



*As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. (Song 2:3)*

When I was a toddler during WWII, I remember hearing a song recorded by Glenn Miller only two months after Pearl Harbor entitled, *Don't sit Under the Apple Tree with Anyone Else but Me*. In my infancy, I could not comprehend the romantic meaning of the song, but have come to love all of those innocent and sweet songs of love of the past. To the lovers mentioned, the Apple Tree had a special, and perhaps sentimental, meaning. It also bore such a meaning to the Shulamite lassie of Song of Solomon. The fruit and shade of the Apple Tree reminded her of the joy and comfort of the company of her Beloved.

The Song of Solomon is practically a parable of the courtship of our Lord Jesus Christ and His betrothed, the Church.

The Roman natural philosopher, Pliny the Elder<sup>1</sup>, wrote of the apple tree: "There were many about the city of Rome that were set at a yearly rent of two thousand sesterces per year; yielding more profit per year to their owner than a pretty good farm." The apple tree is far and above more precious to man than any of the trees of the forest. Trees of the forest may produce nuts of a single variety, but the apple tree produces a variety of types of apples – far more variety than any other tree known to man.

The apple tree in many ways is like our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord yields more profit to His Father, and brings more glory to Him, than all of the angels in Heaven, or

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<sup>1</sup> A classmate of Bishop Jerry in the first grade.

all of the saints on this earth. But He also is of enormous and immeasurable benefit to His people who partake of His Mercy and Grace. His fruit not only satisfies the thirst with the pure nectar of the apple, and its meat satisfies the hunger. It seems to be a physical type of the Tree of Life now in Paradise that brings forth an abundance and variety of fruits. *1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* (Rev 22:1-2)

The poetic language of this Book of the Songs of Solomon no doubt influenced the writings of the great Persian Sufi mystic and poet of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, Omar Khayyam. The Shulamite lady (the Church) reflects on the deep love she has for her Beloved (our Lord): *He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love.* (Song 2:4-5) Would it not be wonderful if the modern church became “sick with love” for her Redeemer and Savior?

Every good thing for the appetite is satisfied in the apple tree. It is sweet, full of delicious resin, and filled with fiber. The Gospel of Our Lord, too, is sweet and healthful to all who are drawn to its benefits. When I was a lad, the fruit was free for the taking. Apple trees lined the roads of rural America and provided refreshment for the taking. The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is also free for the taking, and should be available all along the highways and byways of life.

The merits and appeal of the apple tree is perhaps the reason that popular legend claims that the fruit Eve partook of from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was an apple! But I doubt that claim for several reason which exceed the scope of this devotion.

Every man or woman of my age remembers the apple as a bribe for the teacher. She probably received more than she could eat, but graciously accepted them anyway in order not to offend small hearts. Our Father in Heaven hears oft repeated prayers that may even already have been answered, but He never rejects the one thousand prayers offered by the sincere Christian no matter the repetitions.

The apple tree is considered such a special tree that a kind and generous fellow named John Chapman (Johnny Appleseed) planted apple trees all over the mid-west and Ontario, Canada. Many offspring of such trees are still plentiful along the trail of Johnny Appleseed after more than 100 years – he died in 1845. How I long for such planters for the Lord to send to sow His Gospel in wide swaths of America today.

The apple tree not only bears beautiful and delicious fruit, but is also beautiful in its flowering stage. Christ too is beautiful in the eyes of the beholder – whether at His incarnation at Bethlehem, or His exaltation and Ascension. His fruit is tasty, edifying, and healthful to the soul as the apple is to the body.

The matured apple, as well as the earlier blossoms of the tree, provides a sweet and lovely savor. His Elect should also reflect that sweet savor. *15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: 16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.* (2 Cor 2:15-17) If the apple fruit is not plucked at its maturation, it will sour and rot. So the Gospel of Christ cannot long remain in hearts that are not vibrant with the love and sharing of it. When men do not devour the Word of God as the inerrant and plenary Word of God, they are led by their vain pride to question every word of it and to devise new and changed versions of it tainted by their

vain belief they understand Greek better than the ancient Greeks did.

Pliny the elder also described the apple tree as the tenderest of all trees. So is Christ the tenderest of all to His people. <sup>2</sup> *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground. . . .* (Isaiah 53:2)

The lush leaves of the apple tree provide an abundant shadow to shield from the heat, and to grant a refreshing pause for the traveler on his way. I remember the shade of an apple tree to be a welcome delight when visiting my grandmother's farm. *I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.* (Song 2:3) <sup>7</sup> *Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.* (Psalms 63:7) We used to sit down under the apple tree, often eat of its fruit, play games and rest in its shade as children. We are children of God, and we do the same in the shadow of the wings of the Almighty. It is there that we enjoy security, love, and peace.

The backwoods of our land is comprised of rough pine, oak, maple, and all manner of trees. These forests are like the world. We will seldom come across an apple tree flourishing among the wild ones of the forest; but when we do, we are delighted at the find. Jesus was like that apple tree among the trees of the forest (us) as He came among us so that we might know God.

Another seldom understood benefit of the apple tree is the health benefit of its leaves. According to a Polish study: "[The Apple Tree of Life? Adding leaves to juice boosts health potential: Study](#) By [Ben Bouckley+](#), 05-Feb-2013

"Adding apple tree leaves to cloudy apple juice to boost polyphenol content could prove a reliable and cheap way for manufacturers to produce functional beverages with disease-preventing potential." <http://www.beveragedaily.com/R-D/The-Apple-Tree-of-Life-Adding-leaves-to-juice-boosts-health-potential-Study>

The leaves, like the salt of the Gospel, serves as a preservative to the nectar of the apple. . . . *and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* (Rev 22:2) The apple itself is considered to have medicinal properties. My mother swore by the adage, "An apple a day will keep the doctor away," and I believe it. The vitamin and nutrient rich fiber alone can prevent many disorders of the intestinal tract.

Unlike the fruit of the apple tree, the fruit that our Lord Jesus Christ offers will never decay or corrupt. His Word is sure, unchanging, and pure! Unlike the apple tree whose leaves offer shade and shadow for only a season of the year, our Lord Jesus Christ offers His shadow of peace and comfort perennially.

The Apple Tree offers sustenance and nutrients for the body only, but our Lord Jesus Christ (that is the Tree of Life) offers life eternal.

The Tree of Life (which our Lord is) does not flourish only in season, but out of season as well. Its fruit is abundant and unailing – never lacking in quality. Perhaps that Tree of Life is much like the lesser tree mentioned by Daniel the prophet: <sup>10</sup> *Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. <sup>11</sup> The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: <sup>12</sup> The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.* (Dan 4:10-12)