

No.  
37.

"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS  
WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE  
RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

ECCLESIASTES  
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AND  
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SONG OF SOLOMON.  
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*An Address (revised) at*

Walham Green.

29th April, 1912.

by

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ECCLESIASTES AND SONG OF SOLOMON.  
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Scripture read, Eph. 1.

Our subject this evening, dear friends, is the comparison of two books of Scripture, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon. We cannot read through the two books, but I take it that there is a general knowledge in the minds of most of us as to these two books. We remember that the book of Ecclesiastes keeps on with the word "vanity", "vexation of spirit" "under the sun" but the book of the Song of Solomon, on the other hand keeps on with expressions about "love" and "delight" between the Bridegroom and the bride, between the Lord and His people. It is on that account that I have desired that Ephesians 1 should be read to us before we enter the subject, because Ephesians 1 seems to just give us a view of the heavenly heights of the blessedness of God's dear people, and seems to prepare us for the study of the Song of Solomon. I believe God means us to take these two books together. You notice how they come together in our Bible, and I do not think that is merely an accident. Ecclesiastes comes before the Song of Solomon, and we cannot understand the advance of the Song of Solomon till we see

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Ecclesiastes first. Not only are these two books together, but they are counted together among the Jews, they are among those called megillahs, or rolls. The Jews have five such rolls. Furthermore, these two books go together, for God used the same human writer! In Ecclesiastes we have brought before us first of all the words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. In the Song of Solomon, the Song of Songs which is Solomon's, the same human writer. God inspired both, but they were through the same servant of God. Now, with that little preface, we will come and look into the two books, Ecclesiastes first.

Chapter 1. 2. "Vanity of vanities" saith the preacher. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity". There is the key to the book. VANITY, VANITIES, VANITY, VANITIES, VANITY. There are not many verses in the Bible which have one word so many times. The next verse asks a question. "What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun"? There is the expression I have already mentioned. "Under the sun". The next verse goes on, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth for ever". We thus see the standpoint of this book:- it is "EARTH" and "UNDER THE SUN". Solomon the king at Jerusalem is to give us his experience of life, his experience of what it is to be under the sun. "The sun also ariseth, the sun goeth down, and

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hasteth to his place, where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north, it whirleth about us continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full, unto the place from whence the rivers come thither they return again". There we have the round and round and round of everything. Nature is brought before us and that is made a background for God's servant to show us how all earthly things are merely going round, and that they are therefore vain. We ourselves speak about arguing in a circle, meaning failure to reach a good end. If we go on in a circle we never get to an end of anything we go round and round and round and all is never finished. Thus everything of earth is going round and round and never finished. A man never arrives at the end or satisfaction, he never attains to the goal, he has never obtained permanently anything that he apparently reaches, the eye, the ear, these gifts are useful, but they are never satisfied. As the book adds in verse 8 "The eye is not satisfied with seeing nor the ear filled with hearing, the thing that hath been, it is that which shall be. And that which is done, is that which shall be done, and there is no new thing under the sun". Surely we have the key here to the whole book, nothing on earth satisfies. Now Solomon had wonderful opportunities for finding out if earth could satisfy him. He had all the money he wanted, no man was richer, he had

all the servants he wanted, he had everything that heart could wish, and yet his heart was never filled with everything that heart could wish, nor will any man's heart be. The earth is a miserable place without God and earthly things will never give peace without God, that is the key to Ecclesiastes. So verse 10 continues, "Is there anything whereof it may be said, See this is new it hath been already of oldtime, which was before us". I believe such words are more strikingly true than people think, many of the inventions of to-day, of which people boast, are not as marvellously new as they imagine. The ancients did wonderful things, some things of which we have lost all account, for I would go back beyond ordinary history, to the times before the flood, how many wonderful things were done then! We have no idea of the greatness of man's knowledge and power before the flood. We can see something of man's power even after the flood in some of the wonders that remain, the wonders of architecture, like the pyramids; but before the flood, how great was man's power! And so in a fuller sense than many realise the things of earth repeat themselves. "There is no remembrance of former things (says verse 11) neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after". That is the preface, and then the book starts again at verse 12. It starts with the same words as verse 1. "I, the Preacher". The word Preacher does not exactly mean Preacher, but rather signifies the one who called the people together to teach them wisdom, the one who made a gathering, who caused an assembly of people with

