

A Meditation on Canticles

J. G. Bellett.

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The character of the soul's communion delineated in this little book is very elevated. It is something that we may say with sorrow we little reach. There is no question of sin at all here; it is no enquiry either into the *fact* or the *nature* or the *ground* of our acceptance with God. Such questions and enquiries are here settled beforehand. The communion here is upon the settlement of them all. It is joy in God, delight in Christ, occupation with Himself, that we get here. It is not the finding of Him out, but the enjoying of Him as found to be infinitely suited to the soul's blessing; nor is it the confession of sins. The communion is a sinner's communion most surely, but it is of a consciously pardoned, accepted, and loved sinner; and when any sorrow or repentance is felt or owned here, it is not for any blot or open transgression, but for some spiritual backsliding, some momentary coldness, some infirmity in maintaining or cultivating the soul's due fervour towards Christ. This last point I feel to be especially significant, and such as gets its illustration in this little portion of the book. There is in the believer here the detecting of something wrong; but what is the character of the wrong? Nothing gross or even open in conduct, nothing established as a habit, nothing that a soul that had not been already in simple and earnest fellowship with Jesus would have been apprehensive of; that is, a temporary slothfulness of heart. The very repentance and confession is of such a nature as intimates the fine tone of the soul that could feel and make it; the contact is so tender that the very perception of it speaks the delicacy of the organ which met it and resented it. But what an element is this! Ah, how coarse are our sensibilities compared with all this! Our poor souls are rarely here. They are engaged oftentimes in doing first works again, in grieving over the advantage which our lusts have taken of us, the surprisals which the heat of wrong tempers have wrought, and such like things that keep us below this peace and spiritual joy in Christ. This sickness of love, this keeping of the garden of spices, here so blessedly presented, surely it is little of this we know. Is God thus our exceeding joy? Is it thus in the chambers of the King in thoughts of glory we walk? Is our spikenard thus greeting our Lord, and our souls thus able to call Him nothing less than our Beloved? It were well indeed if such affections as these were filling and commanding our hearts. Thus should we have weapons of sure victory wherewith to meet our enemies, and to beat down the intrusive desires and thoughts that defile us so often. They could not with any power come against a soul thus occupied. This joy of the Lord would indeed be our strength; but, indeed, we know it but poorly. It is not the love of pity in the Saviour which the sinner here enjoys, but the love of complacency which there is in Christ towards His elect. The soul here has tasted the pity and salvation of the Son of God, and is now occupying itself with thoughts of His delights in His saints. Oh, what communion is this! what a dwelling-place for faith opens here! what a banqueting-house for the soul! How far distant from fear and clouds of conscience such regions lie; the land of the turtle indeed, the garden of all pleasant fruits. But where is the precious faith to enter it and walk there? We need to cry for largeness of heart in the bowels of Christ Jesus. J. G. B.