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Sermon preached at Ebenezer, Clapham by Mr. J. Delves on Sunday morning 25th. May, 1952

"My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies. Until the day break and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether."

Song of Solomon 2.16,17

I should rejoice if I could be a minister of God to you this day, and the means, in the Lord's good hand, of bringing into many hearts the mercy, the wonder and the beauty of this profound relationship. O what a day it would be, with some at least, if they could feel to say, by the Holy Ghost "My Beloved is mine, and I am His."!

This relationship unquestionably applies in many cases where the assurance of it is not felt in the heart; and where the assurance of it is felt, it is truly blessed. There may be a general conclusion with regard to a truth like this but there can be a particular experience of the joy, and the heaven of such an experience in the soul, by the witnessing of the Holy Ghost and by that spirit of liberty whereby one can say, "My Lord, and my God".

Truly it can be said that this Song, rightly understood, reveals the essence of a gracious experience where Christ is formed in the heart the hope of glory. Notice with regard to the church, the spouse of Christ, her confession of her deformity, her sense of unfitness and unworthiness, her fervent breathings, her earnest desires, her affectionate appeals and her tender love towards her best Beloved. How frequently through the Song this appellation is used, which shows not only the blessed relationship but also the affection enjoyed in it; her Beloved, so to speak, was everything to her! There was no comparison, no substitute - no one could take the place of Him, He was "the chiefest among ten thousand" the "altogether lovely" in her affections. He was in her heart, and she was in His heart, and the communion expressed in this imagery is profoundly sweet. It would be wonderful if we were favoured with a little of that soul enjoyment, even this day; it is frequently spoken of here.

"The voice of my Beloved! behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills." If we take these mountains to be "the mountains of Bether", the mountains of division, or the mountains which may now separate Him from us, as to this communion and the enjoyment of His presence, then it can be said that He can come over them as though they were nothing to Him. It does not say that He comes struggling over the mountains and over the hills, as though they are practically impassable - not at all - but the way He comes is leaping upon them, skipping upon them; they are under His feet, they are all beneath Him. He comes quickly, so it is expressed, "my Beloved is like a roe or a young hart (for swiftmess):behold, He standeth behind our wall, He looketh forth at the windows, shewing Himself through the lattice." He is not silent to His spouse - "my Beloved spake, and said unto me..." This is a wonderful point! O that it might be so personally with some of us this day, ... "Said unto me, Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away." This has been a long winter, cold, bitter, with biting, piercing winds, heavy rains, rains of affliction and trouble, bruising, sweeping rains. The trees have been all bare, nothing in the garden, all desolate, but now He says, "My beloved" - listen to this - "Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land". O what is this voice? It is the voice of Jesus, the voice of our Beloved, and He so addresses His beloved. The winter is gone, the rain is gone, O that it might prove to be so in some feelingly desolate hearts! What a change it would make! O if the Lord were to come and shed His love abroad in these hearts of ours, it would make this wilderness like Eden, and this desert like the garden of the LORD. You would not wish to keep in the secret clefts of the rock then, or hide up in the secret places of the stairs; there would be a response to the voice of thy Beloved, for He says, "Let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely". It does not seem that can be true, does it? But it is so! Moreover, of His bride He says, "Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee."

In the words that I have read, there is a relationship affirmed, a marriage union, wherein the two are one and their affections mutually entwined around each other; it expresses, shall I say, a satisfaction? The language of the church here is, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His". I am satisfied. So would you be if that could be felt in your soul, if you could say, (and some of you can say) "My Beloved is mine, and I am His". Well, when the sweetness of that relationship is felt, there is a satisfaction with it. When you have Jesus, and can feel Him to be your Jesus, you have all you need; then you can sit down under His shadow with sweet delight, partake of the fruit and find it sweet to your taste. It is said here, "I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste." To be able to say this, "My Beloved is mine", is to be drawn into the banqueting house and have the banner of His love spread over us, to find rest. It is to return unto our rest, feeling that the Lord has dealt bountifully with us. Have you ever been able to say "My Beloved is mine, and I am His"? Have you had a moment in your life when you have received Him into your heart and embraced Him? Some of you will understand what I mean by this, better than I can describe it; some of you who can understand it may, at this time possibly, long for a similar experience to that you had when you found Him, and in finding Him wept to the praise of the mercy you found. There may be some who have never felt they could say this, "My Beloved is mine". Later on in the Song it is said, "I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me". Can you say that your desire is toward Him? Is there in your heart an aching void that cannot be satisfied until you can say, I have found Him? I have found Him Whom my soul loveth? O, there is such a thing as receiving Him! receiving Him! "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name." What choice moments they have been, have they not, when you received Him, when He has filled your heart. O those choice moments! Heaven has not been far away then, has it? And under that sweet influence you would be able to sing the hymn we have just sung (Gadsby's 22) as to your Beloved. Although He dwells enthroned on high, He yet condescends to