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the object of preaching to them, and surely this book is an excellent book to read to an assembly of people. It may make them miserable at first. I remember years ago when we went carefully through the book of Ecclesiastes, it was a very saddening book. If you go through it verse by verse, you will realise what I mean. But to return, God evidently meant it to be read in a GATHERING of people. The very name of the book is the "gathering", we can see this in the English title, "Ecclesia - ates" - Ecclesia is the Greek word for gathering, the church. Next Solomon gives his history starting at verse 13. "I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven, this sore travail hath God given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit. That which is crooked cannot be made straight and that which is wanting cannot be numbered". I pity the man who tries to improve the world without the Lord. To try and put the crooked things straight must be a miserable disheartening attempt. There are some who have high "ideals", as men would call them, and they try to improve people, and try to put earth straight. If they have any thought at all, they become disappointed, if not disgusted, with the result of their efforts. That which is crooked cannot be put straight. Everything seems upside-down and so it goes on. Solomon spake to himself; he

said "I am come to great estate and have gotten more wisdom, and I have got great experience of knowledge and wisdom, and so I will find out everything. But he adds, in verse 18, "In much knowledge is much grief and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow". Now you must understand a verse like that, in the light of the whole book. In the "wisdom that is from above" there is not "much grief". The knowledge of Christ does not mean an increase of sorrow, the true knowledge means the increase of joy, for if we really know Him we have the key to all the problems. If we know Him and live beyond the sun, ABOVE the sun "In heavenly places in Christ Jesus" then we are beyond the vanity and vexation of spirit", but wisdom and knowledge simply viewed in the bare abstract, earthly wisdom and knowledge, are miserable things. The person who is very ignorant can be very merry, but if anyone really thinks (I am speaking now of an unsaved man) - if he really thinks, he must become very disappointed with the world and with everything. Thinking must make anyone very troubled. I should not like to face the problems<sup>s</sup> of the world without the Lord and without the Lord's word, and I know there are others here who will bear me out, in that the world is enough to drive one to madness if it does not lead one to Christ, because the world is so ruined and disordered. You see evil often propering, you see those who have done less evil coming to greater trouble, you see the sin of one generation affecting

the next generation, the world seems upside down. The child of God only looks all the more for the Coming again of the Lord Jesus, but the man of the world who has any knowledge feels that he increases sorrow by knowing more of things and their dismal course. Moreover, not only is it in connection with the knowledge of things of earth that there is sorrow, but with the knowledge of nature. The man who is learning a little science views himself as a scientist, and regards himself as acquainted with all the laws of nature, the man who has learned a little more begins to feel how little he does know and he seems to come always to a fullstop. Now nothing is more painful to man than to come to a fullstop, and the more a man knows the more he comes to a fullstop, he understands something about heaven, I mean the starry heavens, but he comes to a fullstop, and the very fact that he knows something makes him wish to know something more. He knows sufficient about them to know how little he does know, he considers life, and he comes to a fullstop again. Another one has as his delight the study of history, he tries to find out things that have happened in the past, he always comes to a fullstop, the books he wants are lost, and the books that he has were written by persons who had bias and pride, and he cannot reach the kernal of the true history. You cannot get down to the true history except via what God has written. Everyf man has a bias of his own, and thus every student in after years

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comes to a fullstop. And it is a miserable thing to a man of the world to be uncertain, and not to know, and if a man is intelligent enough to be troubled his increase of knowledge will increase his sorrow.

We pass on to chapter 2, "I said in my heart Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth therefore enjoy pleasure, and behold this also is vanity." Pleasure is attractive to some, they do not like wisdom but they want merriment, but what does earthly merriment? Solomon asks the question. "I said of laughter, it is mad, and of mirth, what doeth it?" "It only makes a man want more, we never find a man satisfied with pleasure. The enjoyment of pleasure gives an appetite for more pleasure, there is an intoxication with pleasure, as much as with wine and this is one of the more serious signs of these days in which we live. Yes, beloved friends, earthly pleasures never meet the need. We read on, and we find that Solomon made great works (verse 4) builded houses, made gardens and orchards, made pools of water, arranged everything in connection with a kingly palace. That meant expense and great care, but after he had done it all, what then? He was great and increased more than all that were before him, but he looked on all the works and verse 11 tells us, all was vanity and vexation of spirit. Just as earthly wisdom does not satisfy, just as earthly pleasure never fills the heart, so earthly works never satisfy. If a man has all the money for which he can wish he is not satisfied. If a man has all the positions which his heart desires he is not satisfied.

