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# COMMENTARIES

## EXPOSITION OF THE BOOK OF SOLOMON'S SONG, COMMONLY CALLED CANTICLES

**VOL. 1**

*by John Gill*

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;  
that it may be displayed because of the truth  
— Psalm 60:4*

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**EXPOSITION**

**OF THE BOOK OF**

**SOLOMON'S SONG,**

**COMMONLY CALLED**

**CANTICLES.**

**IN TWO VOLUMES.**

*WHEREIN*

*The Authority Of It Is Established And Vindicated Against  
Objections, Both Ancient And Modern; Several Versions  
Compared With The Original Text; The Different Senses Both Of  
Jewish And Christian Interpreters Considered, And The Whole  
Opened And Explained In Proper And Useful Observations.*

**BY JOHN GILL, D. D.**

*Cantium canticorum spiritualis quaedam sanctarum est voluptas  
mentium, in conjugio illius regis & reginae civiitatis, quod est Christus &  
ecclesia; sed haec voluptas allegoricis tegminibus involuta est, ut  
desideretur ardentius, nudeturque jucundius, & appareat sponsus, cui  
dicitur in codem cantico, aequitas dilexit te, & sponsa quae ibi audit,  
charitas in deliciis tuis. AUG. de Civ. Dei, 1. 17. c. 20.*

**VOL. 1.**

**EDINBURGH:**  
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## PREFACE.

*THE following Exposition was delivered in one hundred and twenty-two Sermons, to the Congregation where God his providence has placed me, and were designed only for their use, profit, and education. Had I had any thoughts of publishing it to the world when I entered upon it, perhaps it might have appeared with some little more advantage than now it does; nor had it appeared now, had not the importunity of the people to whom I minister, with others, obliged me to it; to which I the more readily complied, considering that the authority and usefulness of this book are called in question in this loose and degenerate age; in which, not only this, but all scripture is ridiculed and burlesqued, and the great doctrines of faith therein contained treated with the utmost sneer and contempt; and therefore would willingly contribute all I can towards the vindicating of this, or any other part of the sacred writings; which, being given by inspiration of God, are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.”*

*I have in the performance of this work, consulted the original text, with the versions of several learned men; and have taken notice of them where they have differed from our translation, or have furnished out a proper and useful observation. I have also inspected several interpreters upon this book, both Jewish and Christian, and have collected their several senses together; and generally, if not always, have humbly given my opinion which is the most eligible. The versions which I have made use of, are those of the Septuagint, the Vulgate Latin, the Tigurine, Junius and Tremellius, Arias Montanus, Pagninus, etc. The writings and interpreters which I have consulted, of the Jewish, are Shirhashirim Rabba, Targum, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Alshech and Yalcut Simeoni, together with the books of Zohar and Rabboth, which are interspersed with the senses of various passages in this book. Of Christian interpreters, Alcuin, Foliot, Mercerus, Cocceius, Sanctius, Ainsworth, Brightman, Cotton, Durham, Patrick, etc. from all which I have received profit and advantage; and from none more than from the short notes of the incomparable Ainsworth, and the sweet observations of the excellent Durham: I mention these authors, not by way of ostentation, but as in duty bound to acknowledge by whom I have profited; for, as Pliny says, <sup>f1</sup> Est benignum et plenum ingenui pudoris, fateri per quos profeceris. Where two or more senses of any passage have*

*offered agreeable to the analogy of faith, I have considered them all, and have made what improvement of them I was capable of, leaving the reader to judge for himself, which of them is most preferable; this I thought to be a much better way than to be too positive and dogmatical in the sense of a text, especially in such a part of scripture, which is so very mystical and abstruse. If I should be thought in any part of this work to have stretched the metaphors too far, I hope it will be imputed to an honest zeal, and a hearty desire to set forth the glory of Christ's person; and his exceeding great love to his church and people; to do which, all tropes and figures, all the flowers of rhetoric fall abundantly short. I have been obliged to contract what I delivered sermon-wise, lest the work should swell to too large a bulk, but the substance of it is here contained.*

*I would only observe, as to this edition <sup>f2</sup> of the work, that I have made various additions to it; having, since the publication of the second edition, met with an objection or two to the antiquity and authority of the book itself, I thought it necessary to consider them, and remove them; being unwilling that any thing should lie against a book so grand, so sacred and useful. I have also given a summary of the contents of each chapter, which was wanting in the former editions: and though I had in many parts of the work, attended to the literal sense of passages, yet not so frequently as I have in my shorter notes on this book-published in my Exposition of the whole Bible: I have therefore inserted from thence many things relating to the literal sense, with many others added, which will greatly enrich this edition, and make it more entertaining; and will greatly serve to shew the propriety of the allusions, figures, and metaphors made use of throughout the whole; and to illustrate and confirm the spiritual meaning of this sublime and mysterious book. I have left out at the end of it, the Targum or Chaldee paraphrase, with my notes thereon, which were in the former editions, they being of little use and benefit; especially to common readers.*

# CHAPTER 1.

In this chapter, after the general title of the book, verse 1 the church expresses her strong desires and most ardent wishes for some fresh discoveries of the love of Christ to her, and for communion with him, verse 2. and having tasted of his love, and smelled a sweet savor in his grace, and enjoyed fellowship with him in his house, verses 3, 4. she observes her blackness and uncomeliness in herself, and comeliness in him, the trials and afflictions she met with from others, and her carelessness and negligence of her own affairs, verses 5, 6. and intreats her beloved to direct her, where she might meet with him feeding his flocks and giving them rest; to which he returns a kind and gracious answer, and gives proper instructions where to find him, verses 7, 8. and then commends her beauty, sets forth her amiableness and loveliness by various metaphors, and makes promises of more grace and good things to her, verses 9, 10, 11. when she declares what a value she had for Christ her beloved; and how precious he was unto her, like a bundle of myrrh, and a cluster of camphire, verses 12, 13, 14. and Christ again praises her beauty, and particularly takes notice of her eyes, and her modest look, verse 15. and she returns the encomium back to him, and expresses her pleasure and satisfaction in the house he had built for her, and the furniture of it, verses 16, 17.

## VERSE 1.

### *The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.*

INTENDING, by the assistance of God, to open and explain this mysterious part of the sacred writings, it will be proper,

- I. To enquire into, and establish the authority of this book.
  - II. Shew the nature of it; it being a *Song*.
  - III. The excellency of it. it being called the *Song of Songs*
  - IV. The penman of it; which is *Solomon*.
- I. I shall endeavor to prove the divine authority of this book, and vindicate it from those exceptions which are made against it: and,

**1st,** It was always received by the ancient Jews, to whom *the oracles of God were committed*, as a very valuable part of the sacred writings; and has been continued in the canon of the scriptures by the Christians in all ages to this very day The Jews had always a very venerable esteem of it, calling it, *the holy of holies*; forbidding their children the reading thereof, as well as the first chapter of *Genesis*, and the beginning and end of the prophecy of *Ezekiel*, until they were of thirty years of age, <sup>f3</sup> because of the mysteriousness and sublimity of it. They say, <sup>f4</sup> that *Solomon* when he was old and near death, the Holy Ghost dwelt upon him, and he composed the books of *Proverbs*, *Song of Songs*, and *Ecclesiastes*. Their ancient book of *Zohar* <sup>f5</sup> asserts, that *Solomon* composed it “by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit;” as does also the Targum upon this book, and *R. Solomon Jarchi*, and *R. Alben Ezra*, in their prefaces to their commentaries upon it; the latter of which has these words;

“God forbid, God forbid, says he, that the *Song of songs* should be written or understood of things obscene; but it is entirely parabolical, and had it not been of very great excellency, it had not been written in the catalogue of the holy scriptures; for of it there has been no controversy, that it defiles the hands:” <sup>f6</sup>

for though there was once a controversy <sup>f7</sup> among the wise men concerning the books of *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiastes*, who afterwards, as it became them, changed their minds; yet there never was any concerning this, as appears from their *Mirnah*; where they say <sup>f8</sup> that

“all the scriptures are holy, but the *Song of songs* is the holy of holies; and if the wise men have had any controversy, it has been only concerning *Ecclesiastes*:”

so that this book appears to be authentic, according to the mind of the ancient as well as of the modern Jews; and as for the Christians, they have always looked upon it as a part of the holy scripture, a few only excepted, and have all along continued it in the canon as they found and received it. The ancient fathers and councils have always esteemed it sacred and venerable, not to take notice of authorities of a later date. The opinion of *Theodorus of Mopsuest*, who called the divine authority of this book into question, was condemned in the second council of *Constantinople*, which was held about the year 553. This book also appears in the catalogue of the canonical books of scripture, established in the council of *Laodicea*, Can. 59. held about the year 364. It is likewise in *Origen's* catalogue, recorded

by *Eusebius*,<sup>f9</sup> as well as in that which *Melito*<sup>f10</sup> brought from the East, and sent to his friend *Onesimus*, who flourished about the year 140. So that thus far, at least, we can trace up the authority of this book among the Christians: Not to take notice of the canons of the Apostles, in which it stands as a part of canonical scripture: nor the Constitutions of the Apostles with the larger epistles of *Ignatius*, in which citations are made from this book; which, if genuine, would prove the reception of it in the Christian church still more early; but because they are generally looked upon to be spurious, they are not to be insisted on. And it may be farther observed, that not only *Origen*, but *Hippolytus* in the third century,<sup>f11</sup> *Carpathius*, *Gregory Nyssene* in the fourth, and *Theodoret* in the fifth, and others in the following centuries, wrote commentaries upon this book; and *Eusebius*<sup>f12</sup> ascribes it to *Solomon*, and so does *Athanasius*.<sup>f13</sup>

**2dly**, This book was wrote by one that was θεοπνευστος, divinely inspired; as appears by his being the penman of the books of *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiastes*; for why he should not be under the inspiration of the same Spirit in writing this, as he was in writing those, there appears no reason to conclude. The objection against it, taken from his great fall into lewdness and idolatry, produced by a late author,<sup>f14</sup> avails but little; especially, if, as some think, it should appear that it was written before; or if, with others, it is taken to be wrote after his fall, it will lie as strongly against the book of *Ecclesiastes*, which is generally allowed to be wrote after, as it does against this: Besides, it has pleased the all-wise God, who gives no account of his matters to his creatures, to make use of men, after very great falls into sin, as Amanuenses of his Holy Spirit, and penmen of the sacred scriptures, as *David* and *Peter*.

**3dly**, The dignity and sublimity of the matter contained herein, shew it to be no human composure; for *never man spake* or wrote like unto it; it is therefore called the *Song of songs*, being the most excellent of Songs; which cannot be equaled by any, but surpasses all others, not only human but divine; it is preferred to all scriptural songs, which, as one<sup>f15</sup> observes, would be blasphemous to do, was it not of a divine rise and authority.

**4thly**, The majesty of its style bears a testimony to the divine original of it, which cannot be equaled by the most elaborate performances; it defies all the art and wisdom of man to come near it; and plainly shews itself to be the language of God himself, whose *voice is powerful and full of majesty*.

**5thly**, The power and efficacy which it has in and over the hearts of men, is another evidence of its being the word of God; which is *quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*. This book has been *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*; which are so many arguments of its being *given by inspiration of God*; it *effectually works in them that believe*; it has been useful to thousands who have had their spiritual senses exercised, for the comfort of their souls, the raising of their affections, the increase of their faith, and their instruction in divine things: the reading and expounding of this excellent portion of scripture have been owned by God for the good of multitudes, who are so many sealing evidences of the authority of it.

**6thly**, The impartiality of it is another evidence of its divine original: the bride is here frequently introduced proclaiming her own weaknesses and infirmities, as in chapter 1:5, 6. and 3:1. and 5:2, 3. Now was it a mere human composure of *Solomon's*, celebrating the amours between him and *Pharaoh's* daughter, would it be reasonable to suppose, that he should so manifestly and openly declare the defects and imperfections of his bride? But to consider it as a divine poem, expressing the mutual love between Christ and his church, it agrees very well with the other parts of the sacred writings, wherein the infirmities of God's own people are not concealed; not even of those who were themselves the penmen of them; which is a strong proof of their divine authority.

**7thly**, There is a very great agreement between this and other portions of scripture. Now this has been always looked upon as a considerable evidence of the authority of the sacred writings, that though they have been delivered at *sundry times, and in divers manners*, yet there has been always an entire harmony between them; the which also appears in this part of scripture; for though it is delivered in a mysterious and figurative style, yet it admits of senses which are very agreeable to *the proportion or analogy of faith*; nay, in many places of the New Testament, there seems to be manifest allusions to this song, as will be hereafter more particularly observed: but notwithstanding all these evidences of its divine original, there have not been wanting persons who have called in question its sacred authority; as Theodorus of Mopsuest, whose opinion was, that it was not wrote by inspiration, but was only designed by Solomon to celebrate his amours between him and *Pharaoh's* daughter; which opinion of his was



condemned in the sixth century by the second council of Constantinople, as has been before observed: Castalio in the sixteenth century was condemned for the same opinion, by the senate of Geneva, and was ordered to depart the city upon it: Grotius in the last century seemed to be much of the same mind; and Mr. Whiston in this has attempted in a set tract to weaken the authority of it, and make it appear to be a loose, profane and amorous song: His proposition is this;

“The book of Canticles is not a sacred book of the Old Testament; nor was it originally esteemed as such, either by the Jewish or Christian church;”

with what truth this is asserted, will in some measure appear from what has been already said. The arguments by which he endeavors to confirm and establish this proposition, are as follow, which I shall particularly consider.

### 1. Because as he asserts,

“It was not written in his younger days, or when he was the good, the wise, the chaste, and the religious man; but long afterwards, when he was become wicked and foolish, and lascivious, and idolatrous.”

And he affirms, that there are some very plain and particular chronological characters in this book, which determine it to belong to the latter and worser part of his life, and to that only. And,

The first passage in it, which he mentions to confirm this, is <sup><2109></sup>Song of Solomon 1:9. where the church is compared to *a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots*; which he imagines refers to those horses and chariots which Solomon, contrary to an express command, <sup><6776></sup>Deuteronomy 17:16 had brought unto him out of Egypt, <sup><1108></sup>1 Kings 10:28, 29 when he began to degenerate from his former piety: In answer to which, it may be replied, that the comparison in the text under consideration, is not made to a company of horses brought out of Egypt, which ran in Solomon's chariots; but to a company of horses in Egypt, which ran in Pharaoh's chariots; so that this text falls very much short of proving what it is produced for.

His other chronological evidence of this book's belonging to the loose and vicious part of Solomon's life, is <sup><2172></sup>Song of Solomon 7:12. where mention is made of the *chariots of Amminadib*; in which he supposes there are more proofs than one of what he contends for; the first is, that here are

chariots referred to, as used in Judea, which, he says, we only meet with once before, since the days of Moses, namely, <sup><108B></sup>2 Samuel 8:4 though that appears to be a mistake; for Absalom prepared himself chariots and horsemen, <sup><105B></sup>2 Samuel 15:1 as did also Adonijah, <sup><100B></sup>1 Kings 1:5 both which were before Solomon's accession to the throne. His other proof from this text is, that this Amminadib was one of the twelve rulers of provinces, who married Taphath the daughter of Solomon, <sup><104B></sup>1 Kings 4:11 and therefore he concludes that Solomon could not be a very young man when he wrote this book. To which I answer,

**1st**, That it is not Amminadib but Abinadab, that is there mentioned.

**2dly**, That it was not Abinadab, but the son of Abinadab, that married Solomon's daughter.

**3dly**, It is not likely that King Solomon's son-in-law should be a chariot driver, as this Amminadib is thought to be by many interpreters, who was famous for his skill, courage, and swiftness in driving.

**4thly**, This is not the proper name of any person, but are two words, as R. Aben Ezra, and R. Solomon Jarchi observe, and should be rendered, *the chariots of my free or princely people*; and therefore afford no chronological character of any part of Solomon's life whatever.

The last chronological evidence he mentions, page 10, and which he takes to be the principal and most evident one, which shews in what particular time of Solomon's life this book was written, is chapter 6:8, 9 where mention is made of *sixty queens*, and *eighty concubines*, and *virgins without number*; which he thinks refers to Solomon's wicked practice of polygamy, expressly forbidden <sup><107B></sup>Deuteronomy 17:17. To which I reply,

**1st**, That the allusion does not seem to be made to the number of Solomon's queens and concubines, but to the custom of some princes in the East, which Solomon had in view; for the number of queens and concubines here does not agree with the number of Solomon's, recorded <sup><111B></sup>1 Kings 11:3 where he is said to have *seven hundred wives*, and *three hundred concubines*, which is vastly different from the account which is given here: and if it should be said, that though when he wrote this book, he had not arrived to that prodigious pitch of wickedness in the practice of polygamy, to which he afterwards did; yet he had begun, and gone a great

way in it, and had at the time he wrote it, such a number of wives and concubines as are here mentioned, which he refers to. I answer,

**2dly**, That it is not likely that Solomon should prefer one of his wives, and praise her above all the rest; which would have been the way to have alienated their affections from him, and made her the object of their envy, as well as have raised such domestic feuds and quarrels; which would not easily be laid. Besides,

**3dly**, It does not seem reasonable to suppose that those other queens and concubines of Solomon's should speak so much in the praise and commendation of his lawful wife, as these are said to do here; which is not usual for such sort of persons to do. As to those other texts referred to, namely, chapter 1:3, 5 and 2:7 and 3:5, 10, 11 and 5:8, 16 and 6:9 and 8:4, 6, 7 produced by Mr. Whiston, to prove that the person, who is the bridegroom in this song, loved many other women and virgins, of which his spouse is jealous; I need only say, that those texts do indeed express the love of the daughters of Jerusalem to him, and the notice which the spouse took of them, for whom she appears to have a very great value and affection, to whom she often points out her beloved, and directs them to observe the transcendent excellencies and beauties of his person, as well as strictly charges them to give him no disturbance: yet she also signifies her very great love and regard to him; but no where insinuates any wandering affection or wanton love in him unto others, or that she was jealous of him upon that account.

**2.** His next reason, page 12, 13 is,

“that there is no foundation for an allegorical, or mystical sense of this book; there being not the least sign of a sober, virtuous, or divine meaning therein, nor any thing that in the least concerns morality or virtue, God or religion, the Messiah or his kingdom;”

which, if true, would indeed go a great way against the authority of it; but I hope the following Exposition will make it appear that there is a good foundation in it for a mystical or allegorical sense, agreeable enough to the analogy of faith; as well as shew that there are many things in it which encourage morality and virtue, promote the cause of God and religion, and concern the Messiah and his kingdom; and Mr Whiston has not thought fit to give any one instance which discover, the contrary.

**3.** He says, page 13, that

“the introduction of double or mystical senses of scripture among the Jews, is much later than the days of Solomon, and cannot therefore be supposed to belong to any book of his writing:”

but this does not appear to be true, for surely the speech of Jotham to the men of Shechem, recorded in Judges 9 must be understood in an allegorical or mystical sense; and Nathan’s parable, ~~<0201>~~2 Samuel 12:1 which was delivered before Solomon’s time. Moreover, the forty-fifth Psalm is of the very same strain, and bears a very near resemblance with this song, which was wrote by David, Solomon’s father: besides, suppose this allegorical and mystical way of writing had not been used before by the inspired writers, it is no argument that it should not be used now, as it was afterwards in the writings of the New Testament, as Mr. Whiston confesses, page 22.

**4.** Another reason which he produces, page 23, is, that

“neither the contemporary nor succeeding writers of the Old Testament, ever quote or allude to this book of Canticles, nor to any part thereof, upon any occasion whatsoever.”

The same may be said of many other books of the Old Testament, whose authority was never yet called in question; nor can this be looked upon by judicious persons, a sufficient reason why any of them should.

**5.** He says, page 24,

“The apocryphal writers of the Old Testament, never quote nor allude to this book, nor to any part thereof, upon any occasion whatsoever.”

Which I persuade myself, wilt he no wars shocking or stumbling to any thoughtful Christian, nor belooked upon by them as a sufficient objection against the authority of it; had they expressly opposed it, it could not have been very considerably improved against it, much less will their silence have any force to explode it; and yet after all, in Eccl. 47:18. Solomon is admired for his Songs, Proverbs, and Parables.

**6.** He urges, page 25, that

“Philo, the eminent Alexandrian Jew, who was contemporary with Christ and his earliest apostles, and who was prodigious fond of mystical or allegorical senses of scripture, does yet never cite nor

allude to this book of Canticles, nor to any part of it, on any occasion whatsoever.”

Be it so, that it is not once cited or alluded to in his writings; for though they are voluminous, there are but few citations of scripture in them; yet it does not follow from thence that it must be spurious. Many books in the canon of scripture, whose authority is unquestionable, would yet stand upon a very precarious foundation, if citations out of them and allusions to them in human writings, were absolutely necessary to their continuance in it.

**7.** What he lays a considerable stress upon, and makes the main foundation for the exclusion of this book, is, that Josephus not only neither cites nor alludes to it, but has also left it out in his catalogue of the sacred writings. That he should neither cite nor allude unto it, in writing a history, need not be wondered at; but if it can be made to appear that it is not to be found in his catalogue, it will indeed be a considerable objection against it. Now the account which Josephus <sup>f16</sup> gives of the sacred writings among the Jews is only this, namely, that they had only two and twenty books, five of which are books of Moses, thirteen wrote by the prophets, and the other four contained holy hymns and moral precepts. Now in this account he seems to have regard to the division of the books of the Old Testament into three parts, <sup>f17</sup> used by the Jews: which was first, the Law; secondly, the Prophets; and thirdly, the Hagiographa; which our Lord also takes notice of, ~~Q244~~ Luke 24:44 where he saith,

These are the words which I spake unto you: while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me;

where by the Psalms is meant the whole third part called the Hagiographa, because it began with that book; which also contained the most plain and manifest testimonies, of the person, office, and sufferings of Christ; more than any other book in that part did. Now the order of the books, according to this division of them, which Josephus has a regard to, was this, namely,

In the Law, which was the first division, stood

*These are the five books of Moses, according to Josephus.*

1. Genesis.
2. Exodus.
3. Leviticus.
4. Numbers.
5. Deuteronomy.

In the Prophets, which was the second division, stood

*These are the thirteen books of the prophets, according to Josephus.*

1. Joshua.
2. Judges, with Ruth; which make but one book.
3. Samuel 1 and 2 but one book, hence Samuel is called a prophet,  
~~<H130>~~ Acts 13:20.
4. Kings 1 and 2 but one book.
5. Isaiah.
6. Jeremiah, with the Lamentations, but one book.
7. Ezekiel.
8. Daniel.
9. The twelve minor prophets, but one book. See ~~<H100>~~ Mark 1:2; ~~<H170>~~ Acts  
7:42.
10. Job.
11. Ezra and Nehemiah, but one book.
12. Esther.
13. Chronicles 1 and 2 but one book.

In the Hagiographa, which was the third division, stood

*These are the four books containing holy hymns  
and moral precepts, according to Josephus.*

1. Psalms.
2. Proverbs.
3. Ecclesiastes.
4. Solomon's Song; in all twenty-two.

From hence it appears, that there is no force in this objection; nor has Mr. Whiston any reason to charge Dean Prideaux with forcing this book of Solomon's Song into Josephus's catalogue; for his twenty-two books

cannot be made up without it; though the Dean had no manner of reason to leave out the book of Chronicles, seeing Ezra and Nehemiah, which he makes to be two books, are comprehended in one by the Jews, which he himself also observes. <sup>f18</sup> The Jews indeed, at this present time, reckon the books of the Old Testament to be twenty-four, and that by making Ruth, which is a continuation of the history of the book of Judges and the Lamentations, which were wrote by Jeremy; and so properly belong to him, two books distinct by themselves; and even in this account of theirs of the sacred writings, this book of Canticles keeps its place, nor did they ever pretend to exclude it.

**8.** Another argument used by Mr. Whiston, page 29, is, that

“our blessed Savior himself does never once make the least allusion to this book, or to any part of it, on any occasion whatsoever.”

To this I reply, that it appears plain and manifest, that several phrases used by our Savior bear a near resemblance with, are allusions to, and seem to be taken out of this book: thus the efficacious grace of God is expressed by drawing, <sup><R64></sup>John 6:44 agreeable to <sup><2104></sup>Song of Solomon 1:4. In his discourse with Nicodemus, he compares the Holy Spirit to the wind, <sup><R88></sup>John 3:8 which metaphor is used <sup><2116></sup>Song of Solomon 4:16, likewise he seems manifestly to allude in <sup><4152></sup>Matthew 13:52 *where the instructed Scribe* is said to bring forth *things new and old*, to <sup><2173></sup>Song of Solomon 7:13 where the very phrase is used: as also his comparing the church to a vineyard, and letting it out to husbandmen, are very agreeable to, and are the very phrases used <sup><2181></sup>Song of Solomon 8:11, 12. To all which might be added, several other resemblances and allusions, which are to be found in the evangelic history, as <sup><4131></sup>Matthew 25:1, 5 compared with <sup><2182></sup>Song of Solomon 5:2 and <sup><4193></sup>Matthew 9:13; <sup><4192></sup>John 3:29, where Christ is called the *bridegroom*, and the disciples *the children of the bride-chamber*, agreeable to the several parties in this song.

