

Introduction to the Song of Solomon

Dub McClish

Introduction

The Song of Solomon¹ is a book of never-ending curiosity, comment, and controversy. McClintock and Strong observed: "No book of the Old Testament has been the subject of more varied criticism, or been more frequently selected for separate translation than this little poem."² *Barnes' Notes* comments: "It may be said to be the enigma of the Old Testament, as the Apocalypse is of the New."³ *Pulpit Commentary* states: "There is no book of Scripture on which more commentaries have been written and more diversities of opinion expressed than this short poem of eight chapters."⁴ Matthew Henry began his introduction to The Song of Solomon with the following interesting comparison:

It must be confessed, on the one hand, that if he who barely reads this book be asked, as the eunuch was, 'Understandest thou what thou readest?' he will have more reason than he had to say, 'How can I, except some man shall guide me?'⁵

Because it is so enigmatic, it is often treated like The Revelation: On the one hand, many avoid reading it at all, and on the other, many have invented fanciful, mystical, and even radical theological concepts concerning it.

The Title of the Book

This book is known by a variety of titles. The Hebrew Old Testament names it "The Song of Songs," a superlative expression connoting the best of songs. This comes from the first phrase of the opening verse. The Vulgate carries the title, *Canticum Canticorum*, which is simply the Latin translation of "The Song of Songs." It is from this Vulgate title that the English word, "Canticles," often used by the commentators and expositors to refer to this book, derives. The English Bible, at least as far back as the KJV, has carried the title, "The Song of Solomon." This is a contraction of the entire first verse, indicating: (1) That Solomon is the author and (2) that among all his songs (1,005, 1 Kings 4:32), this is his best, his finest: This is not "A Song of Solomon," among all of his hundreds of songs, but "**The** Song of Solomon" above all his others. It is also the only song of Solomon which has survived, although this is not the significance of its title.

The Author, Date, and Characters of the Book

With but few exceptions, Solomon was universally considered to be the human writer of this book until the schools of rationalism and criticism (i.e., modernism and infidelity) arose in Germany in the nineteenth century.

By the Hebrew title it is ascribed to Solomon; and so in all the versions, and by the majority of Jewish and Christian writers, ancient and modern. In fact, if we except a few of the Talmudical writers...who assigned it to the age of Hezekiah, there is scarcely a dissentient voice down to the close of the last century [18th cent., DM].⁶

The case for Solomonic authorship consists of such things as the following:

1. The book claims to be by Solomon.
2. The book has been accepted from antiquity as authored by Solomon.
3. The book reflects a period in Israel before the kingdom was divided (it speaks of places in various parts of the country as if they were part of one kingdom: Lebanon, Carmel, Jerusalem, Sharon, Terzah, Hermon, Engedi, et al.).
4. Solomon was renowned not only for his great wisdom, but for his knowledge of botanical and animal species (1 Kin. 4:33). The author of The Song of Solomon exhibited a thorough acquaintance with such, mentioning fifteen species of animals and twenty-one varieties of plants.⁷
5. Solomon bought horses and chariots from Egypt (1 Kin. 10:28–29). Compare this fact with the reference in The Song of Solomon to “a steed in Pharaoh’s chariots” (1:9).
6. The book was obviously written in a time of great peace and prosperity, which occurred rarely in Israel’s history apart from the reign of Solomon.
7. “There is a considerable resemblance between the language of Solomon’s Song and that of the Book of Proverbs—especially the first nine chapters and those from chapter 22 to 24.... This is no proof that Solomon himself wrote Canticles, but it is evidence that the two books approach one another in date.”⁸
8. No prevailing reasons have been produced to deny Solomonic authorship, as I will demonstrate in the material that follows.

In saying that “no prevailing reasons have been produced” one should not infer that no attempts have been made to discredit Solomon’s authorship. The modernist critics (whose principal aim appears to be the overturning of everything traditionally accepted about the Bible) generally deny Solomon as the author on the allegation that it was written at a time much later than his. They have offered the following points, all of them revolving around linguistic analysis, to support a late date:

1. The name of David (which appears only once, 4:4) is spelled in a peculiar way in the Hebrew, not found elsewhere in the Old Testament text until the time of Hosea and Amos some two centuries after Solomon’s reign. However, the spelling common to a time later than Solomon’s “...in this solitary instance is easily accounted for by a supposed error in transcription.”⁹
2. One critic alleges that the title could be rendered, “The Song of Songs *which has reference to* Solomon,” instead of “The Song of Songs *which is* Solomon’s.” This is self-answering, admitting that it may be rendered as belonging to Solomon, so it proves nothing at all.