We often think if we had things we have not got we should be satisfied, but if we had them we should be more dissatisfied with them than we were without them, because the possession of more enlarges the desire and the capacity to realise that one wants more. Gratify your desire, your desire will grow larger. If we have a dead thing, or a thing that has no life at all, and we fill it, it is filled, but pleasure, wisdom and great possessions are not filling up a dead thing, they are like food to a man who has life, and if you feed his appetites the appetites become larger and he wants more. The more you give him the more he desires, hence he is never satisfied. His longing advances beyond his income and he is poorer.

Then in verse 12 Solomon turned himself again. He had tried wisdom, he had tried pleasure, he had tried riches, and he turned himself to behold wisdom and madness and folly, and he says "What can the man do which cometh after the king? What can anyone else do who comes after me on the same pathway" for that is one of the thoughts here, and he adds "That which has been already done. The man who follows me will come to the same dead stop". I am so thankful that God gives us a record of the way Solomon went through all these things. People might remark if they heard that an insignificant man went through them, "Well, he did not have all he could wish". But here is the wisest man, here is the richest man, yet he finds these things do not satisfy. Then if HE finds such

WE shall find the same. "What can the man do that cometh after the king"? Will he find more satisfaction than the king did? Not one whit. He will only tread the same path again, - so earthly satisfaction is only like stepping on a treadmill. There is no result, there is no consequence, but God's servant adds, giving the inspired record of it.

"I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness". "The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walketh in darkness and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all. Then said I in mine heart, as it happeneth to a fool, so it happeneth even to me, and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart that this also is vanity". Beloved friends, have you ever thought what the world would be to us if we had not a Bible? If we had not a revelation from God? If we did not know what was after this life? I know there are plenty who set on one side what is after this life, and yet enjoy themselves, but I think you will agree with me that such have never really thought. Satan's great aim at the present day is to make people mad with pleasure, or mad with pride or with something else so that they may not think. Let a man think without God, and he will become miserable. The heathen had a "laughing philosopher", but he could not have been a "philosopher" if he laughed, he could not have been a WISE man. I mean that a man without God could have no

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real joy if he thinks. Ignorance can laugh, ignorance can be "happy" but if a man thinks without God, he will be utterly miserable, the world is so unsatisfying. God has overruled the affairs of the world to make all the ruin of the world a pointer towards Christ. The world's disorder drives a poor heart-broken sinner to Christ, God's Holy Spirit uses the very confusion to bring a sinner to Christ, for he can find no rest elsewhere. It needs a "raven" to fly about in a disordered world, the dove cannot find rest there.

We come along further and we find that Solomon adds "There is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever, seeing that which now is, in the days to come shall all be forgotten, and how dieth the wise man? As the fool". This is from the standpoint of "under the sun". You leave the Bible out for a moment, (only for a moment, thank God), put it on one side for a moment, and just try to realise how you would feel about what is after this life. Some of us thank God that we find it hard to conceive how we should feel. We have become so used to realising the Words of God that a doubt of them never enters our mind, and we do not want it to enter, but I think we can realise that we should find it thoroughly wretched and miserable if we did not know what was after death. Death is solemn to us as it is, but death without Christ, death without knowing what will be afterwards, - death as a leap in the dark, oh! how

tremendous and solemn it is! And Solomon says from the standpoint of "under the sun", it is only a "leap in the dark". From the standpoint of "under the sun" there is no knowledge of what is afterwards. The wise man dieth and the foolish man dies, and they both die alike, and one event happens to them. Why! the very work of a man may bring him to his grave sooner! His very heart's strain of trying to think out the problems will bring him to his grave and so Solomon (verse 18) HATED all the labour he had taken. He hated it because he felt life was so short and unsatisfying. Yet men there are who spend their time and their strength for the things of earth. Think dear friends of what it means. Here is a man who will spend almost all his life with a view to the possibility of just a few years rest at the end of it. He will spend the best part of his life working, without giving himself any time to think of the things of God, and just at the end of his life have a few months or years of seeking peace and rest "settling down" in the world. The miserable folly of it! To spend life for a few years! To spend life for a few weeks, as it were. Only a few DAYS as we might almost put it, only a few HOURS, only a few MOMENTS, only a few SECONDS compared with ETERNITY! And yet there are those who spend the whole of their life for a bare possibility of a few moments at the end - a brief experience of settling down in the world. Wisely did Solomon say, from the standpoint of "under the sun", that he hated all his