**9.** He says, page 30, that

“when St John, the beloved disciple, came at the end of his Revelation, to this very matter of the *marriage of the Lamb*, or Messias; yet have we not a word of it; that is, this book, nor the least allusion to it, nor to any part of it, whatsoever.”

That John, in his book of Revelation, refers and alludes to this of Solomon’s song, seems undeniable; every one may easily observe what a

likeness and resemblance there is between the description which the spouse gives of her beloved in Song of Solomon 5 and that which John gives of Christ in Revelation 1. Moreover, the phrase of Christ's *standing at the door, and knocking*, <sup><400></sup>Revelation 3:20. manifestly refers unto and plainly appears to be taken out of <sup><218></sup>Song of Solomon 5:2. where the spouse says, *It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, etc.* Besides, what John says of the marriage of the Lamb, and the preparation of the bride for it if it is not an allusion to, yet it is a confirmation of what is said in this book, where the church is represented as beautifully arrayed and adorned, and as passionately wishing for the consummation of the marriage; nay, this, is spoken of as completed, <sup><216></sup>Song of Solomon 2:16 and the glory and pomp of the solemnity described, <sup><211></sup>Song of Solomon 3:11 with the joy that was expressed on that occasion; for there the *day of his espousals is called the day of the gladness of his heart*: also it deserves our notice, that those two books of Revelation and Solomon's Song, conclude much in the same manner. John closes his book of the Revelation, and with it the canon of the scriptures, with a passionate wish for Christ's second coming, saying, *Amen: even so, come, Lord Jesus*: and the church concludes the book of Solomon's Song thus; *Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.*

**10.** As what he thinks will much prejudice the authority of this book, he says, page 30, that

“the writers of the known books of the New Testament, with their earliest companions the apostolical fathers of the first century; St Matthew, St John, St Peter, St Paul, St Mark, St Luke, St James, St Jude, St Clement in his epistles, St Barnabas, that prodigious allegorizer, and St Hermas: I may add, says he, and St Polycarp also, one of their later companions, do never once cite or allude to this book of Canticles, or to any part of it, on any occasion whatsoever.”

That the evangelists, Matthew and John, either in using their own, or in recording the words of Christ, have alluded to some passages in this book, I have already shewn; and the same may be said of the other evangelists, Mark and Luke, who mention several of the very same things; for which see <sup><409></sup>Mark 2:19, 20 and 12:1; <sup><454></sup>Luke 5:34, 35 and 20:9, and it seems very evident, the apostle Paul has reference to it in many passages of his writings, as wilt appear from comparing <sup><404></sup>2 Corinthians 2:14, 15, 16;



<4912>Ephesians 5:2 with <2008>Song of Solomon 1:3 as also <5026>Colossians 2:16, 17; <8008>Hebrews 10:1 with <2027>Song of Solomon 2:17 and 4:6 to which may be added <4972>Ephesians 5:27 compared with <2047>Song of Solomon 4:7. So that seeing there are so many passages in several of the writers of the known books of the New Testament, which bear so near a resemblance, and have so manifest an allusion to some parts of this book, it need not much concern us that Clement, Barnabas, Hermas, and Polycarp take no notice of it.

**11.** What he thinks will much prejudice the authority of this book, is,

“that the Apostolical Constitutions give no manner of reason to suppose that this book of Canticles was then looked upon as a book of scripture, but the direct contrary.”

Now those books called The Constitutions of the Apostles, by Clement, Mr Whiston looks upon to be truly authentic and apostolical; when they appear manifestly to be spurious, entirely destitute of apostolical authority, are of a much later date than the times of the apostles, and contain several things and doctrines directly opposite unto them. As for instance, praying with the face to the East is enjoined, 1. 2. c. 57. and 1. 7. c. 44. Trigamy is asserted to be an indication of incontinency; and such marriages as are beyond the third, are called manifest fornication, and unquestionable uncleanness, 1. 3. c. 2. Anointing with oil in baptism is enjoined, 1. 3. c. 15, 16, and 1. 7. c. 27, 41, 42. The keeping of the day of Christ’s nativity, Epiphany, the Quadragesima, or Lent, the feast of the passover, and the festivals of the apostles, 1. 5. c. 13 and 1. 8. c. 33. Fasting on the fourth and sixth days of the week, 1, 5. c. 15. Baptizing of infants, 1. 6. c. 15. Singing for the dead, and honoring of their relics, 1. 6, c. 30. Nay, praying for saints departed, 1. 8. c. 41, 42, 43, 44. As also crossing with the sign of the cross in the forehead, 1. 8. c. 12. Moreover the Lord’s Supper is called an unbloody sacrifice, 1. 6. c. 23 and 1. 8. c. 5, 46. It is likewise asserted, that Christ, in the celebration of that ordinance, mixed wine and water in the cup, 1. 8. c. 12. Nay, concubines, continuing so, are allowed an admittance to a participation of that sacred ordinance, 1. 8 c. 32 with many other things which appear foreign enough from the simplicity of the apostolic age, doctrine, and practice. And now who that reads and considers these things, will ever think that those writings can furnish out an argument sufficient to prejudice the authority of the book of Solomon’s Song? Had any thing been said in them, which was expressly against it, it

would scarce have deserved consideration, much less should their silence about it be improved as an evidence against it. And yet after all, it is pretty to observe how much Mr Whiston himself is foiled with two passages in them, which appear to be allusions and references to a passage in this book; the one is in 1. 6. c. 13. where the false apostles are called *αλωπέκων μεριδες καὶ χαμαιζήλων ἀμπελώνων ἀφανισαί*, *the portion of foxes, and the spoilers of the low vineyards*: And again, in the same book, c. 18. where those same persons are said to *spoil the church of God, ὡς ἀλώπεκες μικροί ἀμπελώνας*, *as the little foxes do the vineyards*; which are manifest references to <sup>f19</sup>Song of Solomon 2:15, and over-against the later of which passages Mr Whiston himself has placed this text as referring to it in the edition of the Constitutions which he has published. Now to evade the force of this, he is obliged to make this part of the work to be of a later date than the rest, even later than the destruction of Jerusalem; lest this book of Canticles should appear to have obtained authority too early in the world. He acknowledges that it is in the catalogue of the sacred writings mentioned in the Canons of the Apostles, Can. 85 which he looks upon to be genuine and authentic, though he questions its being in the original copies of those Canons; he allows, that Ignatius, in his larger epistle to the Ephesians, cites <sup>f20</sup>Song of Solomon 1:3, 4, and is very willing to grant it a place in Melito's catalogue, which I have before mentioned: So that from the whole it appears, that the Apostolical Constitutions are so far from making against the authority of this book, that they rather make for it; though their testimony is good for nothing, the whole being a spurious work, and carries in it evident marks of falsehood and impiety, and was condemned as false and heretical by the sixth general synod held at Constantinople <sup>f19</sup> about the year 680. Thus have I considered the several arguments and objections produced by Mr Whiston to disprove the sacred authority of this book, which, notwithstanding, appears to have a divine stamp upon it. <sup>f20</sup> There is one objection more made against it, which I think Mr Whiston has took no notice of, and that is, that no proper name of God is to be found in this Song. To which I reply, in the words of Mr Durham <sup>f21</sup>

1. "That it is so also in other scriptures, as in the book of Esther; the scripture's authority doth not depend on naming the name of God, but on having his warrant and authority.

2. This Song being allegorical and figurative, it is not so meet nor consistent with its stile, to have God named under proper names, as in other scriptures: Yet,

3. There are titles and descriptions here given to an excellent person, which can agree to none other but Christ, the eternal Son of God; as, *The King; O thou whom my soul loveth; the chief of ten thousands; the Rose of Sharon*, and the like; whereby his eminency is “singularly set out above all others in the world.”

And yet after all, the name of God, Jah, the same with Jehovah, and a contraction of that, is mentioned in it, which is the greatest of the divine names, and is expressive of the being, eternity, and immutability of God. It is in chapter 8:6. **hyAtbhl** **ç** *the flame of God*, or *Jehovah*, which we render *a most vehement flame*; the sense being increased by the word Jah being added, as the word God to *mountains* and *cedars*, in <sup><1816></sup>Psalm 36:6 and <sup><1810></sup>Psalm 80:10 for these are not one word as Ben Asher thinks, but two according to Ben Naphtali and Aben Ezra; see the exposition of the place.

Since the second edition of this Exposition was published in 1751, I have met with two learned gentlemen, I am sorry for it, and that I am obliged to take notice of them, who think that this book is of a later date than the times of Solomon, and so of course none of his, and which must sap the authority of it. The one observes <sup>f22</sup> that the word David, from its first appearance in Ruth, where it is written **drd** without the yod, continues to be so written through the books of Samuel, Kings, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, but appears with a yod **dyrd** in the books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Zechariah; wherefore he suggests, that if it was customary to write this word without a yod till the captivity, and with one after it; then he thinks a strong argument may be drawn from hence against the antiquity of the Canticles, and its being made by Solomon, since this name is written with a yod in <sup><2104></sup>Song of Solomon 4:4 the only place in it in which it is used: But in answer to this, it must be said, it is not fact that the word is universally used without the yod in the books mentioned, particularly in the book of Kings: for the authors of the Masorah have observed on <sup><1184></sup>1 Kings 3:14 that it is five times written full, as they call it, that is, with a yod, **dyrd** three of the places in the book of Kings I have traced out, <sup><1184></sup>1 Kings 3:14; and 11:4, 36 and have found it

so written in all the printed copies I have seen; and so it is read by the Eastern Jews in <sup><35724></sup>Ezekiel 37:24 and in several printed editions of <sup><3423></sup>Ezekiel 34:23. This learned man is aware that it is so written once in Hosea, and twice in Amos; books written two hundred years before the captivity; but then he observes that in the two last places in Bomberg's edition it has a little circle (o) to mark it for an error, or a faulty word, though none over the word in Hosea: But it should be known, that that circle in hundreds of places is not used to point out any thing faulty in the copy, but is only a mark referring to the margin, and to what is observed there: and be it, that it does point out an error or a faulty word, the same circle is over the word in Canticles, and consequently shews it to be faulty there, and to be corrected and read without the yod, which observation destroys the argument from it; and so it is read in that place in the Talmud <sup>f23</sup> without it, and in the ancient book of Zohar; <sup>f24</sup> and indeed it seems as if it was read without the yod in the copies seen by the authors of the Masorah, since in their note on <sup><1084></sup>1 Kings 3:14 besides the five places where it is written full, or with the yod, they say it is so written throughout the Chronicles, the twelve minor prophets, and Ezra, which includes Nehemiah, but make no mention of Solomon's Song; which one would think they would have done, had it been so written there in the copy or copies before them: so that upon the whole, the argument, if it has any force in it, turns out for, and not against the antiquity of Solomon's Song. But this matter stands in a dearer light by observing the larger Masorah on <sup><11104></sup>1 Kings 11:4 and on <sup><3423></sup>Ezekiel 34:23 in which the five places are mentioned where this word is written full, <sup><1084></sup>1 Kings 3:14 and 11:4, 36, <sup><2004></sup>Song of Solomon 4:4, <sup><3423></sup>Ezekiel 34:23, in which places this word was originally so written, as well as throughout Chronicles, the twelve prophets, and Ezra; so that in all these places it is marked not as a faulty word, but as rightly written, though different from what it is in other places. The other learned man <sup>f25</sup> forms his argument from the use of the word **tbhl** **ç** in <sup><18150></sup>Job 15:30, and in this Song, chapter 8:6 his words are,

“I am much deceived if this word be not a strong proof of the age of this poem, (the book of Job) for it is not found but in Ezekiel and the Song of Solomon, the one written during the captivity, and the other after it.”

This proceeds upon a false piece of criticism in a twofold respect; for he adds,

“its construction which is evidently **ç** for **rça**, and **tbhl** the constructive form of **hbhl** *flamma*, shews very clearly its age; since that manner of abbreviation is not found in the books undoubtedly “written before the captivity.”

For, **1st**, this abbreviation appears in books much more ancient than that, not only in the book of Solomon’s Song, the antiquity of which is not to be set aside by this observation, but frequently in the book of Ecclesiastes, undoubtedly written by Solomon, and in the Psalms of David his father before him; for it is not only in psalms without a title, all which are supposed by some to be David’s, as in <sup><1096></sup>Psalm 129:6, 7; 135:2, 8, 10; 136:23, and 146:5 but also in psalms which bear his name, as in <sup><1018></sup>Psalm 122:3, 4; 124:2, 6; <sup><1018></sup>133:2, 3 and 144:15; yea it was in use long before the times of David, even in the times of the Judges. Deborah has it in her song, **ytmqç ytmqç d[**, <sup><1018></sup>Judges 5:7 and in other places in that book, chapter <sup><1017></sup>6:17 and <sup><1072></sup>7:12 and <sup><1085></sup>8:26.

**2dly**, It is a mistake that the construction of the word **tbhl ç** is **ç** for **rça**; and **tbhl** ; for **ç**; in that word is not servile, but radical, as Aben Ezra and Ben Melech observe; it is an addition to the Hebrew word after the Chaldee manner, and has its derivation from a root in the Chaldee or Syriac language, **bhl ç**, which signifies to *kindle, inflame, and burn*, as appears, not only from all the Syriac and Chaldee Lexicons, but from the frequent use of the word in the Syriac version of the Old Testament; nor is this the only Chaldee or Syriac word in Solomon’s Song; see chapter 1:17 and 2:11. Though perhaps as this writer from <sup>f26</sup> the Chaldaisms, Syriasms, and Arabisms in the book of Job, argues its being a production of a later age than what is usually assigned to it; so another of the same way of thinking and reasoning may conclude from some Chaldee words used in Solomon’s Song that it must be of a later age than his: but why may not Solomon be thought to make use of Chaldee or Syriac words as well as his father David, who makes use of words in the Syriac signification of them, as in <sup><1504></sup>Psalm 51:4 compared with <sup><10104></sup>Romans 3:4 and <sup><10104></sup>Psalm 60:4 and with Syro-chaldaic affixes, <sup><10438></sup>Psalm 103:3, 4, 5 and 115:7, 10? and why may not David and Solomon be thought to understand Chaldee or Syriac as well as Hezekiah’s courtiers? see <sup><1285></sup>2 Kings 18:26 and certainly Solomon must understand it, if what is said of him is true, though I lay no stress upon it, that he wrote the book of Wisdom in the Chaldee language <sup>f27</sup> though not by inspiration. Moreover, since the Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac,

Arabic, etc. are supposed to be dialects of the same language, why may not a word in one dialect less frequently, used in a book appear in it without determining the age of it? since one dialect may be as early or nearly as early as another, and can be no evidence of a book being of a later production than is generally thought, or of its being written when the purity of the Hebrew language began to decline, and after the dispersion of the Jews throughout the East, when it began to receive a taint of the other dialects, as this writer suggests; for what taint of the other dialects, as he calls it, did the Hebrew language receive in the captivity, and by the dispersion of the Jews? what appearance is there of Chaldaisms, Syriasm, etc. in the book of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, excepting the names of the months, books written after the captivity, more than in any books before, or even so much? are they not written in as pure Hebrew as any of those books, which may be thought to be written when that language was in its greatest purity? and if so, a few words in another dialect here and there in a book, is no rule to judge of a book by, and determine the age of it. Upon the whole, it is irresistably clear, that the sacred and divine authority of this book remains firm and unshaken, notwithstanding the above objections made against it; nor is there any reason for persons to scruple it, much less to reject it from the canon of the scriptures, nor to question in the least the antiquity and authenticity of it. I proceed,

**II.** To consider the nature and subject of this book; it being a *Song* in which the bride and bridegroom, with their friends and companions, the daughters of Jerusalem, bear their several parts; and it being a divine song, is, no doubt, intended for the glorifying of Christ, the cheering and refreshing of his church, and also the edification of others; for it is the duty of saints to be *teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; singing with grace in their hearts to the Lord*. I shall not enter into the consideration of the controversy, whether singing of the praises of God vocally, is an ordinance to be used under the New Testament, though I firmly believe it to be so; nay, that it is one of the most noble, and most glorious branches of religious worship, it being that which comes nearest to the employment of saints in a glorified state; and what requires a great deal of light, knowledge, experience, faith, and love to perform in a right way and manner; nor shall I need to observe those several cases of conscience concerning singing, which have a very good solution from this tong; such as these, namely, whether the distressed cases of God's children may be sung, or they sing when in distressed

circumstances: whether complaints of their sins, failings and infirmities, may be put into their songs: whether eases different from theirs, yea, such as they have not attained unto, may be sung; as also whether it is lawful to sing the praises of God in mixed assemblies; all which may be answered in the affirmative, and for which this song affords a sufficient foundation; the church here bringing net sorrows and distresses into this song as well as her comforts and privileges, chapter [2006](#)-1:6 and [2181](#)-3:1 and [2187](#)-5:7; nay, her sins and failings, chapter 1:5, 6 and [2182](#)-5:2, 3, 4. Very different cases are also here sung; yea, such, which, if taken in a strict sense, she had not fully attained to, as in chapter [2182](#)-8:12. Moreover, she sings in the presence of, and joins with the virgins, the daughters of Jerusalem, who seemed in a great measure to be ignorant of Christ, chapter [2188](#)-5:8, 9 and [2186](#)-6:8, 9, 10, all which are largely and judiciously insisted upon by the excellent Mr Durham, in his Exposition of this place, to which I refer the reader: I proceed more particularly to consider the nature and subject of this song; which,

**1st**, Is not a celebration of the amours between Solomon, and Pharoah's daughter, which has been the opinion of some, as has been already observed; for there are some things in it which are spoken of this bridegroom, which cannot be applied to Solomon, as that he was both a *king* and a *shepherd*, as in chapter 1:4 compared with 5:7 that he was his wife's brother, and she his sister, chapter [2182](#)-5:2 and [2181](#)-8:1. Nor is it likely that Solomon would ever give such commendations of himself, as are mentioned in chapter [2180](#)-5:10, etc. There are also many things spoken of the bride, which by no means agree with Pharoah's daughter, as that she was a *keeper of the vineyards*, chapter [2006](#)-1:6 and yet a *prince's daughter*, chapter [2207](#)-7:1 that she should be represented as running about the streets in the night, unattended, chapter [2182](#)-3:2 and be exposed to the blows and contempt of the watchmen, chapter [2187](#)-5:7; besides, several of the descriptions here given of her, if taken in a literal sense, would rather make her appear to be a monster than a beauty, as chapter [2001](#)-4:1-5 and chapter [2181](#)-7:1-5 all which agree very well, when understood of Christ and his Church. Nor,

**2dly**, Is it typical, that is to say, this book does not express the amours and marriage of Solomon and Pharoah's daughter, as typical of that inexpressible love and marriage-union between Christ and his church; it is true, there is some resemblance between natural and spiritual marriage, as is manifest from [4023](#)-Ephesians 5:23, 24, 25, 29, 31, 32 nor is it altogether

to be denied, that Solomon was a type of Christ, in some respects, in his marriage of that person; but that this book is an epithalamium, or nuptial song composed by him on that occasion, and that in such a manner, as at the same time also to be expressive of the love of Christ to his church, must be denied; for Solomon's marriage with Pharoah's daughter was at least twenty years before this book was wrote, as appears from chapter 7:4 where mention is made of the *tower of Lebanon*, by which seems to be meant, *the house of the forests of Lebanon*: or some tower near unto it; now he was seven years in building the temple, <sup><1068></sup>1 Kings 6:38 and thirteen more in building his own house, <sup><1100></sup>1 Kings 7:1 after which he built this, <sup><2180></sup>5:2. From hence it may be reasonably concluded, that this book was not penned on any such occasion; for Solomon would never write a nuptial song twenty years after his marriage, which should have been sung the same night he was married. M. Bossuet <sup>f28</sup> has an ingenious conjecture, though it seems to be without a solid foundation, that whereas the nuptial feast with the Hebrews was kept seven days, this song is to be distributed into seven parts, a part to be sung on each day during the celebration.

The first day, chapter <sup><2100></sup>1:— 2:6,  
 the second day, <sup><2117></sup>chapter 2:7-17,  
 the third day, <sup><2181></sup>chapter 3: — 5:1,  
 the fourth day, <sup><2182></sup>chapter 5:2 — 6:9,  
 the fifth day, <sup><2180></sup>chapter 6:10 — 7:11,  
 the sixth day, <sup><2172></sup>chapter 7:12. — 8:3,  
 the seventh day, chapter <sup><2184></sup>8:4-14.

Nor,

**3dly.** Is this book prophetic, expressing the state of the church and kingdom of Christ in the several ages of the world, with regard to particular historical facts and events, which had befallen or should befall it, either under the Old or New Testament-dispensation; this way indeed go most of the Jewish interpreters, as the Targum, R. Solomon Jarchi, and R. Aben Ezra; who have been followed by many Christian writers, though with more judgment and greater regard to the analogy of faith, as well as to the times of the New Testament: and who consider this book as describing the state of the church of God, whether the church under the legal dispensation, from the times of David and Solomon; and before, and in, and after the captivity to the birth and death of Christ; or the church



under the gospel-dispensation,, in its beginning, progress, various changes, and consummation, as Brightman and Cotton. Others interpret this book as pointing to the several ages and periods of the Christian church, in agreement with the seven churches of Asia, as Cocceius, and those that follow him, Hor-chius, Hofman, and Hennischius; which last writer makes this distribution of them: 1. The church at Ephesus, Song of Solomon 1:5-17 from the ascension of Christ to heaven, A.C. 33 to 370. 2. The church at Smyrna, ~~2ND~~ Song of Solomon 2:1-17 from A.C. 371 to 707. 3. The church at Pergamos, ~~2ND~~ Song of Solomon 3:1-11 from A.C. 708 to 1045. 4. The church at Thyatira, ~~2ND~~ Song of Solomon 4:1 to chapter 5:1 from A.C. 1046 to 1383. 5. The church at Sardis, ~~2ND~~ Song of Solomon 5:2 to chapter 6:8 from A.C. 1384 to 1721. 6. The church at Philadelphia, ~~2ND~~ Song of Solomon 6:9 to chapter 7:14 from A.C. 1722 to 2059. 7. The church at Laodicea, ~~2ND~~ Song of Solomon 8:1-14 from A.C. 2060, and onwards. But hereby the book is made liable to arbitrary, groundless, and uncertain conjectures, as well as its usefulness for the instruction and consolation of believers, in a great measure, is laid aside; for then such and such parts of it, which regard the church and believers, in such an age or period of time, can only be applied to them that lived at that time, and not to others; whereas all, and every part of this song, the first as well as the last, is applicable to believers in alleges of the world, which is a manifest proof that it cannot be historical, or prophetic. But,

**4thly**, The whole is figurative and allegorical, abounding with a variety of lively metaphors, and allusions to natural things; and so may be illustrated by the various things of nature, from whence the metaphors are taken, and to which the allusions be, and by the language and behavior of natural lovers to each others and which are to be observed in love-poems, though here expressed more decently and beautifully. This divine poem sets forth in a most striking manner the mutual love, unions and communion, which are between Christ and his church; also expresses the several different frames, cases and circumstances which attend believers in this life; so that they can come into no state or condition, but here is something in this song suited to their experience: which serves much to recommend it to believers, and discovers the excellency of it. Which,

**III.** Comes next to be considered, it being called the *Song of songs*, for this reason, because it is the most excellent of songs; so the *holy of holies* is used for the most holy, and the *King of kings* and *Lord of lords*, for the greatest King and chiefest Lord. This song. is more excellent than all

human songs; there is no comparison between them, either in the subject, stile, or manner of composition: it has the ascendant of all those thousand and five songs which Solomon himself made, of which we read <sup><103></sup>1 Kings 4:32 nay, is preferable to all scriptural songs; the subject of it being wholly and purposely the love of Christ to his church, its stile is lovely and majestic; the manner of its composition neat and beautiful; and the matter of it full and comprehensive, being suited to all believers, and their several cases: This song indeed contains all others in it, and has nothing wanting and deficient therein. The Jews say in their ancient book of Zohar <sup>f29</sup> that

“this song comprehends the whole law; the whole work of the creation; the secret of the fathers; the captivity of Egypt, and the coming out of Israel from thence; the song that was sung at the sea; the covenant of mount Sinai; the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness; their entrance into the land of Canaan; the building of the temple; the crown of the holy name; the captivity of Israel among the nations, and their redemption; the resurrection of the dead; and the sabbath of the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come.”