3. Others allege that, because in the book Solomon is often referred to in the third person, it is unlikely that he wrote it. On this basis, however, many of the Lord's own statements about Himself would have to refer to another.
4. The two or three Chaldaisms (i.e., words borrowed from the Chaldee language) supposedly imply a time after the Exile. Even Driver, who argues for a late date on various grounds, places no stock in this quibble: "The foreign words in the poem, chiefly names of choice plants or articles of commerce, are such as might have reached Israel through Solomon's connexions with the East."¹⁰
5. Some argue that the Aramaic terms in the book indicate that it either is a work written after the Exile (perhaps 400–300 B.C.), or, if it is a work done in Solomon's time, it was written by someone in Northern Israel, which supposedly spoke a different dialect from residents of Southern Israel, which would include Solomon.¹¹ *Pulpit Commentary* counters:

In compositions of a highly poetical and lyrical character such forms are found throughout the Old Testament, as in the Song of Deborah (Jud. 5:7), in Job, and in Amos. They were more frequently used, no doubt, in the northern parts of Palestine than in the southern and would be an evidence of the provincial cast of the book rather than its late origin.¹²

McClintock and Strong argue that Solomon likely had a retreat in Lebanon and that if he wrote in that setting, it would have been natural for him to incorporate some of the terminology of the locale, especially in a pastoral poem.¹³ Young simply said, "The presence of Aramaic words is, of course, no indication of date."¹⁴

The modernistic critics who are determined to redate, restructure, and reassign authorship of every book of Holy Writ without exception place great emphasis upon "linguistic considerations." By following their methodology, one would be forced to assign many renowned, fully attested literary works, both ancient and modern, to other than their actual authors. In summation, to answer all the linguistic "arguments," *Pulpit Commentary* concluded:

The argument for a later date [and consequently a writer other than Solomon, DM] derived from the language itself is of very little force."¹⁵ Young made the following observation on the linguistic argument: "It is quite possible that the book itself is the work of Solomon.... It must be remembered that Solomon's commerce and trade were very extensive, and foreign words might travel widely...."¹⁶

The foregoing material indicates the close relationship between the authorship and the date of the book. If the case is made for Solomonic authorship (as I believe it is), the date is thereby limited to the narrow stricture of his adult life, specifically to his forty-year reign over Israel (approx. 980–940 B.C.). However, at what point in his reign may he have written The Song of Songs? I believe that it was written in the early years of his reign on the following grounds:

1. The language of 3:11 ("in the day of his espousals") may indicate that it was his first marriage.

2. If we take the words in 6:8 as a description of the actual size of Solomon's harem (relatively small at "only" 60 wives and 80 concubines, compared to 700 wives and 300 concubines he later had [1 Kin. 11:3]), this indicates an early time in his reign. (Note: It is possible that the language in 6:8 means that **should he have** wives and concubines galore, his first wife would still be his choice above all [v. 9]).
3. The amorous language is much more in keeping with the warmth and passion of a youthful Solomon than with the degenerate, idolatrous, and jaded man he was in later years. I thus date the book near the beginning of the tenth century B.C., around 980-970.

Solomon, the author of the book, is also one of the two principal characters. The other principal character is the beautiful maiden of Lebanon who is the object of Solomon's affection and whom he takes to be his queen. The third "character" is actually a chorus of women who unite their voices in admiration of the comeliness of the new queen.

Canonicity

As would be expected, liberal critics have attacked the place of The Song of Solomon in the Canon. A statement from John Tullock will suffice to illustrate this:

This book has long been a source of embarrassment to Judaism and to the Christian church. It does not mention God anywhere. This failure has caused its place in the canon to be debated perhaps as no other Old Testament book has.¹⁷

We wonder where Professor Tullock got his information about extensive debate over the canonicity of this book. Contrariwise, The Song of Solomon has been generally accepted as part of the Bible from ancient times.

Pulpit Commentary states:

...that it was held in great veneration by ancient Jewish authorities; that it was received as part of the canon of the Old Testament, not only by the Jews but by all the early Christian writers, with very few and insignificant exceptions....¹⁸

Matthew Henry made a strong statement relating to authenticity:

In our belief both of the divine extraction and of the spiritual exposition of this book we are confirmed by the ancient, constant, and concurring testimony both of the church of the Jews, to whom were **committed the oracles of God** [emph. his], and who never made any doubt of the authority of this book; and of the Christian church, which happily succeeds them in that trust and honour.¹⁹

Barnes' Notes remarks on its place in the canon as follows:

The Song was regarded as an integral and venerated portion of the Hebrew canon before the commencement of the Christian era and passed as such into the canon of the primitive Church: it has been always held both by the Church and by the Synagogue in the highest and most reverent estimation.

