

**(2:14) - O MY DOVE, THAT ART IN THE CLEFTS OF THE ROCK, IN THE SECRET PLACES OF THE STAIRS, LET ME SEE THY COUNTENANCE, LET ME HEAR THY VOICE; FOR SWEET IS THY VOICE, AND THY COUNTENANCE IS COMELY.** - These verses speak of the sweet

communion and the abiding comfort and assurance that Christ, as the Bridegroom, shares and gives to His bride, the church. Remember, His bride consists of all sinners saved by the grace of God. They are all who have been justified freely by His grace based on His righteousness imputed to them. They are all who have been born again by the Holy Spirit and brought to Christ by God-given faith and true repentance. They are all who abide in Him continually by His power and grace because He keeps them under His gracious, loving, and sovereign care to bring them unto final glory.

Again, the Lord compares His bride to a dove for her beauty which is the beauty Christ has created and given to her - His righteousness imputed and the gift of life and graces of the Spirit in which she is adorned (*Isa. 61:10*). He compares her to a dove for its innocence and meekness as opposed to birds of prey. Her innocence is not of her, for she is a sinful bride, but she is innocent because no sin can be charged to her. She is not guilty because Christ has taken her sins and her guilt upon Himself and has died to satisfy God's justice for her (*Rom. 4:6-8; 8:33-34; 2 Cor. 5:19-21*). By His Spirit He has brought her to bow humbly to Him and be obedient to Him in faith and repentance (*Matt. 5:3-10*). As the dove is a symbol of peace, Christ is at peace with His people, and they are at peace with Him, all based on the blood of His cross (*Col. 1:19-23*). His bride, the church, is His dove. He owns her and delights in her. She can find no rest except in him. No matter what she experiences or where she goes, like Noah's dove, she must always return to Christ, her ark, because He will not let her go.

Her safety and security is symbolized here by the fact that she is hidden in the "*clefts of the rock*." A cleft is a rift, a fissure, a break. This speaks of the wounds that Christ obtained in His suffering unto death leading up to and upon the cross where He died for our sins. He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities. When Moses was told to strike the Rock in the wilderness, we were given a beautiful type of Christ in His bearing for His people the crushing blow of God's wrath. Remember, God hid Moses in the "cleft of the rock" (that ROCK was Christ) when He showed Moses His glory (*Exo. 33:22*). This does not mean we escape the storms (or tribulations) of this life. Christ told us that we have trouble in this world, but He also said, "*be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*" (*John 16:33*). Just like Noah and his family felt every rock of the ark and heard the thunder and driving rain while they were in the ark, which was and is Christ, they were completely dry and safe.

"*in the secret places of the stairs*" - Christ is the stairway (or steps) by which believers ascend up to God, have access to and communion with Him. We can think of Jacob's ladder (*Gen. 28:10-15*) where, in a dream, the Lord revealed Himself as the only way to God for a sinner (*cf. John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5*). This way is the way of God's grace in Christ. John Gill wrote, "The secret places may have respect to the justifying righteousness of Christ, and reconciliation unto God by Him, hidden from physical view but revealed to all His people (*Rom. 1:16-17*)." When in distress, or under attack from the world, the flesh, or the devil, we look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, and take shelter in Him. In Him the bride dwells in safety.

Christ, the Bridegroom, longs to hear the voice of His bride, her sweet voice singing praises unto Him, expressing thanksgiving unto Him, worshipping and serving Him. Because of Him (His glory, His grace, His righteousness), her countenance (her face) is beautiful.

**(2:15) - TAKE US THE FOXES, THE LITTLE FOXES, THAT SPOIL THE VINES: FOR OUR VINES HAVE TENDER GRAPES.** - Foxes are sly and cunning. They always seek to ruin and destroy

their enemies. They feed upon their prey. They spoil the vines, but our Vine, which is Christ, cannot be destroyed, and neither can His bride (His church) be destroyed (*Matt. 16:18*). The exhortation here is to expose and catch these foxes and keep them from attacking the tender grapes. This is all symbolic of false preachers who seek to infiltrate the church and use cunning to upset God's children, especially those who are young and yet unskillful in the word of righteousness so as to discern good and evil (*Heb. 5:12-14*). There is much said of such false teachers in God's Word (*Isa. 8:20; Jer. 6:14; 8:11; Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Cor. 11:3-4, 14-15; Gal. 1:6-9; 1 John 2:26; 2 John 9-11*).

**(2:16) - MY BELOVED IS MINE, AND I AM HIS: HE FEEDETH AMONG THE LILIES.** - This is the language of a marriage covenant (*Jer. 31:33*). The Bridegroom has the bride, and the bride has the Bridegroom. He feeds His people among the lilies. This is the assurance of faith that Christ gives to His people through His Word upon which they are fed spiritually. The bride rests in the reality that she is one with her Bridegroom in the view of God's law and justice and in spirit as she been given assurances of His love and care for her. Christ is everything to His people (*Gal. 3:26-29; Col. 3:1-11*). The "lilies" symbolizes each member of the true church feeding upon the Word of God as Christ reveals more and more of Himself and the blessing of salvation to them.

**(2:17) - 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.** - The bride is totally dependent upon the Bridegroom to save her and preserve through all the shadows of night, even the valley of the shadow of death. This was the desire of every Old Testament saint, and it is equally the desire of every New Testament saint - "Looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (*Tit. 2:13, 14*). Notice how that Christ's strength and determination to save His bride to the uttermost never fades or gives way to anyone or anything that would harm her (*Rom. 7:24-25; 8:35-39; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 7:25; Jude 24-25*). Solomon was inspired by the Holy Spirit once again to make reference to the roe (gazelle) and the young hart (deer) to describe the youth, strength, and swiftness of our Savior to be our help in time of need (*Heb. 4:14-16*). The "day break" speaks of the time of His return to gather His church unto Himself and to judge the wicked. Until then, He protects and keeps us like a dove hidden in the cleft of the Rock.