**IV.** The author or penman of this song is said to be Solomon; *the Song of songs, which is Solomon's*, that is, which is of, or *concerning* Solomon, <sup>f30</sup> as the words may be rendered; and so respect the subject of this song, which is Christ, the true Solomon, of whom Solomon was an eminent type, as is at large shewn in several particulars, on chapter <sup><107></sup>3:7. Now it is he that this song treats of; the transcendent glories and excellencies of his person; his inexpressible love unto, care of, and concern for his church and people, together with the nearness of access unto and sweet communion and fellowship with himself, which he indulges them with, are here particularly expressed and set forth; so that it may well be called *the Song of songs, which is concerning* Solomon; though, perhaps, the words may regard Solomon as the author and penman of it, who was used by the Holy Ghost as his amanuensis therein, which was no small honor to him; his wisdom, riches, and grandeur, did not set him above an employment of this nature; nay, his, being concerned herein, was a greater honor to him than all the rest: and it may not be amiss to observe, that his royal title, as *king of Israel*, is here omitted, which yet is put at the beginning of both his other books, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes; the reason may be, either because such a title, expressive of majesty, would not so well have suited a *song of loves*; or else it is purposely omitted, lest he should be thought to be the

*king*, so frequently spoken of in this song; or rather because that the subject of this song is *the King of kings*; and therefore, whilst he is speaking of *the things* which he had made, *touching the Mug*, he lays aside his own royal title, veils his majesty, and casts his crown at the feet of Him, by whom *kings reign*, and *princes decree justice*. The time of his writing this book does not appear very manifest; some think that he wrote it in his youthful days, the subject being love, and the manner of its writing being poetry, both which the youthful age mostly inclines to, and delights in; but it appears from what has been already said, that it was not wrote until twenty years after his marriage, when he could not be a very young man; and so might be written in the middle part of his life, when in the most flourishing circumstances as to body, mind, and estate. Dr Lightfoot <sup>f31</sup> is of opinion it might be written in the thirtieth year of his reign, about ten years before his death, after he had built his summerhouse in Lebanon, to which he supposes he alludes in chapter ~~2008~~4:3 and ~~2006~~7:4 and upon his bringing Pharaoh's daughter to the house prepared for her, ~~1004~~1 Kings 9:24. The Jewish chronologer <sup>f32</sup> says, that the books of Proverbs, the Song of songs, and Ecclesiastes, were all written in his old age, as indeed the last seems to be; and perhaps he wrote this also a little before his death, after his fall and repentance, when he had had a larger discovery of the love of God unto his own soul, notwithstanding all his sins, failings, and infirmities; and so a proper person for the Holy Ghost to use in setting forth the greatness of Christ's love to his people, and the several different states, conditions, cases and circumstances, which they are, at one time or another, brought into in this life, of which he had had a very great experience. But from the title, I shall now proceed to the consideration of the book itself; which thus begins,

## VERSE 2.

*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth;  
for thy love is better than wine.*

HAVING considered the title, now follows the song itself, which begins with these words; and it being dialogue-wise, where several parties are concerned, and do interchangeably speak, it will be therefore necessary, in order to explain them, to consider,

**I.** Who the person is that speaks and begins the song.

**II.** To whom this speech is directed.

**III.** The nature of the request that is made. And,

**IV.** The reason of it.

**I.** Let us consider who the person is that speaks; it appears dearly to be the church and bride of Christ, who here begins and continues speaking to verse 8. She first directs her speech to Christ, in this and the two following verses; in verses 5, 6 she turns herself to the daughters of Jerusalem; and then again to Christ, in verse 7 she begins the song, which,

**1st,** Does not suppose that she was first in her love to Christ: she was not beforehand with him, neither in her love nor in the expressions, and manifestations of it; for he had loved her with an everlasting love, and therefore had thus sweetly *drawn* her with the *bands of love*, to himself. Christ is first, both in his love and in the discovery of it; for *we love him because he first loved us*; it is the manifestation of Christ's love to our souls, which causes us to love him again, and in some way or other to shew it.

**2dly,** Neither does it suppose, that her love to Christ, and desires of his presence and company, were more ardent than his were to her; for as Christ's love is prior to ours, so it far exceeds, and is much superior to it; neither can believers be more desirous of Christ's company than he is of theirs. But,

**3dly,** It shews that she was impatient of delay, and could not bear his absence any longer; she was sick of love; for *hope deferred maketh the heart sick*; she had, perhaps, been hoping, waiting for, and expecting his presence a considerable time, and he was not come; therefore growing impatient., breaks out in this abrupt manner, *Let him kiss, etc.* or,

“O that he would kiss me with one of the kisses of his mouth! I cannot be easy unless he does.”

**4thly,** She speaks as one who had had experience of Christ's love; she knew how sweet the kisses of his mouth were, and how delightful his company had been to her in time past; she, had *tasted that the Lord was gracious*; and therefore was so earnestly desirous of the returns of these love-visits, venting her heart and soul in these passionate wishes and desires. And,

**5thly**, Though Christ gives the first discoveries of love on his part; yet when the church is espoused unto him, it highly becomes her to shew an affectionate regard unto him, and strong desire after his company.

**II.** It will be proper to take notice of the person to whom this speech is directed, and that is Christ; and the form of speech here used, is also worthy our regard; here is no particular mention made of any person; no one particularly named, whose company she desired; but only *him, let him kiss me, etc.* it is a relative without an antecedent, of which we have many instances in scripture, as <sup><180></sup>Psalm 87:1, <sup><250></sup>Isaiah 53:2, <sup><210></sup>Lamentations 3:1 unless we suppose that the antecedent to it is Solomon, in verse 1, *let him*, that is, Solomon, or Christ, who is Solomon's antitype, whose song this is, and who is the subject of it; *Let him*, I say, *kiss me with the kisses of his mouth*; though the connection seems rather to be with the thoughts of her heart, than with any words before expressed: she had had him so much in her thoughts, and her love was so fixed on him, she knew him so well, and had had so much converse with him, that she thought there was no need to mention his name; but that every one must very well know who she designed; as Mary Magdalen, at Christ's sepulcher, when Jesus said unto her, 'Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?' she supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, 'Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away,' <sup><405></sup>John 20:15. Suppose he had been the gardener, how should he have known who this *him* was she meant? But she was much in the same frame as the church is here, who speaks of Christ as if there was no other in the world besides him; and indeed he is a *nonsuch*, the most eminent person in the world, in the believer's esteem; whose language is, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee,' <sup><175></sup>Psalm 73:25. Christ then is the person here spoken of, whom she intends, and to whom she directs her speech.

**III.** Having taken notice of the person speaking, and to whom this speech is directed, we will now consider the request itself, which is here made, 'Let him kiss me,' etc. and this may be considered, either,

**First**, As the request of the church under the Old Testament. And that,

**1st**, For the manifestation of Christ in the flesh; than which nothing was more passionately longed for, and earnestly desired; many kings and prophets greatly desired it; yea, all the Old Testament saints did more or

less pray, as David did, ‘O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion,’ <sup>(Psalms 14:7)</sup> Psalm 14:7, and this they were so vehemently desirous of, because they knew hereby redemption from all evil would be obtained, the curse removed, and all spiritual blessings procured for then; Christ’s incarnation being, like kisses, a pledge and indication of his love, was very desirable to the church, and as appears by her expressions, would be exceeding grateful to all those who were ‘waiting for the consolation of Israel.’ He had sent his prophets, and by them had spoken unto her ‘at sundry times, and in divers manners;’ yet she is not easy and contented herewith, but would have greater displays of his grace, by his appearing in his own person to kiss her with the kisses of his mouth.

**2dly**, For the doctrines of the gospel, in opposition to the law. Most of the Jewish <sup>(33)</sup> writers understand, by the kisses of his mouth, the words of the law, which God spake to the people face to face; but that dispensation was not so desirable an one, for ‘they that heard that voice of words, intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more; for they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die,’ <sup>(Exodus 20:19)</sup> Exodus 20:19. The words of the law contain sharp and severe rebukes for sin; pronounce the sinner guilty before God; curse and condemn him, and are the killing letter to him; therefore these are not the kisses of Christ’s mouth, which the church here desires; but rather they are the sweet and comfortable doctrines of the gospel, which may be so called,

1. Because they come from him; they are the words of his mouth, which drop from him ‘like sweet smelling myrrh;’ he is the author of them, he has spoke and delivered them; they proceed alone from him, and it is he that owns, blesses, and makes them useful to men.
2. As kisses they carry in them intimations of his love to souls, to whom they come in power, and in the Holy Ghost; the love of Christ is the great subject of the gospel; it fills all the doctrines thereof, which give a noble display of it, and lead into a farther acquaintance with it.
3. As the kisses of a friend, they are grateful and acceptable to believers; they are more valuable to them than their necessary food, and are preferred by them to all that is dear in life, yea, to life itself, however they are slighted and despised by the men of the world.
4. As kisses, they raise the affections and fill the soul with love to Christ; kisses, as they are indications of, so they are incentives to love.

When the truths of the gospel come with power upon a sinner's heart, they let in, not only a great deal of light, but also a large measure of love; faith comes hereby, and that works by love, both to Christ and to his gospel. Or,

**Secondly,** We may consider this request as the request of the church, or of every particular believer, for the enjoyments and manifestations of Christ's love. The manifestation of Christ's love is very desirable to believers, who would always have it if they could; this is their heaven on earth, and the beginning of glory to them; this comforts them in all their troubles, and is preferred by them to all earthly enjoyments; and may be called the kisses of Christ's mouth,

**1st,** Because kisses are evidences and pledges of love amongst nearest relations: Christ stands in, and fills up all relations to his people, and has affections for them suitable to them all; he is a kind and indulgent father, a tender husband, an affectionate brother, and loving friend; of all which he has given, and continues to give, full, and incontestible proofs; of which the kisses of his mouth are plain and undeniable evidences.

**2dly,** Kisses are tokens of reconciliation and agreement. Now though reconciliation is made by the blood of Christ, and believers have the comfortable application of it to their souls; yet every time that Christ withdraws his presence from them, they are ready to think that he is angry with them, and is not reconciled unto them; but when he shews himself again, and manifests his love, then they can behold him, and God in him, as reconciled unto them.

**3dly,** Kisses are incentives to love: there is nothing raises believers love higher to Christ, than the flowing in of his love into their souls; this warms it when cold and chill, raises it to a flame, quickens it when dull, puts it in motion, and sets it at work.

**4thly,** By this expression the church intends that nearness and familiarity in communion with Christ, which her soul wanted; which was not only to shew himself to her, feed and feast her, and take his walks with her; by all which phrases communion with Christ is sometimes expressed; but to be kissed with the kisses of his mouth, which is yet nearer still: well may the saints be said to be 'a people near to the Lord;' what wondrous and surprising grace is this, that Christ should condescend to kiss such vile and sinful creatures as we be! to receive us into such near communion with

himself! It is a bold request the church makes, and yet she is in it no bolder than welcome. These are called *kisses*, in the plural number.

**1.** To shew the various ways Christ has to manifest his love, sometimes by one providence, and sometimes by another! sometimes in one ordinance, and sometimes in another; he is not tied to one way, but has divers ways, and makes use of various means to shew himself unto his people; he is never at a loss when he thinks fit to do it.

**2.** To denote the frequent and repeated actings of his love to her soul which she was desirous of; she was for having, not one kiss, but many; one discovery and manifestation of his love and grace after another; yea, many visits from him, until she arrived to the full enjoyment of his love, with himself, in glory. Or,

**3.** The words may be read thus, *Let him kiss me with one of the kisses of his mouth.* <sup>f34</sup> See chapter ~~200~~ 4:9 and then the sense is,

“O that I had but one glimpse, one view, one discovery more of his love and grace unto my soul, but one kiss more from his mouth, which *is most sweet, and altogether lovely*; how great a satisfaction would it be to me, could I have but this request granted!”

which way of speaking shews how exceeding grateful the manifestations of Christ’s love are to believers. Moreover it may be observed, that kisses with the ancients were not frequent, but rarely used, and but *once* when persons were espoused, and as a token of that; and then they were reckoned as husband and wife; <sup>f35</sup> on which account it may be it is here desired; since it was after this we hear of the spouse being brought into the nuptial chamber, and of the keeping of the nuptial feast, verse 4-12. Again, These are also said to be the ‘kisses of his mouth;’ which is not to be looked upon as a mere Hebraism, or as a redundancy in expression; but this heaping up of words shews,

**(1.)** The vehemency of her affection, how much her heart was set upon, and how eagerly desirous she was of, communion with Christ; and therefore pours out words, that she might fully express her mind; ‘for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.’

**(2.)** She mentions the kisses of ‘his mouth,’ in contradistinction to any other; she valued the kisses of no other mouth but Christ’s: the kisses



of any mouth were not desirable to her, none but the kisses of his mouth were.

(3.) She hereby expresses the singular satisfaction she should take herein; ‘Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth;’ “his mouth, which is sweet and delightful to me; his mouth, whom my soul loves, whom I value and esteem above all others, and in the enjoyment of whom I place my chiefest happiness.” Or,

(4.) It may point out that particular way and manner in which she was desirous that he would manifest his love unto her, that is, by his word of promise in the gospel; as if she should say, “O that he would manifest himself, and break up his love and grace to my soul, in some kind promise or other, which may drop from his mouth, and be brought home unto me by the Spirit of grace.”

**IV.** She assigns a reason for this request, ‘for thy love is better than wine;’ here is a sudden change of person, from the third to the second; before she said, ‘let him kiss me,’ etc. now she says, ‘for thy love,’ etc. the reason of which, perhaps, is, because he was absent before, but now present; she had lost sight of him, and speaks of him as at a distance from her; but now he is in view, at the very sight of whom her faith is increased, and her soul fired with love; and having greater nearness to him, grows in her familiarity and boldness with him.

Here we shall,

1. Take notice of the *love* of Christ, and give some account of the nature and excellency, of it: And,
2. Shew in what respects it is preferable to *wine*.

**First** Let us consider this love of Christ, which is so highly commended by the church; in the Hebrew text it is in the plural number, loves <sup>f36</sup> to shew,

**1st,** The various ways in which Christ has discovered it; he shewed it by his suretyship-engagements for the elect in the everlasting covenant of grace and peace, of which he is the surety, mediator, and messenger; he showed it in his assumption of human nature in time; he has given a full display of it, in laying down his life for the sheep, in giving himself a ransom for many, and in offering himself a sacrifice for the sins of all his chosen ones; he has loved them and died for them, loved them and shed his precious

blood for them, and in that blood, has washed them from all their sins; he now shews that he loves them, by appearing in the presence of God for them, acting as an advocate with the Father, and preparing' glory for them; and he will, ere long, come again to take them to himself, that where he is, there they may be also.

**2dly**, It may intend the various effects of it; all the blessings of grace flow from it, such as vocation, sanctification, justification, adoption, and glorification; all spring from this boundless and matchless love of Christ.

**3dly**, Being in the plural number, may denote the aboundings of it; it is superabounding love; love that has heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths; it is immeasurable and unconceivable; it passeth the perfect knowledge of men and angels.

**4thly**, The frequent discoveries of it, which are made to the saints; and which, like the waters in Ezekiel's vision, increase and rise from the ankles to the knees, and from the knees to the loins, and from thence become waters to swim in, a river, an ocean of love which cannot be passed over.

**5thly**, The great esteem the church had of Christ's love, which she shows by calling it 'loves,' in the plural number, as well as by saying that it was 'better than wine:' the excellency of which will farther appear, if we consider the nature and properties of it, which are as follow:

**1.** As to the original of it, it is free and sovereign; it does not take its rise from any thing in us, or done by us, nothing of this nature moved him to it, but he loved us, because he would love us; nothing out of himself moved him to it; it was not because we were better than others, for we are by nature children of wrath, even as others; he loved us when unlovely; he died for us while we were yet sinners, and ungodly in ourselves, and enemies to himself; our love to him is not the cause of his loving us, but his love to us is the cause of ours: in this he is entirely free and sovereign; he has pitched his love and grace on whom he will, and these he loves freely; he was not moved or influenced by foreseen faith or works, or any deservings of ours whatever; for we neither deserved nor desired his love, neither indeed could we have expected it.

**2.** As to the time of its commencement, it is from eternity; before the mountains were formed, and the highest part of the dust of the earth was made, he was 'rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and his delights

were with the sons of men:’ that he loved his people from eternity, is manifest from his engaging as a surety for them; his becoming the mediator of an everlasting covenant; in which he agreed to take care of their persons, and by dying to redeem their lives from destruction, and to bring them to eternal glory; as also from his receiving all grace for them before the world began; all which manifestly shew that he had a love for them; for all the after-actings of his love and grace are but the openings and breakings forth of this love of his, which he bore towards them from everlasting.

**3.** As to its duration, it is to eternity; ‘having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them unto the end,’ <sup><B10></sup>John 13:1, his love is invariable, unalterable, and unchangeable; it is like himself, ‘the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;’ all the waters of sin and corruption cannot extinguish it; nor can any creature in heaven, earth, or hell, separate his people from it.

**4.** As to the degree of it, it is the greatest love, ‘greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,’ <sup><B13></sup>John 15:13, but Christ’s love is greater than this, for he hath laid down his life for enemies, and even whilst they were such: here is great love for great sinners, shewn by a great person, one who ‘thought it no robbery to be equal with God:’ and this he shewed by giving himself a ransom for them; such is the greatness of this love, that it cannot fully be expressed by men or angels.

**5.** As to the quality of it, it is the nearest; that of the nearest relations and friends to each other as of a parent to a child, of an husband to a wife, of brothers, or friends, to each other, are but faint resemblances and mere shadows of this; all fall short of painting and expressing to the life the nature of this love.

**6.** As to the pattern or form of it, it is as the Father’s love to him; ‘as the Father hath loved me; (says he) so have I loved you,’ <sup><B9></sup>John 15:9, as the Father loves Christ, as mediator, with an everlasting, unchangeable, and inseparable love, so does Christ love his people. What surprising grace is this, that Christ should love us with such a love! when there is no comparison between him, who is the object of the one, and them, who are the objects of the other; when we contemplate this amazing love, conceptions fail us to comprehend it, words fall short of expressing it; in eternity only will those surprising mysteries of grace be unfolded to us.

**7.** As to any instance of love, none can be compared: with it, it is unparalleled; that of Jonathan's to David, of one friend's dying for another, and of those brave Romans who died for their country, which history furnishes us withal, can by no means equal or come near it; *scarcely for a righteous man will one die, peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die*, says the apostle, <sup><817></sup>Romans 5:7, 8 where he alludes <sup>f37</sup> to the division of the Jewish nation into three parts, which were these;

**First**, There were **μyqydx**, or righteous persons, who kept to the external letter of the law, and did, as they imagined, what that required, but would do no more.

**Secondly**, There were others called **μydysj**, or good men, who were bountiful and liberal to the poor, and did more than the law required in repairing the temple and maintaining of sacrifices, etc. But,

**Thirdly**, there were another sort who were called **μy[ϙr**, or wicked and ungodly persons, who had no regard to the law, profligate wretches, the refuse of the people.

Now for one of these righteous ones, says the apostle, scarce any would die, because what he had done, he was obliged by the law to do; peradventure for one of these good men, one to whom he had been kind and liberal, a person would even dare to die; but who will die for the other sort, the wicked and ungodly? not one; *but God commendeth his love towards us, in that while-we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; O matchless and unparalleled love!*

**8.** As to its effect upon the hearts of sinners, it is surprising, comfortable, and rejoicing; for souls, when but just let into it, begin that wonder which will last through out an endless eternity; they now place an *ecce*, a *behold* before it, and say as the Jews did of Christ, in regard to Lazarus, *behold how he loved him!* O how has he loved me, and me! says one and the other; what manner of love is this! it is surprising, *wonderful, passing the love of women*, as David said concerning Jonathan's; and it being *shed abroad* in the heart by the Spirit of God, fills the soul with an universal pleasure, *with a joy unspeakable and full of glory*; the manifestations and discovery of it bear up the soul under all the trials of life, and make it long to be in glory, that it may have its fill thereof, wherefore it is no wonder the church here prefers it to wine, which,

**Secondly,** We shall now consider, The church had a real value for Christ's person, and therefore must needs esteem his love; his person being, to her, the *chiefest among ten thousands*, his love must be preferable to all others; she hath tasted a real sweetness in it, and hath seen the vanity and emptiness of all earthly enjoyments, and therefore prefers it to wine; by which. is intended the most sumptuous banquet, with all the dainties, and delightful entertainments thereof: nothing is so valuable as the love of Christ; *O how excellent is thy loving kindness!* says the Psalmist, it is *better than life*, <sup><1317></sup>Psalm 36:7. and <sup><1318></sup>63:3. and all the comforts, pleasures, and profits thereof. I will now endeavor to shew, in a few particulars, wherein this love of Christ is *better than wine*.

**1st,** It is preferable to it for its antiquity; good old wine is accounted the best; and therefore Christ says, *No man having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new: for he saith, the old is better*, <sup><1319></sup>Luke 5:39. Age makes wine better, but not oil, as Plutarch observes. <sup>f38</sup> Now no wine is comparable to this of Christ's love, for its antiquity; for, as has been already shewn, it is a love which commences from everlasting; it does not bear date with time, but was before time was, and will be when time shall be no more. The Jews <sup>f39</sup> often speak of wine, that has been reserved in the grape ever since the creation of the world, which, they imagine, they shall drink in the earthly kingdom of the Messiah; but this wine of divine love was laid up and reserved in the heart of Christ long before the creation of the world: this excels all other wine for its antiquity.

**2dly,** It is preferable to wine for its purity; no wine so pure and unmixed as this of Christ's love; it is wine *on the lees well refined*, free from all the dregs of deceit, hypocrisy, and dissimulation; it is a *love unfeigned, a pure river of water of life*.

**3dly,** It is better than wine, and is preferable to it for its freeness and cheapness; wine is not every one's liquor, every one's purse cannot reach it, especially in some countries; but this wine of Christ's love, is to be had *without money*, and *without price*, than which nothing can be cheaper; nor is any thing freer, for it is freely *shed abroad* in the hearts of God's people, by the Spirit.

**4thly,** For the plenty of it, it is preferable to wine; wine, as it is dear, so it is scarce in some places; but this, as it is cheap, and to be had freely, so there is plenty of it: in the marriage at Cana of Galilee, there was want of wine; but there is no want thereof in this feast of love, which Christ has

made for his spouse and bride: this is a river, nay, an ocean of love, which flows forth in plentiful streams to poor sinners.

**5thly**, It is preferable to wine in the effects of it.

**1.** Wine will revive and cheer a man that is of an heavy heart, and therefore it is advised to be given to such, <sup>21806</sup>Proverbs 31:6, yet it will not bring a man to life that is dead; but such is the nature of Christ's love, that when it is conveyed into the heart of a sinner, *dead in trespasses and sins*, it makes him alive; for whenever it is *a time of love* to a poor sinner, it is also a *time of life*; nay, it not only conveys life, but it maintains and supports it and keeps souls from dying; he that has had it *shed abroad* in his heart, by the Spirit, shall never die *the second death*.

**2.** Wine may remove a worldly heaviness, or a sorrow on the account of worldly things, the things of time; but not of spiritual heaviness, or a sorrow on the account of the things or another world, the things of eternity; but the manifestation of Christ's love to the soul, can remove this sorrow and heaviness, and fill it with a *joy unspeakable and full of glory*, and give him that ease, comfort, and satisfaction of mind, he is wishing for:

**3.** If a man drinks never such large draughts of the wine of Christ's love, it will never hurt him, when other wine, with excessive drinking of it, not only wastes the estates, but consumes the bodies, and destroys the health of men; but of this a man may drink freely and plentifully, without doing himself any hurt; nay, it will be of considerable advantage to him, and therefore says Christ, in chapter <sup>21801</sup>5:1. *Eat, O friends, yea, drink abundantly, O my beloved.*

No wonder then that the church was so desirous of enjoying Christ's presence, and having the manifestations of his love to her soul, seeing his tore is thus *better than wine*; besides, it may be observed that she makes use of this as an argument with him to obtain her request; and in so doing, shews what a value she had for the love of Christ, how much she esteemed it, as also what it was she expected and sought after, in desiring communion with him.

### VERSE 3.

*Because of the savor of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love thee*

THE church having mentioned the excellency of Christ's *love*, as the reason why she desired such intimate communion with him, proceeds in these words to take notice of his savory *ointments* and precious *name*; which were both so delightful, fragrant, and odorous, that even the *Virgins*, those chaste creatures, were ravished, and had fallen in love with him; and therefore it was no wonder that she, who was his spouse and bride, should express her love to him, and be so desirous of his company. In these words we have,

**I.** The savor of Christ's ointments expressed.

**II.** The fragraney and preciousness of Christ's name declared:

**III.** The influence that all this has upon the hearts of the virgins, in attracting their love to Christ: *therefore do the virgins love thee*.