Further, in the same context, *Barnes' Notes* quoted the statement from the Mishnah which represents the judgment of the Jewish schools and scholars in the first and second centuries:

No man in Israel ever doubted the canonicity of the Song of Songs, for the course of the ages cannot vie with the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel; all the Kethubim (Hagiographa) are indeed a holy thing, but the Song of Songs is a holy of holies.²⁰

Literary Form and Method of Interpretation

As indicated in the opening remarks, several (and quite varied) theories of interpretation have been postulated for The Song of Solomon. To some degree the literary form one assigns to the book governs the method of interpretation. Therefore, I will give some attention to identifying the form. Generally, as we classify Old Testament books, we categorize it as part of the “poetic” or “wisdom” literature. Can we identify it more particularly? It has by various ones been viewed as an allegory, a drama (written for performance and even performed), an epithalamium, a collection of several love songs, a type, a parable, an adaptation of Pagan liturgy, an idyll, and perhaps others.

The Jews first treated it as an allegory in their Talmud in which Solomon stood for God and the Shunamite bride represented Israel. The paraphrase of The Song of Solomon in the Chaldee Targum particularly applied the book to the time from the Exodus to the coming of Messiah.²¹ Its authors extended the allegorical device to ridiculous and fantastic extremes. In straining for parallels, those inventive fourth century “doctors of the law” reduced words to their numerical values and freely changed Solomon’s words into homonyms of their own choice. Early “Christian” scholars also viewed the book as an allegory. Origen (late second, early third century) opined that the idea of the book is the soul’s longing for God and the elevating influence of God’s love for man. This approach to the book eventually surpassed the excesses of the Jews in the progression of its extremes (especially among the mystics of the Middle Ages) and hardly knew an exception till the Reformation.

While not totally abandoning the allegorical approach, the Reformers certainly modified it and took a less radical tack. They generally came to consider the book to be an allegory concerning Christ and the church. Evidence of this is readily available by reading the paragraph headings that appear before each chapter of the text in the 1611 KJV.²² This evaluation of the book led to extremes in exposition of this brief book. Bernard of Clairvaux (10th cent.) wrote eighty-six sermons on the first two chapters alone. His student, Gilbert von Hoyland, wrote fifty-two sermons on another part of the book.²³ John Gill preached 122 sermons on The Song of

Solomon to his Baptist congregation at Horsleydown, England, and then published them in a book in 1728.²⁴

In response I offer the following:

1. In the unmistakable allegories, parables, and other extended figures of speech in the Bible, some clue is given in their wording or structure to indicate such design and purpose. There is nothing whatsoever in The Song of Solomon to indicate any allegorical purpose or design.
2. Therefore, to treat it as an allegory is totally presumptive.
3. Surely Christ and the apostles would have made some specific reference to this book and the application of its allegorical features if it were an allegory, yet they never refer to it in any way, in spite of their employment of the bride-bridegroom figure for Christ and His church (e.g. Eph. 5:23-27).
4. If taken as an allegory, whose scheme shall we follow? Why does not the Jew who applies it to God and Israel or the Roman Catholic who applies the bride to the virgin Mary deserve as much credibility as one who applies it to Christ and the church? I reject the view that it is a mere allegory.

Is it a drama written for presentation before an audience? Some have gone so far as to divide it into seven parts, each one identified as an act in a play. While there are indeed some features of drama in it, I agree with the evaluation of *Pulpit Commentary* on this point:

It is a mere abuse of literary language to call it a drama. There is, properly speaking, no dramatic action and progress in it. . . . We can no more call the Song of Solomon a drama than we can give such a title to the Book of Job.²⁵

Young wrote on this point:

But drama did not make its way to any extent among the Semitic peoples. Also, the Song does not purport to be a drama anymore than it does an allegory. It is unlikely that the pious of the ages would have regarded the Song as a divinely inspired composition if it were merely a drama of such nature.²⁶

Clarke defines an epithalamium as a “congratulatory song, sung to a new married pair, wishing them abundant blessings, a numerous and happy offspring, and such like.”²⁷ Although it is definitely a book about marriage and married love, it requires a huge stretch to perceive The Song of Solomon as merely a song prepared to congratulate him or anyone else on their marriage. I reject this view of the book on the very surface.