labour. And verse 20 goes on "Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour" for a man goes and does his work thoroughly and then he leaves it to some one else who may be very foolish, and "What hath man of all his labour?" "All his days are sorrow, and his travail grief. His heart taketh not rest in the night". How true this is of the man who is settling his affections on getting the riches of this world. He cannot even take rest in the night. He cuts short his sleep, and gives up anything, to attain earthly advantages. Beloved friends, when we think of how men will put aside earthly things that are regarded as comfortable, put them aside that they may get on in the world, surely we ought to put aside earthly advantages that are thought to be "comfortable", that we may get on with regard to THAT world.

So we reach the summing up in 2. 24. "There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and make his soul enjoy good in his labour". You do not think that is the position of children of God! It is "UNDER THE SUN". Solomon is giving the inspired record of the feelings he went through. There is not a single child of God here present who would say that the only thing that is good for any one would be to eat and drink and enjoy himself. No one would dare to say so; yet such words are here in Scripture, but they are in a certain context.

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Here is an inspired record of Solomon's feelings. We have the record of what Satan said in Scripture - that does not make Satan's words good. We read the record of what Solomon thought when he was wandering from God, - that does not make Solomon's thought good. He records them afterwards when he came back to God; he records them to warn us. As it were, the Book of Ecclesiastes is written out in front of us when we leave the Lord's way to go towards the meadows of settling down in the world. There is the notice board in front of us if we are going to leave the Divine path, with the Book of Ecclesiastes, telling us that "Byepath Meadows" are miserable places.

We pass along to the third chapter. "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven", and then it finishes up by speaking of all this in verse 12. "I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice and to do good in his life, and also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God". And here we have that gift of God which is enjoying food in the life, but in the later Scriptures, from the standpoint above the sun. "The gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord". In Ecclesiastes 3. 16 we have a further failure of earth noted. Solomon was a king and as such was a judge, all Eastern kings were judges, and he "saw the place of judgment that wickedness was there, and the place of

righteousness that iniquity was there". He saw that the world was so upside down that even the judges were unjust, and he felt he was miserable to try and put the world all right for everything was wrong. There are some people who are not troubled by this, but if you try and solve the problems without God, and are at all conscientious, the lack of judgment in the world, the lack of righteousness in the world, as to government, will be saddening and appalling. Things are not fair. To us as children of God there is the one solution, - GOD IS WORKING, and overruling. Over all God is working out His purposes. God teaches us by all difficulties that there is an afterwards to put things right. But if there be no afterward, and no working out of Divine purposes, government is a tangle and always will be. Those who do outwardly the best, and are apparently inwardly the best from an earthly standpoint, do not get the reward for it, and one man who is worse than others is not punished, - it is not fair. The child of God has to check himself lest he runs into the spirit of grumbling at everything, the world is in such confusion; I do not see how we should avoid being grumblers at much, if we had not Christ. The world is so ruined, and where there ought to be order there is simply disorder. Now I think we have a key to Ecclesiastes. Just glance through one or two verses and you will see the importance of this key. Take for example 3. 19. That is from the standpoint of

earth. From the standpoint of God, the man is above a beast. Come along then to the fourth chapter, and you will find there that Solomon says the dead are praised more than the living that are alive. That is from the standpoint of "UNDER THE SUN". The thought is that life is more miserable than nothing at all, if a man has not Christ, when he begins to think. It is very easy to be merry without Christ, but what is merriness? Is it not an intoxication, to forget the cares of life? That is what the merriness of to-day is. "All the pleasure resorts that we see around us, the picture palaces, and the amusements of to-day, are just an indication that men do not want to think of what is after this life, that men do not want to be disturbed with thoughts of God, that they do not want to be realise facts. There seems to be an unwillingness to look at what is coming afterwards. A man will not sit down to think, he rushes about in the cares of daily business and does not have time to think, and so he is merry. But if he only had time to think he would be miserable.