**I.** The savor of Christ's ointments is here expressed by the church, as having knowledge of them herself, and as having observed the effect of them upon the hearts of others. By *ointments* we are to understand the graces of the Spirit of God, that *oil of gladness* with which Christ, as mediator, *is anointed above his fellows*; this was poured out without measure upon him; it is *like the precious ointment upon Aaron's head, that ran down upon his beard, and went down to the skirts of his garments*; for this being poured upon Christ, the head, descends to all his members, from him they receive that *anointing, which teacheth all things*. In explaining these words, I will endeavor,

**First**, To shew why the graces of the Spirit in Christ, or in his members, are compared to *ointments*.

**Secondly**, Why they are called *Christ's ointments*.

**Thirdly**, In what sense they are said to be *good*. And,

**Fourthly**, What is meant by the *savor of them*.

**First**, I shall endeavor to shew why the graces of the Spirit, either in Christ or in saints, are compared to *ointments*.

**1st**, With the holy anointing oil, which was made according to a divine prescription and direction, kings, priests, and prophets were formerly anointed, and thereby installed into their several offices: thus *Saul, David* and *Solomon* were anointed to be kings; thus *Aaron* and his sons were anointed to be priests; and thus *Elisha* was anointed prophet in the room of *Elijah*: now, as with this anointing oil these were anointed, and thereby installed into their offices; so Christ, with the anointing oil of the Spirit, was anointed, and thereby installed into those offices which he has taken upon him, and bears for the good of his people; it is with this he is anointed to be king, and is set over God's *holy hill of Zion*; it is with this he is *consecrated* a priest for evermore, to offer sacrifice, and make intercession for transgressors; and this same Spirit being upon him, he is anointed therewith a prophet to 'preach good tidings to the meek.' Christ: as the glorious God-man, was anointed and installed into his office as mediator, from eternity; his human nature was anointed with the Holy Ghost, at the time of its conception in the virgin's womb; and more visibly at his baptism, when the Spirit descended upon him as a dove; and still more gloriously at his ascension to, and session at the Father's right hand, when he received from him the promise of the Spirit, and was made or declared to be both Lord and Christ: and it is with the same unction that saints are by him made kings and priests unto God; kings, because grace reigns in their hearts now, and they shall reign with Christ in glory, for ever hereafter; priests, 'to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.'

**2dly**, With this holy anointing oil, all the vessels of the tabernacle were anointed and made fit for use; to which saints may be compared, who are chosen vessels, vessels of mercy, that were fore-ordained for glory; now these, in their natural state, are not fit for their master's use; yet when anointed with this unction, they are not only fit for their master's present use here, but are prepared for glory hereafter; the saints having the oil of grace, as well as the lamps of profession, are ready to go in with the bridegroom, whenever he comes and calls for them.

**3dly**, Anointing with oil was made use of for ornament; 'it makes the face to shine,' as the Psalmist says, <sup>104:15</sup> Psalm 104:15. Christ, as man and



mediator, is adorned with the grace of the Spirit; he is ‘fairer than the children of men;’ and the reason is, because ‘grace is poured into his lips;’ he has a larger measure of this ‘oil of gladness’ than others, and therefore is ‘the perfection of beauty;’ he is ‘white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand;’ and as Christ is, so the saints are adorned herewith, and become beautiful in his eye, being “all glorious within:” by this grace they are purified and prepared, and so presented as a chaste and beautiful virgin to Christ.

**4thly**, Anointing with oils or ointments was used for chearing and refreshing guests at festivals, being very useful for this purpose in hot countries; the smell of which was very delightful and pleasing; <sup>f40</sup> hence Solomon says, ‘Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart,’ <sup>2370</sup> Proverbs 27:9.; and for this reason Mary brought ointment and anointed the feet of Jesus, to cool and refresh them while he sat at meat: these ointments, or graces of the Spirit, are the *oil of gladness*, both to Christ and to his people; in the exercise of them, he, as man, was delighted and refreshed, and so are his saints; the grace of the Spirit is, to them; *the oil of joy for mourning*; he, by his sweet influences and delightful operations on their souls, powerfully draws forth grace into exercise, and thereby administers much comfort to them; they are oftentimes filled *with joy and peace in believing*, being made to *abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost*.

**5thly**, Ointments are useful for mollifying and healing wounds, <sup>2306</sup> Isaiah 1:6. these being applied, soften hard tumors, break them, and then heal them; the hearts of sinners are hard and obdurate, being swelled with pride, vanity, and conceit of themselves; bat the ointments of divine grace being applied, softens them, breaks these hard swellings, makes their hearts contrite, and then heals them: Christ, the great physician, acting herein, like the good Samaritan, who had compassion on the wounded man, and bound up *his wounds, pouring in oil and wine*.

**Secondly**, We will now consider why these ointments are said to be Christ’s.

**1st**, They are of his making; as he is God, he has an all-sufficiency of grace in himself, underived from any other, and is the author of all grace; this excellent composition is all his own; this ointment is made and prepared by his own hand; the holy anointing oil, though of God’s prescribing, yet it was not of his making, though according to the composition of it, no other

was to be made; but these ointments are not only prescribed, but made by him, that is God; and none can make, according to the composition thereof; which shews the excellency of them.

**2dly**, He is the subject of them; as God, he is the author and maker, but, as mediator, they are communicated to him; they are poured into him, and upon him without measure; *it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell*; they are his, not only because made by him, but because they are in his possession; he is anointed with them *above his fellows*.

**3dly**, They are his, because he has a right to dispose of them; they are his own as God, being the maker of them; and they are his own as mediator, being given to him; wherefore he may do what he will with them, as indeed he does; he gives these ointments to whom he will, and he gives them freely and plentifully; he has a fullness of all grace in himself, and from thence saints receive *grace for grace*. This ointment being poured plentifully upon the head, runs down freely to all the members; these ointments are first Christ's, and then they are ours; he composed them as God, for our use and service, and they were given to him as mediator, for that purpose; grace in Christ, and grace in us, are of the same nature, though not of the same degree: grace in us is as in its streams, but grace in Christ is as in its fountain; it is but a small measure we have, but it is an infinite, and inexhaustible fullness that is in him; which may serve to recommend Christ to us, and direct us where to go for these oils or ointments.

**Thirdly**, They are said to be good ointments, or oils; some oils are better than others, and some places produced better than others: *Tekoah* was the chief place for oil in *Judea*, and the next to it was *Regab* beyond *Jordan*; <sup>f41</sup> no doubt but *Solomon* had the best. The oils or ointments of the true *Solomon* are best of all. And of ointments there were various sorts, <sup>f42a</sup> as of roses, lilies, almonds, nard, myrrh, saffron, etc. and *Syria*, a neighboring country to *Judea*, was famous for some sorts of ointments, from whence *Solomon* might be supplied.

**1st**, They are good in their own nature — are an excellent composition, there is no ingredient in them but what is good; grace, as wrought in us, is called *some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel*; it is a *good work*, which being begun, shall be performed until the day of Christ.

**2dly,** These ointments are both made, and applied by a good hand; for he that has made them,, and he that anoints us with them, is God: The ingredients are net only good, but they are put together by a skillful hand; this unction is made by, and received from *the Holy One*.

**3dly,** They are good in their effects: they are good to *make the face to shine*, to adorn the saints, revive and refresh them; they are good to soften hard hearts, and heal wounded spirits; they are good to anoint the eyes with, and thereby recover, continue, and increase sight.

**4thly,** They are good in the believers esteem; they have had experience of their nature and effects; and can write *probatum est* upon each of them; and therefore highly value them, and with very good reason. For,

**5thly,** These ointments are exceeding rich and costly. The holy anointing oil was rich and cosily, being made of the. principle spices, but not to be comps, red with these; the ingredients of which are preferable to gold and silver, to rubies, and all things that can be thought of or desired; these are precious, rich, and costly ointments indeed.

**6thly,** Which makes them still more valuable, they never lose their efficacy; *dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor*; corrupt it so that it loses its virtue, and becomes good for nothing; grace cannot be lost and perish in the saints; the anointing, which they receive, abides in them; it is. an immortal seed, a well of living water, springing up into eternal life; and notwithstanding the dead flies of their sins and corruptions, yet they cannot make the ointment of grace send forth a stinking savor; corruptions do, but grace never will; it is not indeed always in exercise, but it never will lose its nature or its virtue; the saints lamps shall never go out, being supplied with oil from that fullness of it that is in Christ;

**Fourthly,** These ointments are said to have a *savor* in them; precious ointments have a fragranc<sup>y</sup> <sup>f42</sup> a sweet savor in them, very delightful; a greater savor has the grace of Christ to a believer, who savors not the things of men, but the things of God; for, as the natural man, *he receiveth not*, that is, he savors not, *the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness*, unsavory and insipid things *unto him*: these ointments can no more be savory to a carnal man, than food can be relishing to a man of a vitiated taste, or music be delightful to a deaf man, or colors pleasant to one that is blind; for as the one wants his taste, the other his hearing, and

the third his sight, so this man wants his smelling, and therefore these ointments cannot be savory to him; but they are so to the believer, who has his spiritual smelling; now by the *savor* of these ointments, is intended the manifestation of Christ's grace unto the soul; the sense and perception which souls have of it, and their interest in it, fill them with pleasure and delight; and it was this which made the virgins love Christ, and the church so desirous of his company. There is an emphasis on the word *thy*; *thy good ointments*, none so odorous, so savory, and of so grateful a smell as his; as lovers used to admire and commend each others ointments, by which they sought to recommend themselves. <sup>f43</sup>

**II.** The church in these words declares the fragrancy and preciouness of Christ's name, when she says, that his *name is as ointment poured forth*. It will be proper to enquire what is intended by the name of Christ, and in what sense that may be said to be as *ointment poured forth*.

**1st**, By the name of Christ may be meant his person, this being not an unusual way of speaking in the scripture; thus in <sup><f43></sup>Revelation 3:4. 'Thou hast a few frames,' that is, persons, 'even in Sardis,' etc. and in <sup><f42></sup>Matthew 12:21 'and in his name shall the Gentiles trust,' that is, in the person of Christ shall the Gentiles trust; so here *thy name is as ointment poured forth*, that is, thy person is as delightful, grateful, and odorous to me, as the pouring forth a box of ointment; thou art *altogether lovely* to me, thy whole person is so; every thing in thee is engaging, and thou hast every thing to render thee desirable to me; all beauty, power, wisdom, and grace, are in thee, that it is no wonder the virgins love thee; for not only thy mouth, but all of thee is lovely and desirable.

**2dly**, By it may be intended some one, or any of those names by which he is called. As,

**1.** The *Messiah* or *Christ*, which signifies anointed. So that in comparing it to ointment, there may be an allusion to the signification of the name itself, and may more particularly point out which name is intended, even the name *Messiah*, to which *Christ*, in the New Testament, answers; which, though not very frequently met with in the Old Testament, yet was well known to the ancient Jews, as appears from their *Targums*, where it is made use of in upwards of sixty places, in which the Redeemer is treated of; <sup>f44</sup> and as it was well known, so it was highly esteemed of by them; they expected him who was to redeem *Israel*, under this title and character; and when he was

come, and had revealed himself unto some, in an exulting manner they said one to another, *We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ*; that name had been always precious to the saints, who waited for the *consolation of Israel*, and was then like a box of *ointment poured forth*, exceeding grateful, delightful, and refreshing to them.

**2.** Another name by which Christ is called, and which may be said to be as ‘ointment poured forth,’ is the name Jesus, which signifies a Savior, and was given him, because he ‘saves his people from their sins.’ Christ is, in the everlasting gospel, revealed as a Savior; it is therein declared, that the design of his coming into the world was to save sinners, and that he has obtained eternal salvation for them, and is both able and willing to save the chief of them; the discovery the gospel makes of him is exceeding delightful and pleasant to awakened sinners. This name Jesus, a Savior, how sweet is it to such who have seen the exceeding sinfulness of sin, themselves lost and undone thereby, and in a perishing state and condition! the news of a Savior are good news and glad ‘tidings of great joy’ unto them; the discovery of it is like the breaking open a box of ointment, and pouring it out; it at once removes the filthy stench of sin from the sinners nostrils, and that sadness and sorrow of heart which arise from the guilt of it upon the conscience.

**3.** Christ’s name, Immanuel, may be said to be as ‘ointment poured forth,’ which signifies ‘God with us;’ and there are two things in it which make it like ‘ointment poured forth,’ that is, exceeding odorous and grateful to believers.

**(1.)** That he is God; hence they know, and are well assured, that he is able to save them; that the work is not too heavy for him; that he has not undertaken that which he is not able to accomplish, which they would have reason to believe, if he was only a creature: from hence they comfortably conclude, as well they may, that all he did was efficacious, and answered the purposes for which it was done; as that his sacrifice was effectual to atone for and expiate sin; his blood to procure the pardon of it, and thoroughly cleanse from it; his righteousness to justify from all sin, and render them acceptable in the sight of God; and all this, because they are the sacrifice, blood, and righteousness of one that is God. From this name they also gather, that he having taken the care and charge of them, is able to keep them from falling; and that none is able to pluck them out of his hands, no more

than they can separate them from his heart, which they could not be so assured of, was he a creature.

(2.) Another thing which makes this name like ‘ointment poured forth,’ is, that he is ‘God with us;’ God dwelling and conversing with us, God in our nature, God manifest in the flesh; hence it appears, that he who is the great God, and our Savior, is near akin to us, and we to him; being ‘flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone,’ we are both of one and the same nature, and therefore he is not ashamed to call us brethren; and his assuming our nature, gives him a right, as well as makes him a proper person to be our *Goel* or Redeemer, whereby all the blessings, which he procured in this nature, are communicated to us, and not to angels; now what makes this name still more sweet, savory and delightful, is, that he, who is Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature, is, and will be on our side; and if God be with us, *and for us*, who shall be *against us*?

4. Christ’s name, ‘the Lord our righteousness,’ may be said to be as ‘ointment poured forth,’ by which he is called, <sup>2316</sup>Jeremiah 23:6 this is exceeding grateful, sweet and precious to a poor sinner; one who has seen his own righteousness as filthy rags, and as an unclean thing, how does he value Christ as the Lord his righteousness! he counts all things but loss and dung, in comparison of him, and desires only to be found in him, and in his righteousness, and not in his own; but what makes this so exceeding precious to him, is, because it acquits from all sin, and secures from all wrath and condemnation, and renders him spotless, unblameable, and irreproveable in the sight of God.

5. Any, or all of those names of Christ, in <sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 9:6 may be said to be as ‘ointment poured forth,’ they being exceeding precious and delightful to believers; such as *wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting father, and prince of peace*. Christ’s name ‘Wonderful,’ is so; he being wonderful in his incarnation and grace, in his person and offices, in his works, relations and characters; this emits a sweet odor to believers, even like a box of ointment opened to them: and so is his name ‘counsellor;’ under which character he acted from everlasting, consulting with the other two persons, our eternal welfare in the ancient council of peace; and still continues to Bear this character, which he makes good, by giving to us the best advice and most wholesome counsel, and this he does freely and faithfully: his name, ‘the mighty God,’ carries in it as much sweetness and

comfort to the believer, as it does greatness and majesty; and that endearing title, the ‘everlasting Father,’ who, as such, loves his children with an everlasting love, and has made everlasting provisions for them, and takes everlasting care of them, fills those he stands thus related to, with the utmost pleasure: and that noble character, the ‘Prince of Peace,’ which he bears on the account of his having, obtained peace by ‘the blood of his cross,’ for rebellious sinners, so sweetly diffuses the odor of his grace, that it charms and captivates the believer’s heart. The names of true lovers are dear to each other, to which the allusion is; they love to hear their names mentioned, which are as precious ointment, as delicious nectar.<sup>f45</sup> Or else,

**3dly,** By Christ’s *name*, we may understand his Gospel; thus, the apostle Paul is said to be *a chosen vessel, to bear the name of Christ before the Gentiles*, that is, to preach his gospel to them; he was a vessel full of the precious ointment of the gospel, and his preaching of it was the pouring of it forth, which was exceeding grateful to poor sinners, The gospel to some, is like a box of ointment shut up; it is hid unto them, they know it not, it is a sealed book, a hidden mystery, an unpleasant story, and unsavory words; it sends forth no other savor than that ‘of death unto death;’ but unto others, it is like a box of ointment opened, and poured forth, which diffuses and spreads a sweet and delightful odor abroad. The ministers of the gospel make manifest the savor of Christ’s knowledge in every place where they are sent, and become to some the ‘savor of life unto life;’ they open the box, and pour forth the ointment of the gospel, which coming with power, is received with pleasure; and being ‘worthy of acceptation,’ it sheets with it in the hearts of awakened sinners.

**4thly,** By the *name* of Christ, may be intended the fame which was, and still is spread abroad of him: some Jewish writer,<sup>f46</sup> expound it of a good name or good report, which Solomon says, ‘is better than precious ointment,’<sup>2000</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:1, and then the sense is this,

“such is the fame that is spread abroad of thee, of thy greatness and goodness, of thy beauties and excellencies, that even those who have only heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, and to whom, at present, thou art not known by sight, have fallen in love with thee.”

In the days of Christ’s flesh, his name was renowned, his fame was spread far and near, for the good he did to mankind, in healing the sick, and curing all manner of diseases; for the surprising miracles which he wrought, and for the work of the ministry, which he was engaged in; his matter being

excellent and divine, words of grace and wisdom, such as ‘never man spake;’ and his manner of delivery being with power and authority: and now his fame is great, and an excellent report is spread abroad of him, through the preaching of the everlasting gospel, for the mighty achievements of his grace, and what his arm of Almighty power has done, in working out, and bringing in salvation for poor sinners; as also for those peculiar blessings of grace, which souls daily receive from him, as well as for those personal excellencies which are in him; now such a report’ going abroad of him, his *name being* thus ‘as ointment poured forth,’ the virgins love him, souls flock after him, and come unto him. Which brings me to consider,

**III.** The influence that all this has upon the hearts of others; ‘therefore do the virgins love thee.’ In explaining which clause, I shall endeavor,

**1st,** To show who are meant by the *virgins*.

**2dly,** Give some account of the nature of their love and affection to Christ.

**1st,** Let us consider who are intended by *the virgins*. Some think carnal professors are here meant, who are called virgins in scripture, though foolish ones; but their love is not real, such as this seems to be in the text: others have thought that they are the uncalled and unconverted among the Gentiles, who are not yet espoused to Christ; but they rather appear to be true believers in Christ, by their love to him, for ‘faith works by love;’ and, perhaps, persons lately converted are intended, whose love to Christ is generally warm and lively, and their affections strong, not having as yet met with those chills, nor attended with that coldness and indifference, which too often, and too soon befall God’s children: the first love is the best and strongest, but oftentimes cloth not last long warm and lively, being gradually chilled with the abounding of corruption within, and the snares of the world without; though, perhaps, all true believers, whether of a later or of a longer standing, may be understood here, and may be justly called *virgins*,

**1.** For their chaste and strict adherence to Christ, their only husband, to whom they are espoused; ‘I have espoused you to one husband,’ says the apostle, ‘that I might present you a chaste virgin to Christ,’ <sup><47100>2</sup> Corinthians 11:2; these being betrothed to him in righteousness, in loving-kindness, in mercies, and in faithfulness, know, own and acknowledge him



as their Lord and husband, and stedfastly adhere to him as such; he is a head, both of eminence and influence to them; to him they hold, and him alone they submit unto as such; he is the Savior of the body, the church, and they acknowledge him to be theirs, and will have no other. Their language is, 'Ashur shall not save us, neither will we say any more to the works of our hands, Ye are our gods.' They make use of none, as the mediator between God and them, either as a mediator of redemption, or of intercession, but the Lord Jesus Christ; him they know and love, to him they have given up themselves, and by him they will abide, as their head and husband, their Savior and Mediator.

**2.** For the singleness of their love and affection to Christ. Their love is not common to all; it is not bestowed upon any creature, but purely reserved for him who alone deserves it; they can every one of them say, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? *and* there is none on earth that I desire besides thee,' <sup><47/25></sup> Psalm 73:25. Christ requires all their love, he will admit of no rival in it, and they are heartily willing to bestow it all upon him. Those who love any creature, or creature-enjoyment more than Christ, or equally with him, are not worthy of him, nor worthy to be called by the name of *virgins*.

**3.** For their incorruptness in the doctrine of faith: this is what the apostle seems to have a regard to, when he declared his fervent desire to present the Corinthians, as a chaste virgin to Christ; he was jealous, lest they should be seduced through the subtilty and craftiness of ill-designing men, and their pure minds be corrupted and drawn aside 'from the simplicity that is in Christ;' lest they should be polluted with error, and so not answer the character of virgins, which they had hitherto borne, and which he earnestly wished might continue with them. Now virgins are such, who having received, 'hold fast the faithful word, as they have been taught;' whose souls having been nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrines and established therein, cannot be moved from thence, but will earnestly contend, and strive together 'for the faith once delivered to the saints.'

**4.** For the truth and sincerity of their worship: they are such who 'worship God in spirit and in truth;' who make the word of God, and his will therein revealed, the rule to act by, in all solemn and social worship, and not the authorities, customs, and inventions of men; and when they are concerned in any part of religious worship, their desires are, that their hearts and souls may be engaged therein, they are not of those who draw near to God with

their mouths, and with their lips honor *him*, but have removed their hearts far from *him*, and their fear towards *him*, taught by the precepts of ‘men;’ for as they have not committed spiritual whoredom, which is idolatry, so they serve the Lord with pure spirits; they desire that whatsoever they do, more especially in divine worship, might be done in faith, from a principle of love to God, and according to his word and will: these are they who are said not to be defiled with women, for they are virgins; ‘these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth,’ ~~640~~ Revelation 14:4; in every ordinance and institution of his, which he in his word has pointed out unto them, and marked out for them.

**5.** For the purity of their lives and conversations; they hold ‘the mystery of the faith,’ not merely notionally and y a profession of it, but ‘in a pure conscience,’ and hereby ‘adorn the doctrine of God, our Savior;’ their garments are, in some measure, kept from being spotted with the ‘pollutions of the world,’ and which they also frequently wash and make ‘white in the blood of the Lamb.’ Besides, that ‘grace of God, which bringeth salvation,’ ~~641~~ Titus 2:11, 12, that is, the doctrines of grace, which bring the news of salvation by Christ, to poor sinners, ‘teach *them*, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, *they* should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;’ which, through the mighty power of God’s grace, they are in some measure enabled to do.

**6.** For their fairness and beauty. Virgins being fair and beautiful, believers are therefore compared unto them; for though they are *black* in themselves, yet they are *comely* in Christ; though full of spots in themselves, yet, as considered in him, they are ‘all fair, and there is no spot’ in them: through that comeliness, which he has put upon them, they are a perfection of beauty, and being so, are the delight of Christ, and wonder of angels.

**7.** For their gay and costly attire; and yet modest behaviour. Virgins, in their youthful days, if modest, though their attire is gay and splendid, suitable to their age; yet are of a decent and becoming behavior. Believers are richly attired: these virgins appear in cloth of gold, ‘in raiment of needlework,’ curiously wrought, which cannot be matched; they are decked with all kinds of ornaments, with bracelets, chains, rings, and jewels; they have on the glorious robe of Christ’s righteousness, and are adorned with the various graces of the Spirit, which make their behavior decent and modest; for they are not proud and haughty, one of their ornaments being that ‘of a meek and quiet spirit;’ they have low, mean; and

humble thoughts of themselves; suitable to their character is their carriage and deportment; for though they are so richly clothed, and so nearly related to the King of kings, yet, like their Lord, are *meek* and *lowly*.

**Secondly**, I shall now proceed to give some account of the love which these virgins bear to Christ: in doing which I shall,

**1st**, Give some account of the nature of it.

**2dly**, Shew from whence it arises. And,

**3dly**, How it manifests itself.

**1st**, Let us consider the nature and properties of it,

- 1.** It is a superlative love which souls bear to Christ; it: exceeds and excels their love to all creatures, or creature-enjoyments. Christ loves them above all others, and they love him more than all persons or things besides; of all that claim a share in their love, as none deserves, so none has a greater interest therein than himself,
- 2.** It is universal; they love all of Christ, and all that belong to him; they love him in his person, and in all his offices, relations, and characters, which he has took upon him, and by which he is pleased to manifest himself unto them: they love all his saints, be they high or low, rich or poor, and by whatsoever character or denomination, they are distinguished, if it appears that his grace is but wrought in their hearts, and they bear his image and superscription; they love all his commands, ordinances, and institutions; they 'esteem his precepts concerning all things, to be right,' and are not partial in their obedience thereunto,
- 3.** It is, or at least ought to be, constant and faithful, as his is to them, and as *Jonathan's* was to *David*: we should love him in adversity, as well as in prosperity, at all times; nothing should separate our love from Christ, as nothing can separate his love from us.
- 4.** It is, or ought to be, fervent and ardent; and so it is usually at first conversion, as has been already observed; and this is called in scripture, the 'first love,' which the church at *Ephesus* was blamed for leaving: not that she had lost her love to Christ, but the fervency thereof was much abated; she began to grow cold and lukewarm in her affections, which is too often the case of God's people, through the prevailing of corruptions, and an immoderate desire and pursuit after the things of this world; 'because

iniquity shall abound,' says Christ, 'the love of many shall wax cold,' ~~<1812>~~Matthew 24:12.

