

be the sweet strains of happy voices. The Evil One puts thorns into our roses—mud into our silver vases—sadness into our laughter—bitterness into the heart—death in the poor immortal soul!

The only thing that can restore true harmony to man is his wedlock with the Christ of glory. In the morning of the Incarnation, the lofty angelic announcement was:—"Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people: for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord" (Luke ii. 10, 11). Since that great Bethlehem birth, the sun has shone with a brighter light—the stars have twinkled with a milder and sweeter brilliancy—the flowers have flamed with a choicer hue and emitted a richer perfume—the birds have sung with a clearer note—the wild beasts of the forest have given forth a gentler chorus—the lamb and the lion have grown more friendly—dirges have had less lamentation—funerals less melancholy—the grave less hopeless—the future world less doleful and less dreaded! A new joy has been in the human soul and a new song on the lips! All praise to the sovereign grace of God! All glory to the blessed Son of God! "The fruit of the spirit is joy!"

But the unbelieving world knows but little of this joy. It only comes into the heart when sin walks out of the heart. The soul in maidenhood can have no experience of such Heaven-born delight. There must be a courtship and a nuptial union with the King of glory. The penitent sinner, as a bride in the beautiful needlework of meekness, contrition and faith, must, with gladness and rejoicing, be brought into the King's palace (Ps. xlv. 14, 15). This is the glorious thought which, in highest metaphorical language, is worked out in the Song of Solomon. Everywhere throughout this poetic allegory, setting forth the supernal grandeur of free grace, we hear the psaltery and harp, the timbrel, the loud cymbals and high-sounding cymbals of nuptial joy!

(2) Peace. We cannot understand thoroughly the Christological purport of Canticles until we know the figurative sense in which the names of the two leading characters are used. The first of these is "Solomon." The word is from "salom," the Hebrew for "tranquil," "pacific," "giving peace." True to this etymology, we find the statement of the Lord regarding Solo-