come down into the gardens of His grace, to "feed among the lilies" - and if they can be compared to believers, or to the garden of His grace, then it may be said that He will continue, at least at intervals, this sweet favour, this indulgence, "Until the day break and the shadows flee away."

I would like, if I may have grace, to enter more particularly into what is in this word, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His"; and if favoured with a sweet view of His grace, I might be able, more adequately and more unctuously, to enter into what is involved in it. I am such a dry stick and so unable to open up the glories of our Emmanuel, that my poor words seem to mock me, and I come shamefully short; but still, I can tell you this, I have had a few moments in my life when I could say, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His". I have felt not the slightest doubt about it. O it is blessed! Then there is this truth, Once in Him in Him for ever; but a mere doctrine will not keep your soul alive.

What believers long for is communion, and that is the great evidence of this relationship. The Lord only communes with His own. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." This is what the lilies, the believers so described, long for, this communion! When you are favoured to enjoy this communion you can say "my Beloved is mine, and I am His". If the former part of the verse is true, the latter necessarily follows because if He is yours, then you must be His, and if you are His, then He is yours! It necessarily follows because the relationship is mutual "My Beloved is mine, and I am His."

What then is there involved in this, or in what ways can such a confirming truth be considered? In the first place, "My Beloved is mine"; and as here, we may keep to the singular, in the hope that it may be so felt in our souls. My Beloved is mine by the Father's gift, that is by the gift of God of Him to us! You remember when the Lord Jesus came to the well (the woman being there) He asked her to give Him some water to drink; she objected, saying, "The Jews have

no dealings with the Samaritans". You are a Jew; fancy asking me for water. But the Lord said this to her, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." Evidently the Lord intended by that Himself as the gift of God; He is the Father's gift unto His people; He gave Him. It is so asserted. He gave Him as the highest evidence of His love, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." O have you ever felt that you could believe that the Lord Jesus is the Father's gift to you? We shall never have Him unless He is thus given; and yet this remarkable truth applies in every case where Christ is formed in the heart the hope of glory. My Beloved is mine in this gift!

Not only does it apply to the Father as giving Him, but "My Beloved is mine" as giving Himself for me. "He gave Himself for our sins that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." So He is a personal gift in the sense of giving Himself. When we look at it in this light, we may say that He gave Himself, knowing what that gift would mean to Him, that is, He gave Himself a sacrifice for our sins. It is just this that would draw forth your affections to Him and cause Him to appear as your Beloved, for this is where His love reveals itself in the highest degree. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a Man lay down His life for His friends." This is the point, then, to which I would hold you, "My Beloved is mine" to lay down His life for me. You might be very, very fond of a person and yet not be disposed to make too great a sacrifice on his behalf; but the Saviour's love to His people was such, that He made for them the greatest sacrifice He could possibly make and evinced the reality, the height, the depth of that distinguishing love in this particular. "My Beloved is mine." O, if we could but lay hold of this, my Beloved is mine, to stand in my place. He is mine to deal with justice and to bear the strokes of justice in the punishment that I deserve. He is a wonderful Husband; my Beloved

is mine. He is mine to undertake all responsibility; He is mine to fulfil all the claims of the law for me; He is mine to bring my soul out of that prison which holds me, as under that law, in its binding chains and legal fetters. He is mine to set my soul free. A thoughtful, kind husband would, I feel sure, undertake the responsibility for his beloved wife as far as he could, but he could not undertake all of it; perhaps she would not desire him to either; but our best Beloved undertook all, to the fullest extent. If He had not undertaken all responsibilities we should not have been sustained or continued in this blessed, ineffable relationship.

My Beloved is mine to bear my sins away, to make atonement for them; He is mine to pay the ransom price, He is mine to conquer death and hell; He is mine to live. "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." There is this point then, He is mine in the gift of Himself, with all that was involved.