**5.** Where there is true love to Christ, it is always hearty and unfeigned: the virgins, true believers, love him 'with all their heart, *and* with all their soul;' they love him 'in sincerity,' and from their very hearts can appeal to Him, who is the heart-searching and rein-trying God, as *Peter* did, and say, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee,' ~~<1817>~~John 21:17. Here is no deceit, dissimulation or hypocrisy in their love; though it may be sometimes weak and languid, yet whenever it exerts and shews itself, it is real and hearty; these love not 'in word only,' 'neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.'

**2dly,** It will be proper to enquire into the springs and causes of this love, and to observe from whence it arises. And,

- 1.** It springs and arises from a sight of Christ's loveliness: an unbeliever sees no beauty in Christ, wherefore he should desire him; there is nothing in him lovely to a carnal eye; but one that is 'made light in the Lord,' and has but a glimpse of 'the King in his beauty,' his heart is won, his soul is ravished and drawn forth in love to him; he admires and desires him above all, and cannot be easy without an interest in him.
- 2.** From a view of his suitableness, as a Savior; the believer not only sees personal and transcendent excellencies in him, which ravish him, but special blessings, which are proper for him; he beholds him as 'full of grace and truth;' he smells a sweet savor in his ointments, and that name *Jesus*, a Savior, becomes exceeding precious to him; he views all righteousness and strength, peace and pardon, light and life, joy and comfort, grace and glory, and all things appertaining: to salvation, every thing to make him comfortable here, and. happy hereafter, in Christ; and therefore says, as *David* did, 'I will love thee, O Lord, my strength,' ~~<1818>~~Psalms 18:1.
- 3.** From a sense of his love and manifestation of it to their souls; 'we love him,' says the apostle, 'because he first loved us,' ~~<1819>~~1 John 4:19; our love is not the cause of his, but his is the cause of ours; and it is not merely his loving us, bur the shedding it abroad in our hearts by his Spirit, which draws out our love to him; for though he loved us, yet if he had not some way or other manifested it to us, and overcome our hearts with it, we should still have remained enemies to him; but his giving us the sense and

perception of it in our hearts, is what has drawn us to himself, and will keep us there.

**4.** From a view of union and relation to him; how can persons do otherwise than love him, when they see themselves so nearly united to him, as to be ‘members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones?’ How can they but love him, when they view him standing in and filling up the relations of an indulgent father, a tender husband, a loving brother, and faithful friend unto them?


**5.** This is more and more increased by enjoying communion with him; the more intimate a believer is with Christ, the oftener he sees him, the more frequent visits he receives from him, and the greater acquaintance and fellowship he has with him, the more he loves him; every sight of him, visit from him, and enjoyment of his presence, add fresh strength and fervency to his love; *John*, the beloved disciple, who leaned on Christ’s bosom, and had intimate communion with him, had his heart filled with love to him, and wrote the rues; largely of it. But,

**3dly**, I shall now endeavor to shew how this love manifests itself: and it does so,

**1.** By a regard to Christ’s commands and ordinances; ‘If ye love me,’ says Christ, keep my commandments; for he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me,’ <sup><61415></sup>John 14:15-21, that is, he that hath my commandments written upon his heart, by the finger of the Spirit, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, and is enabled to keep them by the assistance of my grace and Spirit, he it is that shews his love to me; and therefore, as you say, you love me, shew it by an observance of my commands: and all that love Christ will do so, according to the measure of grace received; they will love the place of divine worship, and have a respect to all his ordinances and institutions; for all his *tabernacles* are *amiable* and lovely to them.

**2.** By a regard, to his truths, the doctrines of the gospel; they receive the truth in the love of it, and value it more than their ‘necessary food;’ they highly esteem the preachers of it. and cannot bear to hear one truth of the gospel spoken against.

**3.** By a regard to his people; they love the saints, who love Christ, they delight in their company, and take pleasure in conversing with them; they

are the ‘excellent in the earth, in whom is all their delight,’ and indeed, where there is no love to the saints, there can be no true love to Christ; for, as the apostle *John* says, ‘he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?’  1 John 4:20.

**4.** By a regard to his presence; a soul that loves Christ, values the presence of Christ; nothing so desirable to him as that is: and when he has lost sight of Christ, cannot be easy without him, but seeks here and there until he has found him whom his soul loves: he thinks himself never more happy, than when he has Christ’s presence, and never worse than when he is without it.

**5.** This love manifests itself, by parting with and bearing all for Christ: a soul that truly loves Christ, will part with all that is near and dear to him, for him; he will forsake his own kindred, and his father’s house; he counts Christ ‘the pearl of great price,’ and is therefore willing to quit all he has, that he may but enjoy that; he leaves all, as the disciples did, and follows Christ; and resolves, some what will, that Christ’s God shall be his God, and Christ’s people his people, and where Christ lodges he will lodge, and where he goes he will follow, and cleave close to him, as *Ruth* did to *Naomi*. Moreover, he is not only willing to leave and lose all for Christ, but also to bear all for him, that he is pleased to lay upon him, and call him to; he is willing to suffer reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions for the sake of him and his gospel, and to bear any cross whatever he thinks fit to enjoy him; all which he would never be willing to submit to, was not his soul filled with love to Christ; and such a love as this, which springs from such causes, and manifests itself in these ways, is exceeding grateful to Christ, as appears from chapter 4:10.

#### VERSE 4

Draw me, we will run after thee: The King hath brought me into his chambers. We will be glad and rejoice in thee: We will remember thy love more than wine; The upright love thee.

THE church having taken notice of the excellency of Christ’s love, the savor of his ointments, and preciousness of his name, which made the virgins, her companions, love him; she persists in and continues her request, for communion with him, in these words; in which we have,

**I.** A petition; ‘draw me.’

**II.** An argument which she makes use of to obtain this request; ‘we will run after thee.’

**III.** The request granted to her, which is acknowledged by her; ‘the King hath brought me into his chambers.’

**IV.** The effects thereof, or the influence which this had upon her; ‘we will rejoice,’ etc.

**I.** Here is a request or petition made by the church to Christ; ‘draw me.’ What she intends hereby will be proper to consider. And,

**1st,** There is a powerful efficacious drawing of soul to Christ, at conversion, when God calls a poor sinner by his grace, brings him to Christ, enables him to venture upon him, and believe in him for life and salvation; which is what Christ speaks of in ~~John~~ John 6:44 when he says, ‘No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me, draw him.’ A soul’s coming to Christ for life, is not the produce of power and free-will in man, but of the grace of God in drawing, though it is not effected by force or compulsion; it is true, the sinner, in his natural estate, ‘is stout-hearted, and ‘far from righteousness,’ averse to Christ and the way of salvation by him; but by mighty grace, this stout heart is brought down. and made willing to submit to God’s way of salvation; this obduracy is removed, and hardness of heart taken away by him, who has promised to take away the stony heart, and give an heart of flesh.’ Unconverted sinners are indeed unwilling to come to Christ for life; but those who belong to the election of grace, are made ‘willing in the day of Christ’s power:’ the manslayer did not more willingly flee from the avenger of blood, to the city of refuge, than a sinner, sensible of sin, and the danger of his state, does to Christ for salvation; for though a soul is not brought to Christ; by the power of his free-will, yet he is not brought against his will: drawing does not always suppose force and compulsion; there are other ways of drawing besides that. Thus the fame of a skillful physician draws many people to him; thus music draws the ear; love the heart; and pleasure the mind; as the poet says, ‘Trahit sua quemque voluptas.’ Nor is this done by mere moral suasion, which is what ministers use; knowing the terrors of the Lord, they persuade men: but if the mighty power of grace does not attend their ministry, not one soul will ever be converted; though they represent the joys of heaven and the terrors of hell, in never such a lively manner; speak in never such moving strains, and use the most powerful arguments to win

upon souls; yet they will stretch out their ‘hands all the day, to a gainsaying and disobedient people;’ they will return with a ‘who hath believed our report?’ the arm of the Lord not being revealed unto them. God does not act as a mere moral cause in man’s conversion; he does not only propose an object, and then leave the will to choose, but powerfully and effectually works both to will and to do of his own good pleasure; for this drawing is accomplished by the secret and invisible power of his mighty grace: and in this sense is the word used, in ~~<00E>~~Judges 4:7 when *Deborah* tells *Barak*, that the Lord had promised, saying, ‘I will DRAW unto thee, to the river *Kishon*, *Sisera*, the captain of *Jabin*’s army, with his chariots and his multitudes, and I will deliver him into thine hands;’ that is, ‘I will have the hearts of kings, generals, and captains of armies in my hands, and can turn them as the rivers of waters, whithersoever I will,’ will powerfully and invisibly work upon, move and incline *Sisera*’s heart to lead his army to the river *Kishon*, where I will give an instance of my power and goodness in delivering him into thine hands. Thus God powerfully and invisibly works upon the hearts of sinners, bends their wills, slays the enmity of their minds, allures and draws them to Christ, ‘suavi omnipotentia, & omnipotentia suavitate,’ ‘by a sweet omnipotence, and an omnipotent sweetness;’ and this he does by revealing Christ unto them, in all his beauty and loveliness, discovering the love of Christ unto their souls; by the kind invitations of his grace, the precious and encouraging promises of the gospel, and the special teachings of his Spirit; all which is an evidence of his everlasting love; for it is, because he hath ‘loved them with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness’ he hath ‘drawn’ them; this is also a fruit of Christ’s death; ‘I, if I be lifted up from the earth,’ says he, meaning his elevation upon the cross, ‘wilt draw all men unto me,’ ~~<012>~~John 12:32; that is, all that the Father hath given me, and has promised, shall be gathered to me, and whom I shall shed my blood for. Moreover, it is likewise an indication of the weakness and impotence of sinners, seeing they cannot come unless they are drawn; and sufficiently destroys the notion which advances the free-will and power of the creature in conversion: but I apprehend that this is not the drawing intended in this petition, for thus the church had been already drawn.

The *Septuagint* read it, ‘They have drawn thee: at the smell of thine Ointments, will we run’; <sup>f47</sup> that is, the virgins have loved thee, and shewn their love to thee; and this has so took with thine heart, that it has drawn thee after them, they have thy company, which I want; but by the smell of



those ointments, which thou carriest about with thee, I, and others, will run after thee, till we find thee: so that Christ, according to this version and sense of the words, is the person drawn, and not the person petitioned to, to draw; though the latter seems best to agree both with the *Hebrew* text, and the sense of the words.

R. Aben Ezra thinks that they are the words of the virgins, who, every one of them, desire, saying, ‘draw me;’ we,’ every one of us, ‘will run after thee;’ but they seem rather to be the words of the church, desirous of more intimate communion with Christ; for there is,

**2dly**, A drawing to nearer communion with Christ, which believers oftentimes want, and are desirous of, and which the church had enjoyed; as appears from the following clause in this verse; in which she declares that ‘the king had brought her into his chambers,’ where he conversed with her, and disclosed the secrets of his heart to her: now this petition of hers for nearer communion with him, supposes,

**1.** A distance between Christ and her; not a distance with regard to union; for believers being one with Christ, they never are, nor can be distanced from him; they are always in this sense, ‘a people near unto the Lord;’ nor is there a distance of affection, for ‘having loved his own, which were in the world, he loves them to the end;’ they can never be separated from his love, seeing they are engraven as a seal upon his heart: but this is a distance as to communion; and, in this sense, Christ does sometimes stand at a distance, and hides himself from his people; as appears by their frequent complaints of it, they then thinking themselves forsaken and forgotten by him.

**2.** This petition shews her uneasiness in this condition, and therefore she says, ‘draw me;’ not but that sometimes believers are lukewarm and indifferent; for falling asleep upon a bed of security, they become insensible of their condition, and therefore unconcerned about it; but when they are awakened, and find their beloved gone, their souls are troubled, and being impatient of delay, though in the night, as the church in chapter 3 arise from their beds, and in ‘the streets and broad ways’ seek him, whom their souls love.

**3.** This request shews the sense she had of her own inability to attain to a state of nearer communion with him: ‘when he hides his face, who can behold him?’ when he stands at a distance, who can come near him? if he is

pleased to withdraw his presence, there is no commanding it; the light of his countenance, the enjoyment of his presence, and fellowship with him, are as much the instances of his distinguishing and sovereign grace, and as much depend upon his sovereign pleasure, as the first workings of grace itself; we can no more enjoy the one at pleasure, than we could effect the other; the same Spirit that wrought grace in us at first, must give us access into Christ's presence; we need now the same bands and cords of love to draw us to Christ, as then we did.

**4.** It signifies the apprehension she seems to have of danger; *draw me*, or I shall be drawn away: believers may be sometimes under fearful apprehensions of being drawn away by the corruptions of their nature, the snares of the world, and the temptations of Satan; though they can never be drawn totally and finally from Christ. He has, by the cords of love, drawn them to himself; and though they may not always experience it, yet he will never leave his people till he has brought them safe to glory.

**5.** It shews that high value and esteem she had for communion with Christ, which makes her so earnestly importune that blessing, and use such pressing and repeated instances for the enjoyment of it; this was the 'one thing' she earnestly desired and sought for, yea, preferred to all other enjoyments. Moreover,

**II.** Here is an argument made use of to obtain this request; 'We will run after thee;' or else it may be considered as the end of her asking this favor; 'draw me,' that *we* may 'run after thee.'<sup>f48</sup> Lord, do thou draw, that we may run, which we cannot do, unless thou dost; but if thou wilt, we shall run after thee. Here is a change of persons in these words; first she says, draw *me*, and then *we* will run after thee; by whom are meant, she, and the virgins her companions; the church, and particular members: every one in their stations would act with more life and vigor upon such drawings. 'We will run after thee;' this is not a running *to* Christ, as sinners do under apprehension of danger, as to a city of refuge, and saints, as to a place of protection, safety and security; but this is a running *after* him: Christ is the *fore-runner* who has gone before us, and left us an example, both in doing and suffering, as the fulfiller of righteousness, and the great captain of our salvation; and we must follow him the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth; and not only follow, but run. Our life is frequently, in scripture, called a *race*; Christ is the *mark* we must press after; heaven is the *prize* we should have in view; and the way or *stadium* in which we should run, are Christ's

commandments; though our running therein, or performing them, is not the cause of our obtaining the prize; for ‘it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ‘sheweth mercy;’ yet running herein is our duty; which supposes,

**1st**, Cheerfulness, readiness, and willingness; then, says David, ‘will I run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart,’ ~~BBB~~ Psalm 119:32.; that is, I shall observe them more cheerfully, readily and willingly; it will remove that backwardness that is in me to duty.

**2dly**, Swiftmess; ‘I made haste, and delayed not, to keene thy commandments,’ ~~BBB~~ Psalm 119:60 says the same psalmist such obedience as this, though far more perfectly than we are capable of, do the angels perform in heaven.

**3dly**, Strength; and this we have not; but there is fullness of it with Christ; who, whilst we are waiting on him, is pleased to *renew* our *strength*, so that we ‘mount up with wings as eagles, and run and are not weary, and walk and do not faint.’ Now this is the effect of that drawing, without which there is no running; we cannot set one step forward unless he speak to us, much less can we run, unless he draw us.

**III.** Here is an account of the request being granted, which she observes with pleasure, ‘the King hath brought me into his chambers;’ though others read it, ‘Let the King bring me, <sup>f49</sup> or, O! that the King would bring me, etc.’ and so take it as a continuation of her desires after communion with Christ; but this is for want of knowledge in the *Hebrew* language, as *Mercer* observes: others think that the past tense is put for the future, and so read it, ‘The King shall or wilt bring me,’ etc as being expressive of her faith, that she should enjoy what she was desirous of. *Junius* renders it, ‘When the King shall have brought me,’ etc. and so carries in it the nature of a promise, as to her and her virgins future behavior upon the enjoyment of such a blessing; though I think it is much better rendered by our translators, ‘The King hath brought me,’ etc. and so signifies her enjoyment of the mercy she sought after. Wherein are three things to be considered,

**1st**, Who this *King* is, that brought *her* into his chambers.

**2dly**, What *chambers* those are, which he brought her into.

**3dly,** What is meant by his bringing there, or what this phrase is expressive of.

**1st,** Who this *King* is, not *Solomon*, for ‘a greater than Solomon is here,’ but the Lord Jesus Christ, who is **κατ' ἐξοχήν** by way of eminency, called, ‘The King’: <sup>f50</sup> who is the King of the whole world, the King of the kings of the world, and the king of saints; he has, as he is God, an universal empire over all worlds, heaven, earth, and hell; and, as Mediator, has a kingdom given him by his Father, which he has purchased with his own blood, and by the mighty conquests of his grace, has brought into subjection to himself; in this kingdom he enacts laws for the subjects thereof, by which they are governed and kept in order; he subdues all their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, protects them from all dangers; encourages his loyal and faithful subjects; courteously receives them, graciously takes notice of all their petitions, and supplies them with every thing needful for them: now this kingdom, which Christ, as Mediator, is possessed of, is of a spiritual nature, and managed in a spiritual way; it is kept in peace, being governed in wisdom and righteousness; and will continue for ever, when all other rule and authority shall be thrown down. But,

**2dly,** What *chambers* are these which this king is said to bring her into? Not the temple, into which *Solomon* introduced the people of *Israel*, which is the sense <sup>f51</sup> some give of the words; though there may be an <sup>f52</sup> allusion to the temple, and the chambers thereof, of which mention is made, ~~<1381>~~ 1 Chronicles 28:11, 12 and more especially to the holy of holies, which was inaccessible to any but the high priest; as that, which was typified by it, is to any but Christ the high priest, and those who belong to him, to whom he gives access, and who have boldness and liberty to enter into the holiest of all, by the blood of Jesus: nor do I think that by them are meant those everlasting mansions of peace and rest, which are in Christ’s Father’s house, which he is preparing for his spouse, and bride, and into which he, ere long, will introduce her, where they will keep an everlasting nuptial feast; for at present she could not say, that she was brought thither, though she might be assured of it, that she should, by those kind intimations of his love unto her; therefore it seems better to understand them either,

**1.** Of those chambers of intimate communion and fellowship; which Christ sometimes brings his people into, and of which they are exceeding desirous: this inestimable blessing Christ frequently grants to his people in

his ordinances; for he does not always suffer them to stand without, in the outer courts, but sometimes takes them into his inner chambers, where he discloses the secrets of his heart unto them, gives evident intimations of his love, and fills their souls with divine consolation: or else,

**2.** The doctrines of the gospel, which contain the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the mysteries of his grace) which he brings his people gradually into, and shews them those things which eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived of: <sup>f53</sup> He took me, as if she should say, into his chambers, and there more thoroughly instructed me into his mind and will; gave me to know more fully the *mysteries of the kingdom*; opened all the treasures of his grace, and shewed me all his riches, and glory contained therein. Now this sense suits well with a practice much used by the *Jews*, who frequently taught in chambers, where they also met together to converse about, and determine matters in religion, as fully appears from their writings; <sup>f54</sup> and we have many hints in the New Testament, which confirm it; it was in such a chamber that Christ kept the passover, and instituted the Lord's Supper, and gave there a discovery of the nature of his death and sufferings to his disciples: in such a room the disciples met together, after his ascension; and in such an one *Paul* preached till midnight. But,

**3dly**, What is meant by being brought into these chambers; or what does this phrase import, or express?

**1.** On Christ's part.

**(1.)** An acknowledgement of her to be his bride; he having espoused her to himself, and solemnized the marriage among her friends, which was the Jewish custom, takes her home to himself as his spouse and bride, to live and converse with him; leads her into his chambers, and there unlocks all his treasures; shews her all his riches and glory, and puts her into the possession of them.

**(2.)** It imports wonderful condescension in him, that he, who is the King of kings, should vouchsafe to regard such a worthless creature, as the church is in herself; and much more espouse her to himself, and in such a kind, loving and familiar manner, give her access to his person, and all he has, and grant her such intimate communion and fellowship with him.

(3.) It shews us, that all our nearness to, and communion with God, are in and through Christ; it is he that gives us ‘access into the grace wherein we stand,’ and leads us into the presence of his Father; he is our only way of access unto him, and acceptance with him.

2. On her part; they being her words, shew,

(1.) That she does not ascribe this to herself, but to his powerful and efficacious grace; she was conscious of her own inability, and therefore makes application to him, and, having obtained her desires, acknowledges it to the glory of his grace; who ‘brought, *or* caused her to come,’ as the <sup>f54</sup> word may be rendered, notwithstanding all difficulties and obstructions which lay in the way.

(2.) This she does with thankfulness, in an exulting manner, as this way of speaking testifies, and the following words declare: what was before matter of prayer, is now the subject of praise; she owns, with gratitude, as became her, the mercy she had received.

(3.) It seems to be in a boasting way and manner that she speaks. Believers are allowed to glory in the Lord, and boast of what he has done for them, and manifests to them, that his grace may be magnified, others take notice of it, and they be encouraged in their addresses to him: the church here might have an eye to the virgins or daughters of *Jerusalem*.

**IV.** We have, in these words, the effects or consequences of the church’s enjoying this valuable blessing, as they appear in her or her members, or her daughters, ‘the virgins.’

**1st,** Gladness and rejoicing in Christ; ‘we will be glad and rejoice in thee.’ The several clauses of this text, some think, should be considered thus; <sup>f56</sup> the first clause, ‘Draw me,’ as the words of the church; the next, ‘We will run after thee,’ the chorus of the virgins; then the church again says, ‘The King hath brought me into his chambers;’ and after that the virgins, ‘We will be glad, etc.’ but whether the church, or the virgins, or both, are here intended, it is certain, that this is the language of believers, of whose joy Christ is the object: they rejoice, not in themselves, neither in their works, nor graces, nor frames, but in the Lord Jesus Christ: this is one part of the character which the apostle gives of true believers; they are such who

‘rejoice in Christ Jesus, *and* have no confidence in the flesh,’ ~~PHILIPPIANS~~ Philippians 3:3.

**1.** They rejoice in his person, in his greatness, fitness, fulness, and glory, as he is God and man in one person; for, being so, he is able to be their Savior, a proper person to be a Mediator, has all fullness of grace treasured up in him, and appears to be ‘the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person;’ a view of, and communion with, such an one, must needs fill the believer with ‘a joy unspeakable and full of glory,’

**2.** They rejoice in what he has done for them; he is the Lord Jehovah, ‘who has done great things for them, whereof they are glad;’ he engaged as their surety in the everlasting covenant, and in the ‘ullness of time’ assumed their nature, finished and made reconciliation for their sins, satisfied Divine Justice, fulfilled a righteous law, brought in and clothed them with an everlasting righteousness, procured the pardon of all their sins; and, in short, has secured all grace and glory for them; and when they consider all this, they cannot but be glad and rejoice in him.

**3.** They rejoice also in what he is unto them, as well as in what he has done for them; he stands in and fills up all relations to them; he is their ‘everlasting Father,’ their kind and loving brother, their tender and indulgent husband, their constant and faithful friend, and indeed, their ‘all in all;’ he is every thing unto them, for he ‘of God is made unto *them*, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, *and* redemption;’ and when they consider him under all these endearing characters and relations, it is no wonder that they are heard to say, ‘I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in the God of my salvation, etc.’

**2dly,** Another effect of the church enjoying such intimate communion with Christ, is a remembrance of his love; ‘We will remember thy love more than wine.’ I have already, on verse 2. shewn you the preferableness of Christ’s love to wine and shall not here repeat it, but only shew,

**1.** What it is to remember Christ’s love.

**2.** Why we should, and why every believer will do so.

**1.** What it is to remember it.

**(1.)** It is so to record it in our minds, as not to forget it we should, with *David*, call upon our ‘souls, *and* all that is within us, *to* bless his holy

name, *and* forget not all his benefits,' ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 103:1, 2; and more especially we should not forget his love, from whence they all spring.

(2.) We should often meditate upon it; which would not only serve to advance the glory of divine love; but would sweetly ravish our souls, raise our affections, inflame our love, and quicken our faith.