Is The Song of Solomon merely a collection of love songs? This view may generally be associated with modernistic Biblical criticism. Tullock provides a good example of this dogmatic liberalism:

In reality, the book was a collection of love songs, celebrating the joys of physical love making.... The poems cover a wide span of years. They were brought together in their present arrangement in the postexilic period.... The collector and arranger of the poems thought of Solomon as one of the main characters.²⁸

I do not deny that it celebrates the joys of physical love in marriage, but I do deny that it is some sort of “anthology” of songs put together either in the time of Solomon or by some later editor. William Hendriksen argues with obvious force:

The book is a unit, not an anthology of unconnected love-lyrics. The unity of the poem is clear from the repeated refrain: ‘I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the roes, or by the hinds of the field, That ye stir not up nor awake love, Until it please’ (2:7; 3:5; 8:4).²⁹

Barnes’ Notes calls the book “a well-organized poetical whole” and further declares:

Almost all recent critics now assume that the Song is not an anthology or collection of poems and fragments by various authors, but (as its Hebrew title indicates) a single poem, the work of one author.³⁰

It is thus seen that the name, “Canticles,” often applied to the book, is inappropriate because it literally means “songs.”

The arguments against the book’s being a type or a parable are the same basic arguments against its being an allegory (see above): There is simply no evidence for it. To ascribe the Song of Solomon to an adaptation of a pagan liturgy is so far-fetched and ridiculous as to be hardly worthy of a mention. Young aptly points out that this is a wholly naturalistic (i.e., inspiration-denying) view of the book, and were it true, it would never have been admitted to the canon.³¹

Now, having eliminated the above classifications (as descriptions of its literary character), with what are we left? Is the Song of Solomon an idyll? An idyll is defined in various ways. *Barnes’ Notes* describes idylls as “short poetic pieces of various forms.”³² Clarke declared: “*Idyll* implies a **short poem**, containing some **adventure** [emph. his].”³³ Richard J. Moulton identified The Song of Solomon as a “lyric idyll” and then defined what he meant: “The term *idyll* has been appropriated to what, in poetic tradition, have been considered the ‘trifles’ of life—love and domestic scenes, as distinguished from war and heroic deeds.”³⁴ A standard dictionary gives the following definition of *idyll*: “A simple descriptive work either in poetry or prose that deals with rustic life or pastoral scenes or suggests a mood of peace and contentment.”³⁵ All of these descriptions to some extent describe what we find in The Song of Solomon. Thus perhaps better than any other literary form, *idyll* describes The Song of Solomon,

as long as we remember that the content is not imaginary or phantasmagorical, but factual and historical.

Interpretation

If my reasoning concerning the literary form of the book is correct, we are left with but one primary approach to interpreting the book: It is the literal historical account, told in poetic or song form, of Solomon who courted and married a beautiful maiden. However, among those who take a more or less literal view of the book there are some strange variations.

1. Some identify the Shunamite maiden with Pharaoh's daughter whom Solomon took as his wife in the early part of his reign (1 Kin. 3:1), but this denies much of the material in the book as factual. Clearly, the events of the book are set entirely in Israel and the heroine is an Israelite of Shulam (S.S. 6:13), usually identified with Shunem in the land of Issachar (Jos. 19:18). Two notable Old Testament women were residents of Shunem: (1) the woman who befriended Elisha (2 Kin. 4:8) and (2) Abishag, the "fair damsel" who served David in his final days (1 Kin. 1:3). Solomon urged the maiden to come with him from Lebanon, not Egypt (S.S. 4:8). In neither case is there anything common to an Egyptian princess.
2. Some identify the Shunamite maiden with Abishag, as mentioned above. While "Shunem" and "Shulam" may indeed refer to the same city, it is more than a great presumptive leap to find Abishag in The Song of Solomon. (1) There is no Biblical evidence to suggest that Solomon claimed Abishag for himself upon the death of David. (2) In fact, if Abishag became the wife or concubine of David, as some believe (though he did not "know" her in an erotic sense [1 Kin. 1:4]), it would have been unlawful for Solomon to take her for his own (Lev. 18:6-8; Deu. 22:30).
3. Some profess to find a second suitor for the maiden's affections besides Solomon. This other suitor was supposedly a shepherd of her own territory from whom Solomon attempted to take her to be his queen. Advocates of this view allege that the pure and true love of her shepherd-suitor eventually overcame the corrupt infatuation of Solomon and the appeals of his wealth and power. The weaknesses of the "shepherd theory" are well exposed by *Pulpit Commentary*.³⁶

I am convinced that the book is the simple, sublime account of Solomon's literal wooing, winning, and wedding of a maiden of Shulam. This is its most obvious import and there is no prevailing evidence to cause one to approach it in any other manner. This being so, what is the place in the Bible of such a hymn, celebrating and glorifying amorous love between a man and a woman? The answer is simple. God created human sexuality and He ordained sexual attraction and love in the realm of eligible marriage partners.

