of herself and of her Beloved, in order to put before us the contrast between her humility and loveliness, and His majesty and beauty. The believer is like the “rose of Sharon” and the “lily of the valleys,” while Jesus is like the apple or citron tree among all other trees (verses 1 and 3). The rose and the lily illustrate the Christian character as possessing purity, beauty, and loveliness. But the Bride is also like the “lily among thorns,” for she contrasts very greatly with the general tone of character and feeling in the world. These words – “as the lily among thorns” (verse 2) – are from the mouth of Jesus, the Bridegroom. Between earthly loveliness and the loveliness of the saint, there is as much contrast as between a lily and the thorns that grow around it.

The Bride – the same one who was seen in the last chapter as being admitted to such delightful communion with the King at His table – is thus depicted here in verses 1 and 2 as meek and lowly, yet beautiful in the modesty of humility. But Jesus towers high in majesty and grandeur! The apple or citron tree is His emblem; and it illustrates His character as combining majesty with beauty, as providing shelter and protection to His people, and as being capable of satisfying the needs of the soul of His Bride (verse 3).

Such being the characteristics of Jesus and of the redeemed soul, the coming of such a soul into fellowship with Him must yield great pleasure indeed! Hence, when the Bride comes under the shadow of Christ, she has great delight and finds food for her hungering heart. But He leads her along to even greater displays of the riches of His grace and of holy joy (verse 4), for His pleasures which are found in His banqueting-house are even richer and more varied than those under the apple tree! His banner over her is Love! Just as a national banner rallies all the strength of the government for the defense and protection of even its weakest citizen; so also, our Savior’s love is our defense against all evils, and it secures for us all the aid that may be drawn from all the other attributes of God! The banner reveals the home-country of the soldier who carries it; and similarly, it is by possessing love that we are seen to be citizens of heaven. Just as the soldier glories in the flag of his nation, the Church glories in the consciousness of her Savior’s love.

In verses 5-7, we see a representation of the state of the Bride when she is thus overshadowed by Divine love in the banqueting-house, in the full enjoy-

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ *Christ and the Bride converse with one another – verses 1-3*
- ❖ *She remembers the pleasure she has in communion with Christ – verses 4-7*
- ❖ *Christ graciously calls here to “come away” with Himself – verses 8-15*
- ❖ *The Bride rejoices in her interest in her Beloved, and longs for His return – verses 16-17*

ment of these overflowing riches of heavenly grace, to the greatest degree of enjoyment possible. The state of a believer's soul, at such times of the greatest spiritual enjoyment, is that of being love-sick – that is, being filled with communications of Jesus' love that are almost beyond the heart's power to bear! These feelings which are had at such seasons are those of great contrition and humility. We see that the Bride's head was sinking; but she was consciously of being sweetly and powerfully sustained by the Lord Jesus, through His imputed righteousness and by His inward grace. "His left hand is under my head" (thus drawing her very near to Him), and "His right hand doth embrace me!" she exclaimed.



But alas! These overpowering manifestations of love cannot be expected to continue forever without interruption. For wise purposes, Jesus will sometimes withdraw Himself from the believer's soul; and so, in verses 8 and 9, we see the way being set forth in which He returns and manifests Himself after such a withdrawal. Having thus returned, however, we cannot enjoy Him without much to hinder the full manifestations of His excellence and glory! He is very near to us; but the vision of His glory is obscured, and the sound of His voice is deadened by the barriers behind which He stands – namely, the walls of our earthly tabernacle (verse 9). At most, all that we can now get is nothing more than very partial glimpses of the glory of Christ – such as may be had of a person showing himself through a lattice-work. Jesus is standing outside, in the invisible world – looking upon us kindly through the lattice, and trying to allure us away from our darkness and chains, into that bright and glorious world where He has gone to prepare a place for us. He says to us, in the tenderest language, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away!" (verse 10) Loving His Bride so strongly, He is desirous to have her with Himself in glory.

As motives for alluring us away from earth to heaven, Christ says that in the world where He wishes to draw us, "the winter is past!" (verses 11-13) In that place, the curse is forever done away with! All is fresh and uninterrupted springtime. "The rain is over and gone!" Afflictions and sorrows and all former things are passed away. "The flowers appear on the earth," for everything there is budding and bursting with beauty! "The time of the singing of birds is come"; for all is vocal with enchanting melody there, and even the inanimate creation joins in the chorus. Hence, Jesus tells us to "come away" from the sin and sorrows of earth, and to come away with Him to the skies!

Since these delightful visits of her Beloved must be interrupted as long as we remain on this earth, the Bride prays (verse 17) that He would repeat them as often as possible, until the day of eternal blessedness dawns, and the shadows which now close around us flee away forever!

Lord Jesus, we praise You as "the apple tree among the trees of the wood" – the Tree of Life that is open and freely accessible to every redeemed person! Amen.