(3.) We should constantly observe that ordinance, which Christ has appointed for this purpose, namely, the Lord's Supper; it being his design in the institution of it, that we should remember him, his broken body and precious blood, and particularly his special love, which appeared in all.

(4.) We should so remember it, as to have our desires more strongly after it, and our affections more firmly fixed upon it: Christ's love is excellent and valuable; it is preferable to life itself, and all the comforts of it; and a frequent revolving it in our minds will enlarge our desires after a greater knowledge of it, and heighten our value for, and esteem of it.

(5.) We should so remember it, as to exercise faith in it; for it will bring us but little comfort, and do us but little service, unless we can, in some measure, appropriate it to ourselves, saying, with the apostle, 'He hath loved me, *and* hath given himself for me;' it will afford us no solid joy and comfort, that he has loved others, if we have no reason to hope and believe that he hath loved us; for it is faith's viewing a peculiar interest in this love, that fixes a sense of it more firmly upon the mind.

(6.) It then appears, that this is uppermost in our minds, when we speak and make mention of it to others; and, indeed, that should be the subject of our discourse now, which will be the delightful theme of glorified saints to all eternity. But,

2. Why should we, and why will every believer remember Christ's love, value and esteem it more than wine?

1. Because it is worthy of remembrance, in its own nature, and in its effects, as has been already shewn; it is 'better than wine;' it is great and glorious, stupendous and unparalleled, matchless and boundless, everlasting and unchangeable; it 'passeth knowledge, and is the source and spring of all the grace we now receive, and of all the glory we are expectants of.'



2. It would be ungrateful in us not to remember it; should we be unmindful of, and forget this love, and the benefits which spring from it, we should be justly chargeable with the vile sin of ingratitude; and it might be very pertinently returned upon us, what *Absalom* said to *Hushai*, ‘Is this thy kindness to thy friend?’ <sup><1067></sup>2 Samuel 16:17.

3. Because he hath remembered us, and that ‘in our low estate, because his mercy endureth for ever;’ even when we were in the depths of sin and misery, could not help ourselves, and were so far from having any love to him, that we were in open rebellion against him; yet such was his amazing love to us, that he raised us ‘beggars from the dunghill, washed us from our sins in his own blood,’ and made ‘us kings and priests to God and his Father; and shall we not remember? can we be forgetful of this love?’

4. A remembrance of it promotes our own comfort and edification, serves to make sin odious and detestable, and is oftentimes useful to excite and revive grace, to banish our doubts and fears, and make the person of Christ more precious to us.

**3dly**, Another effect or consequence of the church’s being brought into the chambers of near fellowship and communion with Christ, is, that the love of his church and people is the more drawn forth to him, who here go under the character of upright ones, ‘the upright love thee;’ or, according to the Hebrew text, ‘uprightnesses love thee;’ <sup>f57</sup> the abstract for the concrete; which intends upright men, or men of uprightness, as being the persons who love Christ; unless with *R. Sol. Jarchi*, we take it to be expressive of the sincerity of their love, and so read it, ‘in uprightnesses, or with an uptight love they love thee.’ *R. Aben Ezra* thinks it is the adjective of *wine*, before-mentioned, and intends the excellency, sweetness, and incorruptness of it, as in chapter <sup><1070></sup>7:9 and the sense then is this, ‘we will remember thy love more than wine, yea, more than uptight wine,’ or wine that goes down sweetly, ‘do they love thee.’ though I rather think it intends the character of the persons who love Christ. I have already, on the preceding verse, shewn the nature of this love, with which souls love Christ, from whence it springs, and how it manifests itself; and shall now only consider the character of those persons who are here said to love him, namely, upright ones; and they are,

1. Such who are said to be ‘upright in heart,’ of whom mention is made in <sup><1071></sup>Psalm 124:4. ‘Do good, O Lord, to them that be good, *and* to them

that are upright in their hearts;’ such are they who have a work of grace wrought upon their souls; whose hearts are right with God, and desire to worship him with their whole hearts; who live by faith on Christ, and his righteousness, and whose words and actions are without dissimulation; such are ‘Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile.’

**2.** Who are of an upright conversation, as in <sup><1974></sup>Psalm 37:14. These are they who walk according to the rule of God’s word; they are not partial in their observance of his commands, but have a regard to them all; they make a conscience of avoiding lesser, as well as greater sins; and in all their obedience to the divine will, seek the honor and glory of God; and what they do, they do in faith, and from a principle of love to God and Christ. *Junius* understands this clause of the sincerity and uprightness of the love of the church and her friends to Christ, and reads it in connection with the former thus, ‘We will remember thy love more than wine, *and* whosoever most uprightly love thee;’ <sup>f58</sup> that is, whoever bear a sincere affection to thee will do the same.

## VERSE 5.

*I am black, but comely; O ye daughters of Jerusalem,  
as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.*

THE church in the preceding verses had directed her speech to Christ, where we have observed the request she makes, and the success of it, and also the comfortable and grateful frame of Spirit produced by it: here she turns herself to ‘the daughters of Jerusalem,’ and gives an account of her person and state, and delivers her mind to them in this and the following verse. Wherein may be considered,

- I.** The persons she speaks to, ‘the daughters of Jerusalem.’
- II.** The character which she gives of her herself.
- III.** The reason of her so doing.

**I.** The persons she speaks to, are ‘the daughters of Jerusalem:’ and seeing these are frequently mentioned in this Song, it will be necessary to consider who are meant by them. *R. Sol. Jarchi* would have them to be the Gentiles, who, he says, are so called, because *Jerusalem* shall be the *metropolis* of all nations, according to Ezekiel 16:61. ‘I will give them unto thee for

daughters;’ and that they are, in the same sense, ‘the daughters of Jerusalem,’ as the towns of *Ekron* are called in <sup><1656></sup>Joshua 15:45. ‘the daughters of Ekron; but it is much better to understand them of particular churches, of which, ‘Jerusalem that is above,’ or that ‘general assembly, and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven,’ is the mother; though I rather think, young converts are intended by them, who, perhaps, had not as yet joined themselves to the church, though they had a very great respect for her, as is manifest from chapter <sup><2189></sup>5:9 they seem to be very weak, and their knowledge of Christ but small, yet desirous of knowing him and seeking him with her. (See chapters 5:8 and <sup><2181></sup>6:1) And it is very evident, that not only the church, but Christ also, had a very great respect for them, from chapter <sup><2189></sup>3:9, 10, 11. They were her friends and companions, distinct from mother’s children, mentioned in the following verse, and were far from being enemies either to Christ or his church.

**II.** To these persons she gives a character of herself.

**1st,** She makes a concession that she was *black*.

**2dly,** Notwithstanding asserts that she is *comely*. And,

**3dly,** Uses some similies to express both by, ‘as the tents of Kedar, the curtains of Solomon.’

**1st,** She ingenuously and frankly acknowledges that she was *black*. This is not to be understood literally of *Pharaoh’s* daughter, whom *Solomon* had married; and whose mother, *Grotius* conjectures, might be an *Arabian*, and so these words be expressive of her natural complexion; but this is not intended, nor, perhaps, is there so much as an allusion to it; but rather to a shepherdess, or keeper of vineyards, made black by lying in the fields, as the following verse seems to intimate. The *Targum* applies it to the people of *Israel*, when they made the calf, and says, that then ‘their faces became as black as the Ethiopians, that dwell in the tents of Kedar; but when they returned, by repentance, and were forgiven, the brightness of the glory of their countenances was increased, as the angels:’ but the words are expressive of the spiritual estate and complexion of the church of Christ, and of all believers in him; who may be said to be *black*, and *comely*; *black* by sin, *comely* by grace: <sup>f59</sup> *Black*,

**1.** Upon the account of the many spots, blemishes, and infirmities; for though they are fair and spotless, as considered in Christ, yet they are black

and full of spots, as considered in themselves; sin dwells in them and they are sometimes overcome, and carried captive by it; it is always present with them; this body of sin and death, they carry about as their burden; neither will they be rid of it in this life; for 'if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us'; the most holy and righteous man on earth is not without it; every one is both disturbed and defiled with it, and therefore in this sense may be said to be *black*; and so the <sup>f60</sup> Jewish doctors expound it, of the sinful actions and evil works of the congregation of *Israel*.

**2.** The church of Christ may be said to be *black*, oftentimes on the account of those swarms of hypocrites and heretics that appear in it; there have always been more or less of them in the church, in all ages, which have been 'spots in their feasts of charity.' There was a Cain in Adam's family, a Ham in Noah's, an Ishmael in Abraham's, an Esau in Isaac's, and a Judas among Christ's disciples; these goats have always been among Christ's sheep, these tares grow up among his wheat, and will do so, till he shall divide the sheep from the goats, and take his fan in his hand, and thoroughly purge his floor. Now upon the account of these, and the several heresies, schisms, and divisions, which frequently arise, and are made in the church of Christ, she may be said to be *black*: And also,

**3.** By reason of the persecutions and reproaches of the world, which the church of Christ, and all believers in him sustain; for they that 'will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution' of one kind or another; if not confiscation of goods, fines, imprisonments, racks, tortures, yea death itself, which in some ages of the world, have been the lot of God's children, yet, at least, loss of their good name, credit, and reputation; for if they are loved by Christ, they must expect to be hated by men; if they have peace in him, in the world they must have tribulation; they may be sure of being vilified by the world, and backbited and reproached by carnal professors; and this is what the church seems to ascribe her blackness to, in the following verse. So in Zohar, <sup>f61</sup> this blackness is, by the Jews, expounded of the captivity of the people of Israel.

**4.** She may be said to be black, with sorrow and mourning; black color not only being the habit of mourners, but does also, in scripture, express grief and sorrow itself. See <sup><248D></sup>Jeremiah 8:21 and <sup><244D></sup>Jeremiah 14:2. The sins and corruptions of God's people, oftentimes put them in this mourning habit; as David says, when he was under a sense of his manifold iniquities,

‘I go mourning all the day long,’ <sup><f806></sup>Psalm 38:6 or nearer the Hebrew, ‘I go in black all the day long;’ <sup>f62</sup> the coldness, hypocrisy, and formality of professors, give them much uneasiness: the many errors and heresies among them, and the persecutions and reproaches, both of the world and carnal professors, produce this black hue and mournful color.

**5.** They are black in the eyes of the world, which indeed is no wonder; for the men of the world see no beauty nor comeliness in Christ himself, and therefore not any in his people; they being, in their eyes, mean, abject, and contemptible, despised by them, and accounted as the refuse and ‘off-scouring of all things.’ But notwithstanding all this she could say,

**2dly,** That she was *comely*, that is, beautiful and desireable, <sup>f63</sup> having graceful features, and a just symmetry and proportion. Now the church, and every believer in Christ, may be said to be comely.

**1.** By the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, whereby they are justified from all sin, and stand spotless and irreprovable in God’s sight; their own righteousness is as filthy rags, and rather detracts from, than adds to their comeliness; but Christ’s righteousness being that ‘fine linen, clean, and white,’ with which being arrayed, they are ‘adorned as a bride for her husband,’ they appear perfectly *comely through the comeliness which* Christ has *put upon* them; they are no ways comely in themselves, but in Christ they are a *perfection of beauty*.

**2.** By the sanctifying grace of the Spirit, whereby they are made new creatures; Christ is formed in their hearts, and they are conformed to him, who is the ‘first born among many brethren;’ his image is impressed upon them, and all the parts of the *new man* are in a just proportion in them, though not grown up to their perfection; and thus being made partakers of the divine nature, and appearing in the beauties of holiness, they are *all glorious* and comely *within*.

**3.** Believers are so in their church-state, having fellowship with Christ, and with one another, walking together in, and according to the commands and ordinances of Christ Jesus: a church of Christ, in gospel order, is beautiful for situation; all her tabernacles are amiable and lovely; and enjoying the presence of Christ in them, is ‘beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, and terrible as an army with banners.’ O how comely are the saints in their goings in Zion! a more lovely sight than this can scarce be seen; they are then like a ‘company of horses in Pharaoh’s chariots.’

**4.** However black believers may be in the eyes of the world, they are certainly comely in the eyes of Christ; who often, in this song, calls his church his ‘fair one,’ and ‘the fairest among women;’ however undesirable she was to others, she was very desirable to him; her eyes, cheeks, lips, teeth, head, hair, neck, etc. are commended and praised by him; so much beauty and comeliness appeared in her, that his heart was even ravished with her; and so long as he thinks her comely, it matters not what opinion others entertain of her.

**3dly,** She makes use of some similies to express both her blackness and her comeliness, ‘as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.’ Some think <sup>f64</sup> that these refer to both parts of her character; and suppose that the tents of Kedar, though they were mean and abject without, yet were full of wealth and riches within; and a number of them together made a fine appearance, as Dr Shaw relates they now do; <sup>f65</sup> and that Solomon’s curtains or hangings had an outward covering, which was not so rich and valuable as that within; and so are both designed by the church to represent unto us, that though she was mean and abject in the eyes of the world, yet she was rich, glorious, and beautiful within: the outside of a believer is only seen by the world, and they judge of him accordingly; his inside is hid from them, as the riches of *Kedar’s* tents, and the fineness of *Solomon’s* curtains were from those who viewed the outside only; though I rather think her blackness is designed by the one, and her comeliness by the other.

**1.** For her blackness she compares herself to the *tents of Kedar*. *Kedar* was the second son of *Ishmael*, <sup><0243></sup>Genesis 24:13 whose posterity dwelt in the deserts of *Arabia*, <sup><2321></sup>Isaiah 42:11 and their employment being to feed cattle, <sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 60:7 they dwelt in tents, <sup><1900></sup>Psalms 120:4, 5 which were made of hair-cloth, and that of goats hair; which being always exposed to the sun and rain, were very black, looked very mean and contemptible: <sup>f66</sup> they had no other houses but these; and because they always, dwelt in them, removing and pitching them at pleasure, therefore they were called *Scenites*. <sup>f67</sup> Now the church compares herself to these mean, black and despicable tents, on the account of the sins and infirmities of herself, the carnality and hypocrisy of others, the many errors and heresies she was vexed with, as well as the persecutions and reproaches of men, which oftentimes oppressed her, as has been already observed.

**2.** For her comeliness, she compares herself to the *curtains of Solomon*. The Septuagint read it, ὡς δερρεὶς Σαλωμών, *as the skins of Solomon*;

and so the *Vulgate Latin* likewise; which version *Gilbert Foliot*<sup>f68</sup> following, in his Exposition of this place, says, it is not to be understood of the skins of sheep, goats, or any other animal, but of the very skin of *Solomon* himself; who being a rich king, and living deliciously, he supposes was very comely and beautiful; to whose fine skin he thinks the church here compares herself, to set forth her comeliness: but this is much better referred by *Alcuin*, his countryman, to the skins of slain beasts, of which, he thinks, *Solomon* made tents for himself; though it seems rather to intend those rich hangings of tapestry, which *Solomon* had, either about his bed, or in the several apartments of his house; which, no doubt, were very rich, costly, and glorious, he being so great and wealthy a prince: or his garments, as *Theodoret*, see <sup><f69></sup>Matthew 6:29; and therefore the church, on the account of her perfect comeliness, thro' Christ's righteousness put upon her, and the curious and embroidered work of the Spirit of God in her, as also her walk in gospel-order, compares herself to these curtains or hangings. Moreover, by a metonymy, may be understood, both in this and the preceding comparison, the persons who dwelt in *Kedar's* tents, and *Solomon's* courtiers, who lived in those apartments of his which were so richly hung; the former being black, and the latter dwelling in the palace of a wealthy king, and faring deliciously, were no doubt, plump and comely: though neither *Solomon* nor any of his courtiers, could come near the church for beauty and comeliness; and to this sense agrees *Junius's* version of the text.<sup>f69</sup> But,

**III.** Let us now consider the reason of her giving this account of herself to the daughters of *Jerusalem*: her design seems to be to obviate what might be objected by, and remove whatever might be discouraging in her to the daughters of *Jerusalem*, those young converts; they might object to her, Thou talkest of being brought into the king's chambers, and having nearness of access unto him, how can it be, that one so black as thou art, should be taken notice of by so great a person, and have such nearness to him, who appears to be so mean and so unworthy thereof? To this she answers, by granting, that she was black in herself, but yet was comely, through his comeliness; in him she was *prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*; and it was this that gave her the favor and acceptance she had with him.

Again, It might be objected, How canst thou be cheerful, when thou art so black, loaded with persecutions and afflictions, and hated and despised by all? This she obviates by observing, that the world could not see her inward

glory, and therefore passed a wrong judgment upon her; and that the unseen glory, riches, beauty, and perfection in Christ, supported her under all reflections, persecutions, and reproaches.

Also the sins and infirmities which they saw in her, as well as the sufferings she was exposed unto, might stumble those young converts, and be a means to deter them from the ways of Christ, and joining with his church and people; and seeing there was danger of this, therefore she informs them of her beauty as well as of her blackness; of her grace, as well as of her corruptions; of her glory, as well as of her sufferings; and in doing this, her design is to engage and encourage them to go with her; in all which, she discovers her strength of faith in Christ, and his righteousness, notwithstanding all her sins and sufferings; of which she gives a farther account in the following verse.

### VERSE 6.

Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: My mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards but mine own vineyard have I not kept.

THE church, here continues her discourse to the daughters of *Jerusalem*:  
And,

**I.** Desires of them, not to look upon her.

**II.** Gives a reason why she would not have them do so, *because I am black*; of which blackness she assigns several causes; some of which are mot, near, others more remote.

**1st,** 'Because the sun *had* looked upon her.'

**2dly,** '*Her* mother's children were angry with *her*.'

**3dly,** 'They *had* made *her* the keeper of the vineyards.'

**4thly,** This occasioned a neglect of her own; *mine own vineyard have I not kept*; all which produced this blackness in her; for it was not her true and native color.

**I.** She desires the daughters of *Jerusalem* not to *look upon* her; which may be understood, either,



**1.** Of a look of scorn and disdain: <sup>f70</sup> she was now in suffering circumstances, surrounded with a variety of enemies, exposed to a multitude of troubles, and liable to many failings and infirmities; for which reasons she might be jealous of falling under their scorn and contempt, and therefore says, *Look not upon me*. The meanness, poverty, and sufferings of the saints, render them contemptible to the world; and the failures and imperfections of their lives are oftentimes thrown in their teeth, and this, too often, by professors themselves; but this we should be very careful of, that we do not treat our fellow-Christians after such a manner: we should be far from slighting a believer under sufferings, or carrying with a disdainful air to a fallen saint; for we should consider, that we also are *in the body*, and liable to the same temptations. Or else,

**2.** It means a curious and prying look into her failings and infirmities; conscious she was to herself of them, but knew it was not their duty, tho' perhaps they too often made it their business, to look into them. There are some who are never better, than when thus employed, in exposing of the saints; they watch for their haltings, and are glad to report and spread a tale of the infirmities of their brethren; their eyes pierce like vultures, and fasten upon nothing else but corruption: but such a curious, prying look as this, is condemned by Christ, ~~407B~~ Matthew 7:3, 4, 5. 'And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye,' etc. If God did as strictly observe and mark our iniquities, as we are too apt to mark one another's, what would become of us! This consideration should deter us from a practice so vile in itself, so dishonorable to religion, and which is so highly resented by Christ.

**3.** It may also signify a looking with delight and pleasure at her afflictions and falls, which, perhaps, she was suspicious of: this was what Edom was blamed for, in Obadiah v. 12, 13. 'but thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother,' that is, with joy and pleasure, as the following words shew; 'neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah, in the day of their destruction,' etc. believers should be so far from such a temper as this is, that they should rather sympathize with them in their sufferings and fails, than triumph over them; for 'let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.' Or,

**4.** She would not have them look upon her as persons astonished and amazed at her present sufferings, as though some strange and unaccountable thing had happened to her; for they need not be surprised,

when they consider, that Christ, her head and husband, the holy and the harmless one, was treated after the same, yea, after a much worse manner; that the sufferings which she underwent, were but what were appointed for her, and would all end in God's glory, and her own good; therefore she would have them not be startled at them, nor be discouraged by them from joining with her.

**5.** She would have them not to look at her blackness only, but also at her beauty; it is true, she was black in herself, and that she acknowledges; but then she was comely in Christ, and that she would have them take notice of, as well as the other: she would have them look upon Christ, who is 'white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand,' who is altogether lovely and exceeding comely, and consider her in him, and not as she was in herself, for that might be frightening and discouraging to them.

**II.** She proceeds to give the reason why she would not have them look upon her, because, says she, 'I am black;' she had said this before; but here she uses the same word in another form, which some think is to diminish the signification of it, and that she was not so black as they thought her to be, or had represented her; and read it 'blackish,' or 'somewhat black'; <sup>f71</sup> though the doubling of the radicals seems rather to increase the signification, as in other places, see <sup><B98B></sup> Psalm 45:5; <sup><A08B></sup> Proverbs 8:31 and therefore should be read, 'because I am very black or exceeding black; <sup>f72</sup> and this she here mentions again with this addition, that she might have an opportunity to give an account of the particular reasons thereof; which reasons are as follow:

**1st,** She declares, that one reason of her blackness was, 'because the sun had looked upon her.' The Ethiopic version has it, 'because the sun hath not looked upon me,' that is, not kindly and gently, which would be pleasant and delightful; but severely, as to scorch her, and therefore looked black: and so Ambrose <sup>f73</sup> reads the words; but interprets them of the Sun of righteousness, who had not shone upon her, being deprived of which she had not attended to her devotion and observance of the commands, which had brought blackness upon her.

**1.** The Targum expounds this of the congregation of Israel, which was made black by the idolatrous worship of the sun and moon; against this, a law was provided, it was strictly prohibited by God, <sup><B57B></sup> Deuteronomy 17:3 but yet was very early in the world; most nations under the sun fell into it;

some worshipped the sun under one name, and some under another, and all paid a regard unto it; this idolatrous worship seems to have obtained in Job's time, see <sup><48126></sup>Job 31:26, 27 and the Jewish nation was not exempt from it; they frequently fell into it. and were blackened by it, see <sup><12216></sup>2 Kings 23:5-11, <sup><48186></sup>Ezekiel 8:16, for idolatry, error, and superstition, will make the church black.

**2.** Others understand it of Christ, <sup>f74</sup> 'the Sun of righteousness;' and that she was made black, either by suffering for him, or else by being in his company, in whose presence, all other beauty, but his oxen, vanishes and disappears. Thus a person that is not of a fair complexion, being in the company of one that is, looks abundantly worse than if viewed alone: Christ's beauty infinitely exceeds any that is in us; there is no comparison between them; we look black, exceeding black, when compared to Christ. But,

**3.** I should rather choose to understand it of the sun of persecution, for under this name it goes in <sup><48136></sup>Matthew 13:6 compared with v. 21, and this seems to suit better with the church's present state and circumstances; and, indeed, every one 'that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution,' from the tongues, if not from the hands of men: and this persecution, which the church underwent, seems to be a very vehement one, in that she compares it to the looks and scorings of the sun; and it must continue some time upon her, to make and leave such visible marks and impressions upon it; and yet she patiently endured all, and bravely 'bore the heat and burden of the day,' and seems to be no more ashamed of her sufferings, than she was of the person and cause for whom she suffered. The allusion is to persons burnt with the sun, <sup>f75</sup> and so made black or swarthy, as in some countries; and especially to such who are much in the fields, and employed in rural work, as the church is represented as a keeper of vineyards and of flocks of sheep, in the following words.

**2dly,** Her "mother's children were angry with her." To her outward persecutions were added intestine broils; it is therefore no wonder she looked so black as she did: oftentimes a man's worst enemies are those of his own house. The Targum by *mother's children* understands the false prophets, who taught the congregation of Israel to serve idols, and walk in the statutes of the people; by reason of which, she served not the Lord, neither walked in his statutes, nor kept his precepts and his laws. R. Sol.

Jarchi thinks the Egyptians are intended, among whom the Israelites were brought up; many of whom came along with them out of Egypt, and were frequently the cause of their falling into sin: but rather we are to understand by *mother's children*, either,

**1.** Indwelling sins and corruptions, which are produced with nature; lust conceived, as soon as we were conceived; nay, we were conceived with it, and in it, as the Psalmist says, ~~4516~~ Psalm 51:5. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;" which brought forth sin in us, as soon as we were brought forth into the world: and these indwelling lusts and corruptions proclaim war against us; these war against the soul, and sometimes "bring it into captivity to the law of sin which is in the members;" they frequently draw us away to the performance of sinful actions, making us the keepers of other vineyards, and often divert us from our duty, and cause us to neglect it; they hinder us from doing the good we would; for "when we would do goods evil is present with us;" and so we may be said not to keep our own vineyard Or else,

**2.** Carnal professors may be here intended, who are members of the same society, externally children of the same mother, who profess themselves of the holy city, are pretenders to godliness, but enemies to it; such are they, who have "a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof," in themselves, and hate it in others; which, perhaps, may be one reason why these children that were born after the flesh, these false brethren, were angry with the church here; as they frequently are at her zealous defense and vindication of gospel-truths and ordinances, in the power and purity of them, and at her faithful reproofs and admonitions to them and others, throwing all the scandal and reproach upon her that possibly they can: now these are generally her most bitter and implacable enemies, are thorns in her side, and give her the greatest uneasiness; causing more grief and trouble to her, than all her sufferings and persecution from the world; for hereby they blacken and lessen her reputation and character, more than any other whatever; and yet bear it she must, and patiently she ought to endure it; Christ himself was not free from it; for who were more bitter and implacable enemies to him and his gospel, than the Jews, God's professing people, and the chief among them, the high-priests and Pharisees?