We come along to the fifth chapter and find there (verse 13) "There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, - riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt, but those riches perish by evil travail". So we see here that riches are not an advantage; how can they be "under the sun"? A man who has more riches has more opportunity for doing wrong, without Christ. Then in chapter 6 "There is an evil

which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men, a man to whom God hath given riches, wealth and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat". The simplest illustration of that of course is a wealthy man who is suffering physically. What a miserable incompleteness! He has enough money to buy all the food he wants, but his physical condition is such that he cannot enjoy a crust of bread, whereas the one who has no money at all and a healthy appetite can enjoy a good meal.

We come along to the seventh chapter, and we find there likewise "Sorrow is better than laughter, for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better". Now this passage has, I suppose, an application above the sun as well as under the sun. Do not misunderstand me. Where it says "Sorrow is better than laughter" it means that if you look at the things of earth they are so miserable that the only fitting thing for a man on earth to do is to cry. But why does he cry? Because things are so upside down. But if one is brought above the sun he has plenty of joy, there is no sorrow in Christ. "The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow thereto". When He looks down below the sun, and sees the ruin of man, and the sin of man, ah! it is a good thing to feel for men. Christ beheld the city, and wept over it, Paul the apostle spoke "weeping of those who were the enemies of the cross of Christ, We need

to have more heart weeping.

Just one more passage from Ecclesiastes 9. 4, "For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die, but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward for the memory of them is forgotten, also their love and their hatred and their envy is now perished, neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun. You see the key to it at the end, - "UNDER THE SUN". We know very well that after death there are consequences, but the man under the sun cannot see them, hence the words at the end of Ecclesiastes, "Rejoice O young man in thy youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou that for all these God shall bring thee unto judgment". And then the closing word of Ecclesiastes "For God shall bring every work into judgment and every secret thing whether it be good or whether it be bad".

Then we pass on to the Song of Solomon. Ecclesiastes is a dirge, the Song of Solomon is a song, the "Song of Songs" which like the "King of Kings" means the Song beyond others. It is wonderfully joyful, this Song of Songs. You do not find the crying in the Song of Songs, it is ABOVE THE SUN. The sun is only mentioned once here (1. 6) "Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me", and

there you find the feeling of earthly suffering under the sun, but when the Lord looks at the Bride he does not say "You are black" with the sun; He says "Thou art all fair, there is no spot in thee". The standpoint of the Song of Solomon is above the sun. Whereas Ecclesiastes brings before us the day of DEATH several times (three times I believe) you do not have that day in ~~the~~ Song of Solomon. 'Tis the day breaking and the shadows fleeing away in the Song of Solomon, not the day of the death, but the Day of the Coming of the Lord, and if Ecclesiastes finishes up with the day of death, the Song of Solomon finishes up "Make haste my beloved and be thou like to a roe or like to a young hart upon the mountain of spices". Ecclesiastes finishes up with DEATH for let me remind you that the Book in one sense finishes at 12. 7. Verses 8 to 14 of chapter 12 is of course an appendix referring to the Book, explaining why it was written. The climax of Ecclesiastes is "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return to the God that gave it", and that involves the ungodly spirit returning to God's prison. The thought of man by nature is brought before us. In fact the special thought in Ecclesiastes is not God's people at all, till we reach the appendix.

But the Song of Solomon has the bright hope of the Coming again of our beloved Lord. If I were to ask you

what the key note of Ecclesiastes is I suppose you would reply "VANITY", but surely the key word of Solomon, if there is any key word that stands out beyond others, is "BELOVED" or "LOVE". The Holy Spirit causes it to be repeated. There is LOVE throughout this book, the love of the Lord to His people, and the love of His people to their Lord. More than once in a single verse we get the thought of this wonderful affection. The very second verse of the Book has love in it, and the third verse has love, and the fourth verse has love. Throughout it is the thought of affection. In Ecclesiastes "love" is spoken of in a different way. "Their love and their hatred is perished" says Ecclesiastes 9. 6. Not so the Song of Solomon; there is undying love there between the Lord and His people. You will find in Ecclesiastes 9. 9, the earthly bride and bridegroom, but in the Song of Solomon you have the heavenly Bridgroom and Bride. There is thus a wonderful contrast, again and again brought before us. There are failures recorded in the Song of Solomon. Beloved friends, if we enjoy the life of fellowship with God we still feel we have failed. But oh! what a blessed communion with Him is possible for those who desire to live in the experience of the Song of Solomon. It is quite true that you have the night in the Song of Solomon. It is quite true that the bride settled down, and she feels miserable in this condition, but then she does not obtain any rest until