The Song of Solomon does not glorify sexual love as an end in itself nor under any and all circumstances, but it does glorify the beauty of this human behavior in the context of a

husband and his wife. Evil men and women have dragged the sexual impulse and its fulfillment in the slime and dirt of their own perverted thoughts and deeds. They have made of men and women nothing more than brute beasts at liberty to cavort at will with partners of their own choosing, thus cheapening, corrupting, and all but destroying the concept of the pristine purity of God-ordained sexual behavior and relationships. The Song of Solomon at the same time demonstrates the thrill and the purity of the deepest sexual attraction and passion by placing it in and limiting it to the one sphere in which God has placed it – marriage!

I appreciate Young's statement on the emphasis of the book:

The Song does celebrate the dignity and purity of human love. This is a fact which has not always been sufficiently stressed. The Song, therefore, is didactic and moral in its purpose. It comes to us in this world of sin, where lust and passion are on every hand, where fierce temptations assail us and try to turn us aside from the God-given standard of marriage. And it reminds us, in particularly beautiful fashion, how pure and noble true love is.³⁷

It would be difficult to improve on *Barnes' Notes'* analysis of The Song of Solomon:

The primary subject and occasion of the poem was a real historical event, of which we have here the only record, the marriage union of Solomon with a shepherd-maiden of northern Palestine, by whose beauty and nobility of soul the great king had been captivated. Starting from this historical basis, the Song of Songs is in its essential character an ideal representation of human love in the relation of marriage (8:6-7).³⁸

Walter L. Porter writes a good summary observation:

The Song of Solomon is about a man and his wife – how they look upon, feel about, and act toward each other. The style of the book differs noticeably from the styles of the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. The Song of Solomon appears to teach by presenting a model to imitate. It demonstrates by example the kind of mentality and behavior that should occur in a healthy marriage.³⁹

Henry Halley caught the gist of the in his evaluation of it:

On its face, the poem is a eulogy of the Joys of Wedded Life. Its essence is to be found in its tender and devoted expressions of the intimate delights of Wedded Love. Even if it is no more than that, it is worth a place in God's Word; for Marriage was ordained of God (Gen. 2:24). And on proper Mutual Attitudes in the inner familiarities of Married Life depend, to a very large extent, Human Happiness and Welfare [caps his].⁴⁰

Now, having said all of that, we would not deny that there are possibly “overtones” of the relationship between Christ, the perfect Son of David, and His bride, the church. Thus, *Barnes' Notes* suggests the following connection:

It is then no mere fancy, which for so many ages past has been wont to find in the pictures and melodies of the Song of Songs types and echoes of the actions and emotions of the highest Love, of Love Divine, in its relations to Humanity. Christians may trace in the noble and gentle history thus presented foreshadowings of the infinite condescensions of Incarnate Love [caps his]....⁴¹

However, this remains at best, secondary. The guiding principle to understanding the book is to view it in its most obvious light—an inspired song of rare beauty to extol and demonstrate the purity of amorous love in marriage.

Outline of the Book

Curtis A. Cates suggests the following simple outline:

- I. The courtship of the bridegroom and the bride-to-be (1:1–3:5).
- II. The wedding procession, wedding, and honeymoon (3:6–5:1).
- III. Marriage difficulty, difficulty resolved, and growth of marital bliss (5:2–8:14).⁴²

Jim Laws gives the following fuller outline [with minor editing, DM]:

- I. The bride and the king express their love for each other (1:1–2:7).
 - A. The inscription and the bride’s description of the king (1:1–11).
 - B. The bride and the king meet (1:12–2:2).
- II. The bride’s praise for the king (2:8–3:5).
 - A. The bride’s praise for the king by day (2:8–17).
 - B. The bride’s praise for the king by night (3:1–5).
- III. The king’s praise for the bride (3:6–5:1).
 - A. The king arrives, accompanied by a great host of soldiers (3:6–11).
 - B. The king describes his bride in terms of loving tenderness (4:1–5:1).
- IV. The disturbing dream of the bride (5:2–7:9).
 - A. The dream described (5:2–6:3).
 - B. The bride finds the king and he praises her for her beauty (6:4–7:9).
- V. The undying love and devotion of the king and his bride (7:10–8:14).
 - A. The bride gives her love to the king (7:10–8:4).
 - B. The beauty of love is described (8:5–14).⁴³