There is another very choice point here, and that is, my Beloved is mine, as revealed to my soul by the Holy Ghost. Do you think you have ever known that? O, some of you may say, Such an experience leaves me altogether out of the secret. I question if it does. If you have any real concern about your best Beloved, I doubt if it does. Have there been moments when He has "put in His hand by the hole of the door" and melted you a little and just dropped a word like "sweet-smelling myrrh" into your heart, so that you have said, "It is the voice of my Beloved"? and the moment after that, the cruel adversary has confronted you in it and said, don't you dare to think that; you fancied it, it is not real, it could not be for you. When he comes like that, pray for grace to resist him, and lay hold of what the Lord is, and hold Him to it, as it is said later of "the watchmen". "It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him Whom my soul loveth: I held Him, and would not let Him go." Do you think you can understand that? What does it mean? This is the victory of faith in a believer. You so get hold of Him in the arms of your faith that you hold Him and will not let Him go. O it is so profoundly sweet; my Beloved is mine, as

revealed by the Holy Ghost, and this is His blessed office. "He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you." Some of you would not dare to deny, at least a little revelation would you? You would not dare to deny some moments when He has been made precious, more than you can say, in the desire for Him; a moment now and again in your life when He brought you, a poor, vile sinner, into His house of wine? O the sight of Him, the sight of Him! "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced and shall mourn for Him." It is a wonderful thing to have a revealed Christ, and if your soul is on the stretch for Him, may the Lord keep it on the stretch until He fills your heart. He will come one day. Why will He come? Because He is your Jesus. You would have no desire for Him otherwise. O it is the communion that is so sweet. Well, do you think you could say, "O come, Thou much-expected Guest"? or if that is a little too high, Thou much-desired Guest!

"Lord Jesus, quickly come!
Enter the chamber of my breast;
Thyself prepare the room"

Is that desire in your heart for Him? Would it fill you with joy if He should come and speak in your soul, so that you could say, "My Beloved is mine", mine as revealed by the Holy Spirit? This revelation is an opening up, a discovery, an unfolding of His beauty to your faith; that is what it is; so that under the influence of it, you will find that He draws you unto Himself under that revelation. "I drew them with cords of a Man, with bands of love"; "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." He is my Beloved; none can compare with Him. Natural affection is profoundly sweet, and it would be an arid, cold, dreary, desolate world without it, but that is but an emblem of the wonder of this heavenly affection. My Beloved is mine. Have you ever had a moment when you could feel that was so, and enjoy it for yourself, and could be satisfied? Well, here it is, my Beloved is mine, under the revealings and discoveries of Him to my soul by the Holy Ghost.

Here is another point; my Beloved is mine as the glorious Head of the Church of which He has made me, though unworthy, a member.

Every believer is a member of His body, you see. The apostle has it in the epistle to the Ephesians, "The Father...hath put all things under His (Christ's) feet, and given Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Now I am sure you will agree that is a most amazing expression - in fact, it staggers me, "The fulness of Him that filleth all in all". That really means that Christ the Beloved would not be complete without His church in union with Him, because as He is her fulness, so she is His fulness. He must have her as His own to be complete as the great and glorious Head. Surely that is a wonderful truth! It is true and can be said without stretching a point, that as you would not be complete without Him, so He would not be complete without you. The body, to use a figure, is not complete without the head, so neither is the head complete without the body. There is a completeness; so the church is the fulness of Him that filleth all in all; a very sacred, beautiful point of teaching. My Beloved is mine, as my glorious Head in whom I stand perfectly complete. "Ye are complete in Him", said the apostle. You are, you are, poor, unworthy creature as you feel to be, having nothing but sin and death perhaps; you are complete in Him. He is the Head of all principalities and powers, the fulness! My Beloved is mine. O could you claim Him? Say you, it would be presumption. No, no, not if you want Him, not if you love Him. This is what He would love you to do, to claim Him, as your portion, as a devoted wife will claim her husband, as considering him to belong to her. So it is in a far sweeter sense. My Beloved is mine, as my glorious Head. I shall have to leave these few observations, but to revert to what I said, it will be a wonderful day, one of the days of the Son of Man, if even one here is favoured to say that for the first time. O may the Lord cause it to be so; it would be a wonderful day if some could feel it again; perhaps some of you have. May the Lord grant it for His mercy's sake. Amen.