she comes back to her Lord, and she is quite satisfied with Him. I cannot imagine a bride, when she comes to the Bridegroom, saying "All is vanity and vexation of spirit". Such an expression would grate in your ears if it came in the middle of the Song of Solomon; you do not expect vexation of spirit there; you expect wonderful rejoicing in Him. You will notice how that in Ecclesiastes we have "I, I, I" with regard to the failure of man, but in the Song of Solomon there is much of the "THOU" and the "HIS". The Lord is taken up with His people, and the bride is not taken up with herself, but taken up with her Lord. While there is a big "I", all is VANITY AND VEXATION OF SPIRIT, when there is a vast "HE" all is REST AND JOY OF SPIRIT. In Ecclesiastes you have the piling up of one thing upon another, to show how earthly things do not satisfy. The Song of Solomon has the piling up of one thing on another, just the same, to show how heavenly things do satisfy, because of HIMSELF. If in Ecclesiastes you reach references again and again to the failure of earth, describing it from different standpoints till you almost become weary in reading of ruin, in Song of Solomon you are reminded of HIS eyes, HIS cheeks, HIS nose, HIS legs, HIS mouth, HIS everything. Word is added to word, and the Lord speaks in like manner of His people. You do not find the Lord speaking to Solomon in Ecclesiastes,

you do not get what the Lord says, but you are ever realising this in the Song of Solomon. There is a dialogue, there is a communion between the Lord and His people. You do not have a parallel in Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes gives the natural standpoint, Song of Solomon the heavenly standpoint.

And now dear friends there comes the solemn thought as we approach the end of our subject. In which book do we live? By nature we were all in Ecclesiastes, by nature we were all those who were under the sun. We were born there. "Except a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God". FROM ABOVE THE SUN. The new life is from above. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh", that is Ecclesiastes. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit", that is Song of Solomon. Unless you and I have been brought by grace unto the Lord we are still in Ecclesiastes we are still there, but if we have been brought unto the Lord, and are redeemed by the blood, we are in the Song of Solomon, - at least, are we? It is interesting to know this book, and to know how to explain it, but I want us to go a step further, to experience it, "Draw me, we will run after Thee" says the bride "Thy love is better than wine". "His banner over me was love" and so forth. Is that our experience? I am sorry for the child of God who quickly says "Yes" for the one who enjoys it most will say so least glibly. I am not sorry for the child of God who enjoys something of this, but I am sorry for the one

who will too readily say "Oh yes, I have entered into it". The more we know of the Lord, the more we feel how little we know of His fulness, as Exodus 23 and Phil. 3 reminds us in the experience of Moses and Paul. The more we enjoy the fellowship of the Lord the more we feel that we want to enjoy Him more. There is such a vast difference between the two forms of longing for "more". The man of the world longs for more, and earth does not satisfy him, the child of God longs for more because Christ does satisfy him. There is a vast difference between these two things. The believer longs to enjoy what he has, the unbeliever longs to have what he has not. The child of God longs for "more" in his heart's experience because he is satisfied, and God enlarges the capacity to enjoy Christ more and more as the days go by. Oh that it might be our experience to live more in the Song of Solomon! To go by grace beyond the thought of vanity, and enjoy the communion with God. You have the gardens of earth in Ecclesiastes, you have the Lord's people as His garden in the Song of Solomon. You have the earthly trees and food in Ecclesiastes, you have the spiritual food in the Song of Solomon. And everything is by the precious blood as the parallel in Eph. 1. 7 indicates.

Beloved friends, do we love the spiritual more than the earthly? Do we delight in these heavenly counterparts? It would doubtless be profitable to take hold of many more words that come both in Ecclesiastes and Song of

Solomon, and see just how they come. We should find such different contexts, such different surroundings, and one might be enabled to realise the wondrous change that grace has wrought. If the Holy Spirit's leading is sought in our prayerful meditation, we shall pray more fervently to possess our possessions.

May the Lord prosper such further study in our daily life! - the EXPERIENCE study and let all be to His Own glory.

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