**3dly,** She says 'they made her the keeper of the vineyards,' as an effect of their anger to her, and this, no doubt, added to her blackness; for being obliged to lie abroad in the fields, to keep the vineyards, she was exposed

to the scorching sunbeams, and thereby got the hue she appeared with; this employment being not only very slavish, but base, mean, and reproachful; it was what was usually done by the poorer sort, and was much below the honor and dignity she was raised unto. By *vineyards* may be meant false churches; and by her keeping them, her falling in with their corrupt worship, and observance of the vain traditions and ordinances of men; which Christ complains of, and condemns in the Jewish church, who ‘made the commandment of God of none effect by their traditions:’ But this the church was obliged unto by her mother’s children; her compliance does not seem to be voluntary, but forced, and she complains of it as an imposition; ‘they made me,’ that is, forced and obliged me to do it. And this produced,

**4thly**, A neglect of her own vineyard, ‘but mine own vineyard have I not kept;’ which still increased her blackness through outward persecution, intestine broils, and a sinful compliance to human traditions, arising either from fear or weakness, or both, her own vineyard, the church, or her own soul, was neglected, and the affairs of it; her duty and business incumbent on her, <sup>f76</sup> the religious exercise she ought to have been employed in: with the Romans, neglect of fields and vineyards came under the notice of the censors, and did not go unpunished. <sup>f77</sup> Every believer has talents more or less given him to occupy, grace to exercise, gifts to use, and a part assigned him in the Lord’s vineyard, to labor in; and when these things are neglected by him, either through the fear of men, or the corruptions of his own heart, he may be said, not to have kept his vineyard; which, perhaps, sometimes is like his who was ‘void of understanding, which was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof;’ but when he is sensible of it, he will acknowledge and bewail it, as the church does here; she does not go about to extenuate her sin, by the anger of her mother’s children, nor by their obliging her to keep other vineyards, but ingenuously acknowledges that it was her fault to neglect her own; which, as it was prejudicial to herself, so it was highly resented by Christ, who thereupon removed his presence from her; for she seems to be at a loss to know where he was, as is manifest from the following words.

## VERSE 7.

Tell me, (O thou whom my soul loveth), where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon: For why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions.

THE church having, in the two former verses, directed her speech to the daughters of Jerusalem, and given them an account of herself, and present condition, with the reasons thereof, which she did, in order to solve their objections, and remove all discouragements from them that might arise from thence; and being sensible of her weakness and sinfulness in complying with, and embracing the traditions and doctrines of men, in which she found no solid food for her soul; she therefore makes application to Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep, that he would feed, refresh, guide, direct, and restore her wandering soul. In these words are,

**I.** A request made unto him.

**II.** Some arguments used by her to prevail upon him.

**I.** Here is a request made by the church of Christ, which consists of two parts.

**First.** To know where he feedeth; ‘Tell me where thou feedest.’

**Secondly,** That he would inform her where he rested and refreshed his flock in the heat of the day, ‘where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon;’ both which we shall enter into a consideration of.

**First,** She desires to know where Christ fed; which is to be understood not passively, where he himself was fed, or where he fed himself; but actively, where he fed others, namely his flock; which, though not expressed in the original text, must be understood; and it may be observed here, that God’s own children sometimes may be at a loss to know where Christ feeds; which may arise, either from the prevailings of corruptions in them, whereby they have stepped out of the ways of Christ; or from the hidings

of God's face, and the withdrawals of the Sun of righteousness, or from the violent temptations of Satan, and fierce persecutions of the world; but when they are hungry, and desirous of spiritual food, they will enquire after it, and are very jealous, lest they should not be fed by Christ, and with the wholesome words of faith and sound doctrine; therefore in these straits they make their application to Christ, and him only, who 'feeds his flock like a shepherd;' which branch of Christ's work and office we shall now consider; and shall endeavor to shew,

**1st,** What this phrase supposes and intends, as referred to Christ.

**2dly,** What he feeds his flock with.

**3dly,** How, after what manner, and by what means he feeds them.

**4thly,** Where he does so.

**1st,** It will be proper to enquire what is supposed and intended by Christ's feeding souls.

**1.** It supposes that Christ is a shepherd; and he frequently calls himself so, in John 10. The scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, do abundantly testify that he bears this character, and stands in this relation to his people, where he is called God's shepherd, 'Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts,' ~~Zechariah~~ Zechariah 13:7 now he is so called because he is the shepherd, whom God the Father hath approved of, chosen, appointed, set up, and sent to be the shepherd of the sheep; who, as such, died for the sheep and rose again, and as such must give an account unto the Father, of all the sheep which he has intrusted him with; he must bring in the full number, yea, must not have one of them wanting. He is also called the chief shepherd; 'And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory, which fadeth not away,' ~~1 Peter~~ 1 Peter 5:4 which title he well deserves; for he that is God's shepherd, is also God's fellow, entirely equal to him in the dignity of his nature, and in the fullness of his power and glory; all other shepherds are under him, they receive their commissions from him, have their several flocks assigned to them by him, are furnished with abilities from him to feed them; to him, at last, must they give an account of themselves, their work, and the flocks that were put under their care, and from him shall they receive the never-fading crown of glory. He likewise calls himself the good shepherd; 'I am the good shepherd; the

good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep,' <sup><301></sup>John 10:11, and he may very justly call himself so, for so he was to him that employed him, and so he is to those who are made his care and charge; he was faithful to his Father, that appointed him, and is merciful and compassionate to, careful and tender of the sheep committed to his trust; of which, a greater proof cannot be given, than his laying down his life for them. He is called the great shepherd; 'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep,' <sup><302></sup>Hebrews 13:20 which will manifestly appear, if we consider the dignity of his person, being the Son of God; the nature of his flock, the souls of men, therefore he is called 'the shepherd and bishop of souls;' and also the largeness of his abilities for this work: he has an exquisite knowledge of them, he can call them all by name; he is endued with infinite wisdom and prudence to manage and order his flock aright; has an almighty arm to protect and defend them from all their enemies; is furnished with large supplies of grace for them, and bears an inexpressible love unto them. Finally, he is the one, and the only shepherd; 'I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them,' <sup><303></sup>Ezekiel 34:23, not but that there are other shepherds, which are under Christ, and whom he employs in his service, to feed his flock; but Christ is the chief and principle; God the Father never did, nor ever will set up any other; he is the only shepherd that owns the flock, having purchased it with his own blood, and he alone is able to take care of it.

**2.** Feeding being applied to Christ, not only supposes that he is a shepherd, but also that he has a flock to feed; 'He shall feed his flock like a shepherd,' <sup><304></sup>Isaiah 40:11. All the elect are Christ's flock, they are 'his people, and the sheep of his pasture;' the Father has given them to him, and has put them into his hands; he has also purchased them with his blood, and calls them by his grace: hence they know his voice, follow his steps, believe in him, and therefore shall never perish, but have everlasting life. Which flock is,

**1.** A distinct one; it is distinguished from all others, by electing, redeeming, and efficacious grace; Christ's sheep are distinct from the world's goats, and Satan's wolves in sheeps clothing, and will one day be separated and manifestly distinguished, not only from the open enemies of Christ, but also from all painted hypocrites, and carnal professors,



**2.** Though this flock is divided into many parts and branches, yet it is but one flock; for, as there are but ‘one fold, and one shepherd,’ so there is but one flock under the care of this shepherd; though there are many particular flocks or churches here on earth, yet there is but one general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.’

**3.** This is but a little flock; ‘Fear not, little flock, etc.’ <sup><4123></sup>Luke 12:32. Christ’s cote of sheep are little and contemptible in the eyes of the world; and are low and mean in their own eyes; they are few in number, when compared with the world’s goats, though when all appear together in glory, they will be a ‘great multitude, which no man can number.’

**4.** It is called a flock of slaughter: Thus said the Father to the Son, ‘Feed the flock of the slaughter,’ and he replied, ‘I will feed the flock of the slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock,’ <sup><3104></sup>Zechariah 11:4-7, and it is so called, because it is exposed to the cruelty and barbarity of open and avowed enemies, and to the ravings of wolves in sheeps clothing; the saints, for the sake of Christ and his gospel, have been ‘killed all the day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter,’ <sup><886></sup>Romans 8:36.

**5.** Nevertheless it is a beautiful flock, as the people of the Jews are called in <sup><3120></sup>Jeremiah 13:20; the saints are beautiful in Christ’s eyes, being clothed with his spotless righteousness, washed in his precious blood, and sanctified by his Spirit; therefore, however black they may be in their own eyes, or in the eyes of others, they are comely and delightful in the eyes of Christ.

**3.** This act of feeding, takes in and comprehends the whole work and business of a faithful shepherd towards his flock; all which Christ fully and exactly performs,

**1.** He knows them distinctly, and takes a particular account of them; he knows them so, that he can call them all by name; he knew them full well in his father’s gift of them to him, and so he did when he shed his precious blood for them; he knew distinctly all that he died for and in effectual calling, he sets his mark, stamps his image on them, that it may also appear, both to themselves and others, to whose flock they belong; he took a particular account of them, when the Father put them

into his hands, and made them his care and charge, and they shall ‘again pass under the hands of him that telleth them;’ for he will take care that not one of them shall be lost, but shall be all safely folded in heaven.

**2.** He not only, as a shepherd, takes a particular account of his flock, but he also leads them out, goes before them, and they follow him; he leads them out of the barren pastures of sin, and leads them into the green pastures of his love and grace; he goes before them as an example to the flock, of love, meekness, humility, patience, etc. and they follow him, in an observance of his ordinances, and in an obedience to his commands, till he has safely conducted them to glory.

**3.** He protects them from all their enemies; Christ’s flock is exposed unto, and surrounded by many a roaring lion; ravenous wolves, and snarling dogs stand ready to devour it, had they but as large a permission, and as good an opportunity as they desire; but as David defended his father’s sheep from the lion and the bear, so does Christ defend his; he has power enough to do it, and there is not wanting in him, either will, courage, or diligence.

**4.** He restores his sheep, when they have wandered and strayed from the fold; as it is natural for sheep to go astray, so at as common to Christ’s sheep, not only before, but after conversion; ‘I have gone astray like a lost sheep,’ says David, ~~139:76~~ Psalm 119:176. ‘seek thy servant;’ Christ does so, when his sheep go astray, he seeks every where until he has found them; when he lays them upon his shoulders, and brings them into his fold again, rejoicing; he restores their souls to their former life and liveliness, and ‘leads them in the paths of righteousness, for his own name’s sake.’ **5.** He heals all their diseases; there are many diseases which sheep are liable to, and therefore had need to be well looked after; so there are many diseases which Christ’s sheep are liable to, but they are all healed by him; he binds up the broken hearted, strengthens the weak, heals the sick and wounded; none ever die of their diseases; he is a sovereign, free, universal and infallible physician.

**6.** He watches over them in the night seasons, as the shepherds of Bethlehem did over their flocks; he watches over them night and day, in the dark and cloudy day, in the night of affliction, temptation and desertion; he never leaves them, nor forsakes them.

**7.** In short, he makes all necessary provisions for them; so that they shall not, neither can they want any good thing; he takes care that they shall have the best of food, and what is most suitable and proper for them; he has all fullness of grace treasured up in him, and he freely distributes it among them as they stand in need.

Having thus taken notice of what is supposed and intended in this act of feeding, I shall now consider,

**2dly,** ‘What Christ feeds his flock with,’ and that is,

**1.** With himself, who is ‘the bread of life,’ which being fed upon by faith, supports and maintains the life of God’s children; and such are the nature, virtue, and efficacy of it, that if a man eat thereof, he shall never hunger after the sinful pleasures of this life, so as he has heretofore done; he shall also never die the second death, but shall live spiritually here, and eternally with Christ hereafter. Christ’s ‘flesh is meat’ indeed, and ‘his blood is drink indeed;’ and the believing soul tastes a sweetness therein, and receives nourishment from hence. Christ is the hidden manna, the food of the wilderness, which faith lives upon, whilst travelling through it. O how richly are the saints fed, whose food is Christ himself!

**2.** He feeds them with the gospel, the doctrines and promises of it; the doctrines of the gospel are ‘the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ,’ in which believers are nourished up; these are sweet to their taste, the joy and rejoicing of their hearts, and are esteemed by them more than their necessary food; the promises of the gospel are ‘exceedingly great and precious;’ faith often lives upon them; the whole gospel furnishes the believer with a variety of food; in it are milk for babes and meat for strong men; there is what is suitable to the dispositions, tastes, and constitutions of all God’s children.

**3.** He feeds them with the discoveries of his love and grace; he brings them into his ‘banqueting-house,’ and his ‘banner over them is love;’ there he gives his best wine, and revives and refreshes their fainting and drooping souls with it; he not only feeds them with himself, ‘the bread of life,’ but he also sheds abroad his love in their hearts, which is ‘better than wine;’ and thus, with both these, from time to time, does he regale them; and in making such comfortable repasts for them, which they largely feed upon, they ‘grow stronger and stronger,’ until, at length, they become perfect men in Christ Jesus. But,

**3dly,** ‘How, after what manner, and by what means does Christ feed his flock?’ This is the part of the church’s request; for so the words may be read, ‘Tell me how thou feedest, and how thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon.’<sup>f78</sup> Now, Christ feeds his flock:

**1.** By his ministers, who are his under-shepherds, to whom he gives commissions to feed his flock, saying, as he did to Peter, <sup><EPI></sup>John 21:15, 16, 17: ‘Feed my lambs, feed my sheep;’ who receive food from Christ, the great Shepherd, and have suitable gifts and graces bestowed upon them, that they may feed souls ‘with knowledge and understanding,’ that is, with the doctrines of the gospel; which is the food Christ would have his fed with, as has been shewn already.

**2.** He feeds them by his ordinances, which are ‘breasts of consolation’ to his people, out of which they suck, and are satisfied. Christ oftentimes makes a feast for his people, in his ordinances, and bids them welcome, and says, ‘Eat, O friends, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved;’ and their faith feeds heartily upon ‘the goodness and fatness of his house.’

**3.** He does all this by his Spirit; it is the Spirit of Christ that takes Christ, and the things of Christ, and sets them before us, for faith to feed and live upon; it is he that applies the doctrines, and seals the promises of the gospel to us; and it is he that sheds abroad the love of Christ in us; the ministry of the word, and the ordinances of the gospel, are the means of feeding souls; but these would be dry breasts, and would fall short of satisfying and refreshing them; were they not attended with the Spirit of Christ.

**4thly,** The last enquiry is, Where does Christ feed? To this I answer, in the gardens, his several and particular churches, according to chapter <sup><ZEP></sup>6:2. ‘My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens.’ Would any, with the church, know where Christ feeds? It is where his gospel is powerfully preached, his ordinances purely administered, and the laws of his house faithfully put in execution: this may then serve as a direction to such enquiring souls, who would be glad to know where Christ feeds, that they may feed with him; let such seek after a gospel ministry and sit under it; or a church in gospel-order, and give up themselves unto it, to walk with the saints, in all the ordinances, and commands of Christ. So much for the first part of the request. It remains to be observed,

**Secondly,** That the church is also desirous to know where Christ ‘makes his flock to rest at noon;’ and there was a great deal of reason for her to make such a request as this, for it was noon with her; the sun was in its meridian, in its full strength, and had looked upon her, as she declares in the former verse. The allusion is to shepherds in hot countries, leading their flocks to some shady place, where they may be sheltered from the scorching heat of the sun; which, as Virgil says, was at the fourth hour, or ten o’clock, two hours before noon.<sup>f79</sup> We read of **προζατία μεσημβριαζοντα**, sheep nooning themselves, or lying down at noon, under a shade by a fountain asleep.<sup>f80</sup> Some by *noon* understand the noon of the everlasting day of the saints’ happiness and felicity in heaven, where Christ feeds his elect with joys that will never end;<sup>f81</sup> ‘leads them to fountains of living water, wipes all tears from their eyes,’ and gives them an everlasting rest from all their toil and labor; but I think, by it we are rather to understand, either,

**1.** The noon of temptation, which is sometimes very hot, fierce and violent; Satan throws his fiery darts, thick and fast, which oftentimes give the believer much uneasiness; he is ‘in heaviness through manifold temptations;’ but Christ makes him to lie down quietly, and rest safely; which he does, either by shading him from the violent heat thereof, or by supporting him under it, or else by giving him deliverance from it. Christ has sweet resting-places for his people, in the time of temptation, and would you know where and what they are? I answer, the fullness and all-sufficiency of grace, which is in him, is what he makes a believing soul sweetly to rest in, at such a time; when he is pleased to say unto it, as he did to the apostle Paul, when in such a case, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee:’ such sweet resting-places, in times of temptation, are also his precious blood, which always speaks peace and pardon, and is of an eternal efficacy; his spotless righteousness, in which, as neither law nor justice, so neither can Satan find any flaw; as likewise, his atoning sacrifice, by which he has effectually ‘put away sin,’ and perfected for ever them that are sanctified; and so is his advocateship and intercession, in the discharge of which, he pleads the believer’s cause, answers all Satan’s charges and accusations exhibited against him, and prays for him, ‘that his faith fail not;’ moreover, the covenant of grace is another resting-place, which stands firm and sure, and the promises thereof are absolute, unconditional, and shall never fail. Now these are some of those sweet resting-places, in

which Christ causes his people to lie down and rest in the noon-time of temptation: or else, by noon may be meant,

**2.** The noon of affliction, which is sometimes very sharp and severe upon God's children; so that as Job says, chapter ~~33~~30:30. their skin is black upon them, and their bones are burnt with the heat thereof; they have generally a large share of afflictions in this world; this sun oftentimes smites them very severely: but Christ has his resting-places for them, where he makes them lie down and rest, which are such as the world know nothing of; he grants them his presences and goes along with them, when they walk through the fire, or through the water, so that the one shall not kindle upon them, nor the other overflow them; he puts underneath his everlasting arms, and supports them under all their trials; he makes their beds in their affliction, so that it becomes easy to them; he discovers his love and grace to their souls, and gives them views of their interest in him; he remembers his word of promise to them, on which he has caused them to hope; lets them see that all their afflictions are in love, that they are all working for their good, and when he thinks proper, he delivers them; and upon such pillows, and in such resting-places as these, does he cause his people to lie down, where 'he gives his beloved sleep,' in the noon-time of affliction: Or else,

**3.** By the *noon* may be meant the noon of persecution; and this, indeed, seems to be the case of the church here; the sun of persecution had scorched her; and her 'mother's children were angry with her;' and therefore, being in distress and anguish of soul, she desires to know unto what cooling and refreshing shades Christ used to lead his flock at such a time. It is an allusion to shepherds, as before observed, who, in those hot countries, used to lead their flocks in the heat of the day, which is at noon, to some cool and shady place, where they might repose themselves, and be preserved from the vehemence of the scorching sun. Most of the Jewish writers <sup>f82</sup> interpret it of the captivity of the people of Israel, which was a time of tribulation and distress unto them: the heat of persecution seems chiefly intended, which fiery trial oftentimes befalls God's children; but Christ has his resting-places for them, at such a time, and under such a trial; he will 'recompense tribulation to them that trouble his people,' but to those that are troubled, that is, with persecution, he will 'give rest with us,' says the apostle, ~~5006~~2 Thessalonians 1:6, 7: rest here, and rest hereafter; he gives liberty of soul when in prison, and fills with an unspeakable joy, even when both their goods and good names are spoiled,

and taken away from them; he gives them a peace under all the racks and tortures, cruelty and barbarity that are exercised upon them by their enemies, which passeth all understanding; they find such rest, satisfaction, and contentment in the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, that they choose rather with Moses, ‘to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season,’ <sup><BR12></sup> Hebrews 11:25.

**Thirdly,** The arguments she makes use of to obtain her request, which are these,

**1st,** She argues from her strong love and affection to him; ‘Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth:’ it is true, these words may be considered as an endearing title which she gave to him; but yet they seem more strongly to express her singular esteem of him, and her sincere and unfeigned love and affection to him, than those usual titles, *my love*, or *my beloved*, do; which love of hers might be very well improved as an argument to obtain her request, thus.

‘O thou who art the great Shepherd of the sheep, tell me in what pastures thou art graciously pleased to feed thy flock, and to what cooling shades thou dost lead them, in the heat of the day, to screen them from the scorching sun. She who makes this humble request unto thee, though mean and unworthy of thy notice, yet is one that loves thee with all her heart and soul; who, though of late, through the weakness and sinfulness of her own heart, and through the fear and force of others, has stepped aside from thy commandments to the doctrines and traditions of men; yet, being made sensible of her weakness and folly therein, cannot be easy to continue among those false teachers and worshippers; and therefore, from a real love to thy person, a respect to thine ordinances, and a regard to thy glory, humbly desires to be informed of these things.’

Now, though the church knew full well that her love to Christ could merit nothing, nor deserve a gracious answer from him; yet she was sensible that expressions of love were very pleasing to him, and therefore she takes this method. The nature, causes and actings of a soul’s love to Christ have been shewn on verse 3.

**2dly,** She argues and expostulates with him, on the account of her present case, and what was likely to befall her, if he did not give her some speedy

directions; ‘for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?’ There is much difficulty and difference in the rendering of the Hebrew word, which we translate ‘as one that turneth aside’; <sup>f83</sup> some render it ‘as one that covereth herself, or is covered’, <sup>f84</sup> either as an harlot; <sup>f85</sup> so Tamar covered herself, which made Judah take her to be an harlot, <sup>01384</sup> Genesis 38:14, or as a widow in mourning, <sup>f86</sup> it being the custom of mourners to cover themselves, <sup>02417</sup> Ezekiel 24:17, 22, and then the sense is, ‘Why should I be suspected to be an harlot, and looked upon as an unchaste woman, that has left her own husband to follow strangers; when thou, who art the searcher of hearts and trier of reins, knowest that I love thee in sincerity, and am heartily desirous of following thee in thine own ways:’ or se the sense is, ‘Why should I appear in a widow’s dress, and go mourning and sorrowing as if I had no husband: O tell me where thou art, and where I may enjoy thy presence, and be delighted with thy company.’ Junius and Tremellius translate the words thus, ‘Why should I be as one that spreadeth the tent with the flocks of thy companions;’ and give this as the sense, ‘Why should I? I would not, though but for a time, have any conversation with such persons, who pretend to be thy friends, and are not; I cannot bear it, my soul abhors and detests the thoughts of it, though, perhaps, thro’ my weakness and infirmities, I may do it; O therefore tell me quickly, speedily, where thou feedest.’ Others render it ‘as one that wanders about, declinest or turns aside by the flocks of thy companions’: <sup>f87</sup> this agrees with our version; and from these words we may observe,

**1.** That there are some who would be the associates and companions of Christ, who indeed are not; these were not really so, but usurped to themselves an equal power and authority with Christ: such are those who take upon them an arbitrary and lordly government of Christ’s flock, who make and impose laws on the consciences of men, which Christ never established, and who teach doctrines contrary to those which Christ taught, and which are derogatory to his honor and glory: such rivals with. and pretended companions of Christ, are, the pope of Rome, who exalts himself above all that is called God; Arians, who deny Christ’s divinity; Socinians, that oppose his satisfaction; and all self-justiciaries, that advance the doctrine of justification by works, in opposition to justification by his imputed righteousness: but such Christ will not own as his friends, nor suffer to be his rivals and companions; for as his own arm brought salvation to him, so the government is alone upon his shoulders; as he was



alone in the purchase and salvation of his flock, so he will be in the government and feeding of it; for his glory, which arises from thence, he will not give to another. Christ never did, nor never will empower any to make new laws, nor coin new doctrines for his church and people.

**2.** These false and pretended friends and companions of Christ, who are no other than wolves in sheeps clothing, have their flocks. Heretics and false teachers, in all ages, have had their followers, and sometimes large numbers have been drawn away after them; and this God suffers in a judicial way; he gives men up to believe a lie, because they love not the truth; but having itching ears, grew weary of it and want something new: also these are permitted to have their flocks, by themselves, that Christ's little flock might be distinguished from them, and that those who are chosen, loved, and approved by God, might be made manifest; as also to animate and excite the faithful ministers of the gospel to be constant and assiduous, bold and faithful to preach the doctrines of Christ. and to oppose errors.