Conclusion

The poetry and lyricism of The Song of Solomon are unsurpassed in all of literature. Moreover, the message of the book further enhances its beauty: God ordained that a man should “cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). Tragically, in later years he strayed from the faithfulness he pledged to the bride he wooed and won in The Song of Solomon, leading him far astray from faithfulness to God as well. However, in his moments of soberness (which are reflected in The Proverbs) it is clear that he recognized the wisdom he exercised concerning love and marriage in those early years of his reign. Thus, he counseled his sons:

Let thy fountain be blessed; and rejoice in the wife of thy youth. As a loving hind and a pleasant doe, let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. For why shouldst thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a foreigner (Pro. 5:18–20)?

One can only guess at the greatness of Solomon had he not been led into apostasy by marrying many strange and foreign women. In our day when the moral fabric of our nation is in danger of being irreparably torn by the tragic abandonment of God's plan for marriage, the family, and the home, there is a desperate need for the exaltation of the beauty of married love and fidelity. We believe The Song of Solomon, correctly perceived, provides this needed exaltation.

Endnotes

1. American Standard Version used throughout, except as indicated or in quoted material of others.
2. John McClintock and James Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1968 rep.), 2:92.
3. *Barnes' Notes*, Proverbs to Ezekiel, ed. F. C. Cook (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, n. d., rep. of 1879 ed.), 5:115.
4. R.A. Redford, *The Pulpit Commentary*, eds. H.D.M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell (New York, NY: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1950), 9:i (sec. 3).
5. Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell Co., n. d.), 3:1053.
6. McClintock and Strong, p. 92.
7. Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1960), p. 350.
8. *Pulpit Commentary*, p. iii.
9. McClintock and Strong, p. 92.
10. S.R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York, NY: Meridian Books, 1960), p. 449.
11. Driver, pp. 448–49,
12. *Pulpit Commentary*, p. iii.
13. McClintock and Strong, p. 93.
14. Young, p. 351.
15. *Pulpit Commentary*, p. iii.
16. Young, p. 351.
17. John Tullock, *The Old Testament Story* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1981), p. 370.
18. *Pulpit Commentary*, p. i.
19. Henry, pp. 1052–53.
20. *Barnes' Notes*, p. 115.
21. The full text of the Chaldee Targum Paraphrase is reproduced in Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, n. d. rep. of 1824 ed.), 3:872–89.

22. Chapter 1 headings begin as follows: "1 The church's love unto Christ. 5 She confesseth her deformity, 7 and prayeth to be directed to his flock. 8 Christ directeth her to the shepherd's tents: 9 and shewing his love to her, 11 giveth her gracious promises. 12 The church and Christ congratulate one another."
23. *Pulpit Commentary*, p. xi-xii.
24. Clarke, p. 847.
25. *Pulpit Commentary*, p. vi.
26. Young, p. 353.
27. Clarke, p. 841.
28. Tullock, p. 370.
29. William Hendriksen, *Bible Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1957), p. 306-07.
30. Barnes' Notes, p. 115.
31. Young, p. 354.
32. *Barnes' Notes*, p. 115.
33. Clarke, p. 841.
34. Richard J. Moulton, *A Short Introduction to the Literature of the Bible* (Boston, MA: D. C. Heath and Co., 1907), p. 248.
35. *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, ed. Philip B. Gove (Springfield, MA: G and C. Merriam Co., 1970), p. 414.
36. *Pulpit Commentary*, p. xvii.
37. Young, p. 354.
38. *Barnes' Notes*, p. 118.
39. Walter L. Porter, *King Solomon's Advice* (Searcy, AR: Privately pub., 1992 ed.), p. 229.
40. Henry H. Halley, *Halley's Bible Handbook* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1965 ed.), pp. 277-78.
41. *Barnes' Notes*, pp. 120-21.
42. Curtis A. Cates, Sermon Outline: "How to Build a Successful and Happy Marriage."
43. Jim Laws, *The Living Messages of the Books of the Old Testament*, eds. Garland Elkins and Thomas B. Warren (Jonesboro, AR: National Christian Press, Inc., 1977), p. 241.

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