**3.** Believers are very fearful, lest they should, and are very desirous that they might not go aside from the ways of Christ; they are jealous of their own hearts, and are sensible that there is in them a propensity thereunto; they know that Satan uses all the crafty methods, and takes all the opportunities he can to draw them aside, and corrupt their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ; they are apprized of their own weakness, and know that they are not kept by their own power, but that if they are left to themselves, they shall soon divert to crooked paths: and the present case of the church also manifestly shews that God may, for a time, suffer his own children to be carried away with the error of the wicked; but when they are made sensible of it, they will be filled with an holy indignation against it, and make it their principal request at the throne of grace to be delivered out of it, and that their feet may be guided and directed in the paths of Christ: now those who are desirous that they may be kept from turning aside unto, and joining with the flocks of false teachers, who vainly pretend to be the friends and companions of Christ, should abide in the Lord's inheritance, keep close to Christ's ways and ordinances, and not believe every spirit, but try them according to the word of God, as the noble Bereans did; they should earnestly beg that the gospel which is preached unto them might effectually work in them, and make deep impressions upon them; so shall they not be 'like children tossed about with every wind

of doctrine.’ But let us hear what directions Christ himself gives to the church in the following words.

### VERSE 8.

If thou know not (O thou fairest among women!) go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds tents.

SOME think <sup>f88</sup> that these are the words of the chorus of virgins or daughters of Jerusalem, by whom she is called ‘the fairest among women,’ in chapters ~~ZIRB~~ 5:9 and ~~ZIME~~ 6:1 who here instruct and direct her where she might find and come at the sight of her beloved; but the note of R. Solomon Jarchi is much preferable, which is, that ‘this is the answer of the shepherd;’ for it was to him, and not to the virgins, that she made her application; nor were they capable of giving her any directions in this case, but rather stood in need of some from her, as is manifest from chapters 5:9 and 6:1. In this answer of Christ’s unto the church, are these three things:

- I. The commendation he gives her; ‘O thou fairest among women!’
- II. A supposition of her ignorance: ‘if thou know not.’
- III. A direction to her; ‘go thy way,’ etc.

**I.** Christ in these words gives the church an excellent commendation, ‘O thou fairest among women;’ in what sense the church is fair and comely has been shown, on verse 5 who, thou’ black in herself, and in her own eyes, yet having Christ’s righteousness imputed to her, and his grace wrought in her, is fair and comely: which commendation here, both in itself. and as it follows upon the account which she gave of herself and state, in the preceding verses, may teach us the following things:

1. That the beauty of the church is very great and exceedingly admired by Christ; as some men are eminent for their strength, courage, and valor, so are some women for their beauty and comeliness; and she being said to be ‘the fairest among women,’ shews that her beauty must be excellent rind surpassing; as he is fairer in her eyes than all the sons, so she is fairer in his than all the daughters of Adam.
2. That believers are fairest in Christ’s eyes, when blackest in their own: she had asserted of herself, in verse 5 that she was black; but here Christ

says, that she was ‘the fairest among women.’ The humble believer that has low and mean thoughts of himself, on the account of the corruption of his nature, the imperfection of his obedience, the weakness and insufficiency of his righteousness, is much more esteemed and valued by Christ, than the proud, haughty and vain-glorious Pharisee; an instance of this we have in <sup><P183></sup>Luke 18:13, 14. An humble soul is one that looks upon itself as the least of saints, and the chief of sinners; the countenance of such an one blushing at its sins and infirmities, is beautiful and comely in the eyes of Christ, and is a sight exceeding desirable to him; and therefore he says, in chapter <sup><P14></sup>2:14, ‘Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.’

**3.** That Christ’s thoughts of believers are not according to those which they have of themselves, nor according to those which the world entertains of them; he ‘seeth not as man seeth,’ neither does he look upon, or judge according to the outward appearance: the believer oftentimes looks upon, and judges of himself, according to his indwelling corruptions, and the inward frames of his soul, and draws black conclusions against himself: the world looks upon the outward, mean, and abject appearance of the saints, and so they become black and contemptible in their eyes; but Christ views them in himself, and in his own righteousness, and considers them in all that glory in which he saw them in the glass of his Father’s purposes and decrees, which glory he has fully, resolved on, and designed to bring them to the actual possession of; and on this account they appear exceeding fair and beautiful in his eyes,

**4.** This excellent commendation of the church given by Christ, shews his amazing and unalterable love to her; he loved her now as well as ever; notwithstanding all her blackness thro’ sins and sufferings, she was as fair in his eyes as ever, nay surpassingly fair, fairer than all others; though she had been negligent of her duty, and had sinfully complied with false and superstitious worship, with the doctrines and traditions of men, and thereby wandered from Christ and his ways, and knew not where he fed and caused his flock to rest; yet upon her first application to him, he gives her such a character, as expresses much love and tenderness, as well as manifests a very great regard to her, in directing and instructing of her: O matchless love! boundless grace!

**II.** Here is a supposition of her ignorance, ‘if thou know not:’ which is not to be understood, either by way of hesitation or reprehension, as if Christ

either doubted of her ignorance, or reproved her for it, but by way of inference from what she had suggested; for this particule *if*, is not always hypothetic or conditional, but is sometimes illative, see ~~Philippians~~ <sup>Philippians</sup> 2:1, and thus the words may be rendered, ‘seeing thou knowest not,’ so Junius; or ‘because thou knowest not;’ and may be considered as a reason why Christ gave her the following direction and advice, and will lead us to observe these two things:

**1.** That believers may, in some measure, be ignorant of a great many things in this life; this life is a state of imperfection, both with respect to holiness and knowledge; the greatest believer knows but in *part*, and sees things but *through a glass, darkly*; he is ignorant of himself in a great measure, though he may know much of the plague of his own heart, of the corruptions and treachery of it, yet he does not know all; for the heart is ‘deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?’ These words may be rendered from the Hebrew text, thus, <sup>f89</sup> ‘If thou know not to thee, or, for thyself,’ so Ainsworth; or, ‘if thou knowest not thyself;’ it is generally looked upon as a pleonasm, yet it may intend, not only the ignorance which was in herself, but also her ignorance of herself. Again, a believer maybe in some measure ignorant of Christ and his gospel; he may not so fully know his relation and union to him, and interest in him: many of those truths, which concern Christ’s person, grace, and kingdom, may be but obscurely revealed unto him; he may have but a small insight into them: tho’ he may have been long in Christ’s school, yet he may be but a babe in knowledge, and need to be taught ‘the first principles of the oracles of God:’ our knowledge of these things at best is but imperfect, and when compared with that which saints shall have in glory, is very dark and obscure: also believers sometimes may be at a very great loss to know where Christ feeds his church and people; and this has been the case of the saints, as it was the church here, in times of persecution, darkness, and surperstition; they have not only been at a loss for his presence, but they have also been at a loss for his ordinances; they have not only been ignorant where he was, but also they have not known where his gospel was preached in the power, and his ordinances administered in the purity of them.

**2.** That though Christ’s people are ignorant of a great many things, and of such which, as one would think, they should not be ignorant of, but should make it their principal business to be acquainted with, yet Christ does not upbraid them with it; for ‘he has compassion on the ignorant, and on them

that are out of the way;’ as their merciful and faithful high priest, he has atoned for their sins, both of ignorance and presumption; and as their prophet he instructs them by his word and Spirit, and ‘guides their feet in the way of peace;’ and therefore the most ignorant soul need not be discouraged from going to Christ for wisdom, counsel and direction; but let him that ‘lacketh wisdom, ask it of him, who giveth liberally to all men, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him,’ <sup><5005></sup>James 1:6.

**III.** Here is a direction which Christ gives her, in answer to her request, which consists of two parts;

**First,** To ‘go forth by the footsteps of the flock.

**Secondly,** To ‘feed her kids beside the shepherds’ tents.’

**First,** The first thing which Christ directs and advises her to, is, to ‘go her way forth by the footsteps of the flock.’ Some <sup>f90</sup> consider these words, not as a direction to the church, but as spoken by way of resentment to her. Christ, observing the church was growing uneasy under her trials and temptations, and, as it were, threatening that if he did not relieve her, she would join herself to the flocks of his companions; being ignorant, both of her own beauty, which she had received from him, and of that relation which she stood in to him; as also, that she must expect to meet with more troubles, temptations and trials with him and for him; Christ, I say, observing and resenting this froward temper of hers, and the ignorance that was in her, bids her be gone from his presence, and follow the steps of those flocks which she had mentioned, and see what would be the consequence of it, and whether she would find her account in it or no; and ‘feed her kids,’ that is, give a loose to, and indulge her carnal lusts and corruptions among those persons whom she seemed to have an inclination to: but they seem rather to be spoken by way of direction than resentment; and there are some, who, though they look upon the words as a direction of Christ to the church, yet by ‘the footsteps of the flock,’ understand the paths and ways of those sheep and shepherds, among whom she was, and by whom she was in danger of being carried away, and read the words thus, ‘Go out of those footsteps of the flock,’ <sup>f91</sup> so Junius and Tremellius. But though, no doubt, the church is here directed and exhorted to depart from the ways of sin, to leave all superstition and idolatry, and come out from among false worshippers; yet I cannot but think that the ‘footsteps of

the flock' are the rule and mark by which she was to go, and keep her eye upon, in finding Christ: and it may be enquired,

**1st,** What is meant by 'the flock.'

**2dly,** What by 'the footsteps' of it, by, and in which the church was to go.

**1st,** What is meant by 'the flock;' and by it we are to understand, the flock which the Father has committed into the hands of Christ, which he has purchased with his own bloods and continually feeds like a shepherd; this is called *a flock* in the singular number, in opposition to the numerous flocks of those other shepherds mentioned in verse 7, for as there is but one shepherd, who is Christ, so there is but one flock, which is the church; of which flock I have given a more large account on the former verse.

**2dly,** By 'the footsteps of the flock,' are meant the ways and ordinances in which saints by faith walk, in obedience to Christ Jesus; he has left us an example that we should follow his steps; so far as believers walk therein, we should follow and walk in the steps of the same faith which they have done, and in so doing, may, and shall find the presence of Christ Jesus. From whence may be observed,

**1.** That we have no reason to expect a new gospel nor new ordinances; but we should enquire for *the good old way*, which the saints in all ages have trod; no new lights nor new revelations, that have no foundation in the word of God, are to be regarded by us; for 'we have a more sure word of prophecy, to which we do well if we take heed.' Christ has in his word established the order of his churches, fixed the ordinances thereof, till his second coming, and marked out the paths in which he would have his people walk; and these are the footsteps of the flock, which saints in all ages should go by.

**2.** That the faith and obedience of God's children, as to the substance of them, have been the same in all ages: There is but 'one faith, one Lord, one baptism;' the object of faith has been always the same; so have the Spirit and Author of faith, and also the grace itself, as to its nature and actings: there has been but one Lord, who has established laws and ordinances, has a power to require obedience, and to whom, in all ages, it has been given by his saints, both in a way of doing and suffering.

**3.** That the practices of former saints, both as to their faith and obedience, are to be imitated by us: see <sup><8162></sup>Hebrews 6:12 and <sup><8107></sup>Hebrews 13:7. but always with this limitation, given by the apostle Paul, ‘Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ,’ <sup><6101></sup>1 Corinthians 11:1, and indeed, no farther should we follow the most eminent saints, for faith and holiness, than as they have trod in those steps which Christ has marked out for them and us.

**4.** In so doing, we may expect to have our souls fed and nourished, as theirs were, and to enjoy the presence of Christ, as they did; for though our faith and obedience deserve none of all this, yet in walking in Christ’s ways, we have most reason to expect it, being encouraged both by Christ’s promises, and by those many instances and clouds of witnesses that have gone before us. The Targum and R. Sol. Jarchi, understand this part of the direction, of the righteous, in whose steps those that come after should tread.

**Secondly,** The other part of the direction is, to feed her kids beside the shepherds’ tents. It was common in the eastern countries, as Philo says of the Arabs, <sup>f92</sup> not for men only to keep flocks, but women also and young virgins; of women keeping flocks, see <sup><0120></sup>Genesis 29:2, <sup><0116></sup>Exodus 2:16, the same Josephus says of the Troglodites; <sup>f93</sup> and it was an early custom for shepherds to have tents where they fed their flocks: they were as early as the days of Jabal, who was the inventor of them, <sup><0041></sup>Genesis 4:20. Hence the Arabian shepherds, who dwelt in tents, and moved them from place to place for the sake of pasturage, were called *Scenites*; and,

**1st,** By *shepherds* may be meant such who are called *the companions* of Christ in verse 7. <sup>f94</sup> who only had the appearance of shepherds, but were inwardly ravenous wolves: the words may be rendered, ‘Feed thy kids above the shepherds tents, or above the tents of other shepherds;’ so R. Aben Ezra and Junius; that is, go beyond their tents, and do not pitch thine where theirs are, but carry thy kids farther, into other pastures, and feed them with better and more wholesome food than they give: or else, by them, may be meant the ministers of the gospel, who are Christ’s under-shepherds, whose business is to feed Christ’s sheep and lambs, with the soul-refreshing doctrines of the everlasting gospel; who receive their commission from Christ to feed the flock, are furnished with abilities from him for that work, and must give an account unto him; and by, or near the tents of these shepherds, <sup>f95</sup> the church is directed to feed her kids.

2. By the tents of these shepherds, may be meant those places of divine worship, where the ministers of Christ usually preach his gospel, and administer his ordinances; which tents or tabernacles are amiable and lovely to believers: the Jewish writers generally understand them of their schools or synagogues. <sup>f96</sup> It is an allusion to shepherds' tents, which are usually pitched where they feed their flocks.

3. By kids may be meant young converts, who, though they are desirous of the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby, yet are but weak in faith, and have but a small degree of knowledge; and therefore should be near the shepherds' tents, that they may be under their immediate care and inspection; as Christ himself has the strongest affection for these, and takes a special care of them, as in <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 40:11, so he would have his ministers and churches be particularly careful and tender of them: these kids R. Aben Ezra calls *ἡννα γκῑϑ ὀλιγοπίζους*, 'persons of little faith;' the very character which Christ gives of his disciples, <sup><4060></sup>Matthew 6:30, young converts are not only called kids, because of their faith and knowledge; but kids being young goats, lascivious and of an ill smell <sup>f97</sup> may intimate, that notwithstanding the grace which is wrought in them at conversion, yet there still remains sin and corruption in them, disagreeable to themselves and others; as also, that being called by divine grace out of the world, and having separated from the men of it, they did *male oler*, smell ill, and were become abominable and contemptible to them; and therefore needed much refreshment and encouragement from the church and ministers) that they might not be discouraged and cast down at their own corruptions, nor at the frowns and reproaches of the world. This direction to the church, to feed her kids beside the shepherds tents, where the gospel was preached by Christ's ministers, shews the necessity and perpetuity of a gospel-ministry, and of gospel-ordinances; and what a value saints should have for them, and also what use they should make of them, as well as informs us of the wretched mistake of those persons who think themselves above hearing the word, and regarding ordinances.

## VERSE 9.

*I have compared thee, O my love, to a company  
of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.*

CHRIST having returned a suitable answer, and given proper directions to the church in her present difficulties, enters upon a commendation of her,



which is begun in this verse, and continued in the following one. In these words are,

**I.** An affectionate title given to her; ‘O my love.’

**II.** A comparison which Christ makes of her, ‘to a company of horses in Pharaoh’s chariots.’ And,

**III.** It may be enquired why such a comparison is made and mentioned in this place.

**I.** Here is a very loving and endearing title given unto her, ‘my love;’ it may be rendered ‘my friend’; <sup>f98</sup> there is a mutual friendship between Christ and believers; the church owns Christ to be her beloved and her friend, and Christ welcomes his church and people to the entertainments of his grace, under the characters of his beloved, and his friends, saying, ‘Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved:’ and he not only calls them so, but uses and treats them as such; he converses with them, and discloses the secrets of his heart unto them; he is a friend to them at all times, in adversity as well as prosperity, and has given the most incontestible proofs of it in his suffering and dying for them. The Septuagint render it, ‘my neighbor:’ the church is Christ’s neighbor; they dwell near to each other; he dwells in their hearts by faith, and they by faith dwell in him: he shews, that he regards his church as his neighbor, by loving her as himself; nay, he has so loved her, as to give himself for her. Again, if we consider this title, according to our version, it well suits the church, who is Christ’s love.

**1.** Objectively; She is the object of his love, was so from eternity, will be so throughout all time, and when time shall be no more; he has given the fullest proofs of it in his undertaking, as a surety for her, in his assumption of her nature, in dying in her room and stead, and in making satisfaction for all her transgressions. The nature of this love has been shewn already on ~~2002~~ Song of Solomon 1:2

**2.** She is Christ’s love subjectively; Christ’s love is fixed upon her, and is shed abroad in her heart, by the Spirit, and this causes love in her soul to him; that so as Christ loves her, she loves him, with a real, hearty, sincere, and superlative love; she is therefore Christ’s love, both because he loves her, and also because she loves him.

**II.** Here is made, by Christ, a comparison of her, ‘to a company of horses in Pharaoh’s chariots: I have compared thee, O my love, etc.’ that is, I *thought and imagined thee to be like* unto them, <sup>f99</sup> or *I have made thee like unto them*; which shews that she was not only like unto them, he having asserted her to be so, who must certainly know, but also that this was owing to him, that shew as so: or to my mare, as some render it, <sup>f100</sup> which being a present by Pharaoh to Solomon, he might have a particular regard for it; nor is such a comparison of a woman a disagreeable one; many women have had their names from this creature, from some celebrated excellence in them, as Hippo, Hippe, Hippia, etc. and the same figure is made use of by various writers. <sup>f101</sup> Now the church is compared to a company of horses, to set forth her greatness and excellency, and to Egyptian ones, which were esteemed the best, and to those in Pharaoh’s chariots, which, no doubt, were best of all: all believers may very well be compared ‘to a company of horses in Pharaoh’s chariots;’

**1.** Because the horses in Pharaoh’s chariots were a choice and select company, picked and singled out from others, peculiarly for his service: so R. Sol. Jarchi interprets it, ‘a collection of horses,’ which, no doubt, was a choice and curious one; for if there were any more than others, it is very reasonable to suppose, that they were in Pharaoh’s chariots. The church of Christ is a ‘chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, and a peculiar people;’ they are distinguished and separated from others, by electing, redeeming, and calling grace; they are a collection from the rest of mankind, made by the free, sovereign, and distinguishing grace of God; they are ‘a remnant: according to the election of grace,’ chosen and singled out from others in Christ, before the foundation of the world; they are ‘redeemed from among men, and that out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation;’ whom God is pleased by his mighty, powerful, and efficacious grace to call, even, one of a city, and two of a family, and bring to the participation of peculiar favors and privileges, thro’ Christ, in the church on earth, and with Christ for ever in glory.

**2.** These horses in Pharaoh’s chariots were, no doubt, bought at a very great price; Egyptian horses went at a very great price, in Solomon’s time; a single one was valued at an hundred and fifty shekels of silver: see ~~1~~1 Kings 10:29. and therefore these, which were bought for Pharaoh’s service, who was king of Egypt, being the best, must be supposed to be bought at a very great price. The church and people of God are bought with a price, and that with a very great one indeed, such a one, that angels

and men could never have given; they are purchased, not with ‘corruptible things; as silver and gold;’ no, all the riches in the world amassed together, could not have purchased a single soul, nor have given to God a ransom for it: ‘but they are bought with the precious blood’ of the unblemished and unspotted Son of God; they are bought for the service of the King of kings, and at no less a rate, than at the expence of his own blood and life; the ransom which is given for them is himself; O how valuable must they be to Christ, and how much must they be esteemed by him!

**3.** These horses, being well fed, looked very beautiful and pleasant. Believers are fed with the finest of the wheat, with Christ and his fullness; Christ himself is the bread of life, and the hidden manna, which being fed upon by faith, removes hunger, supports life, and preserves from the second death; his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed, which give spiritual and divine refreshment to believers; his grace is represented by wine, milk, and honey, on which his people feeding plentifully, grow and look exceeding delightful and beautiful in his sight.

**4.** These horses, being the king’s horses, as they were well fed, so, no doubt, they were well taken care of; they had proper persons appointed on purpose to attend upon them, and to supply them with what was necessary for them. Believers in Christ have a guard of angels to attend upon them, who encamp about them, and minister to them; for those ‘ministering spirits are sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation;’ also the ministers of the gospel, being furnished with suitable grace and abilities, are appointed to feed them with the doctrines of the everlasting gospel, and to give to every one ‘their portion of meat in due season.’ Moreover they are not left merely to the care of angels and ministers, but the Lord himself likewise concerns himself for them; when his church is represented as a vineyard, he is said to be the keeper of it, who ‘watches over it night and day lest any hurt it;’ when it is compared to a city, he is the wall of fire round about it; and when to a flock of sheep, he is the shepherd of it; and being here compared to a company of horses, it is owing to the food that he gives them, and the care he takes of them, that they appear ‘as his goodly horse in the battle,’ <sup>300B</sup> Zechariah 10:3,

**5.** Horses have been and are much delighted in by princes; and there is no reason to question but that those which ran in Pharaoh’s chariots were so by him; Solomon’s fancy and inclinations ran so strongly this way, and he took so great a delight in those creatures, that he broke through a divine

command, <sup><f176></sup>Deuteronomy 17:16 compared with <sup><f179></sup>1 Kings 10:29 to satisfy and indulge his carnal pleasure; and many other princes have run prodigious and excessive lengths this way. Julius Caesar set up a marble effigy of his horse in the temple; <sup>f102</sup> Antoninus Verus erected a golden image for his. Nero clothed his with a senator's robe, and told him out a weekly stipend; Poppea Sabina, Nero's wife, had golden shoes made for hers; Caligula used to invite his to supper, and held out his golden cups to him; he would have made him a consul, as he afterwards made himself a priest, and his horse his colleague; Alexander the great built a city in honor of his Bucephalus; Cimon the Athenian buried his mares by his own sepulcher; and Commodus the emperor buried his horse in the Vatican. These instances, though vain and sinful, and not to be imitated, yet shew how much some princes have delighted in this sort of creatures. Now, as these creatures were the delight of princes, and, perhaps, of Pharaoh, so are believers the delight of Christ; he first makes them beautiful, and then delights in that beauty which he has put upon them; 'the Lord taketh pleasure in his people, he will beautify the meek with salvation;' his heart is often ravished with his own grace in them, and his soul delights in that which he himself has given them; there is nothing in them of their own which can render them acceptable to him, and yet they are his jewels, the apple of his eye, and the delight of his heart.

**6.** Horses are stately and majestic creatures, especially a company of choice and well fed ones, that run in a chariot, as these were. There is a stateliness and majesty in believers, especially when they are united together in gospel-order, in a church-state: and the majesty, stateliness, and glory of a church of Christ, do not consist in the multitude of members, nor in their outward riches, pomp, and splendor; but in their being all clothed with Christ's righteousness, and possessed of his grace; in the enjoyment of his presence in ordinances; in their walking in love and unity with each other, and wisely towards them that are without; in having their conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ, and the profession which they make of it, and in shewing a becoming zeal for the truths and ordinances thereof; being thus blessed with these things, they may be truly said to be as stately and majestic as 'a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots,' which were well fed, and harnessed in a splendid manner.

**7.** Horses are very strong creatures, especially, a company of them joined together, as these were; concerning the strength of the horse, the Lord says to Job, chapter 39:19. 'Hast thou given the horse strength; hast thou

clothed his neck with thunder?’ Believers are strong, not in themselves, but in Christ; their strength lies in their head, and in their union to him; they can do nothing of themselves, but’ can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth them;’ having strength communicated to them from him, they can endure all hardships, go through all difficulties, withstand all temptations, and perform all duties which he calls them to: and next to their union to Christ, the strength of a society and company of believers, or a church of Christ, lies in their union and close adherence to each other; they are like the bundle of sticks in the fable, which, whilst kept bound together, could not easily be broke, but when separated from each other, were soon snapped asunder; which consideration should excite mutual love among believers, and an endeavor ‘to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace;’ by doing which, they will not so easily fall a prey to their enemies, but will appear ‘terrible as an army with banners.’

**8.** Horses are of an undaunted courage, especially such as are well fed, as these were; an elegant description of the majesty, and undaunted courage of the horse, as given by God himself, may be read in ~~1831~~ Job 39:20-25. Believers in Christ ‘are bold as a lion; whilst the wicked flee, whom no man pursueth;’ they remain undaunted at all the reproaches, threatenings, and menaces of men, and cannot be deterred thereby, from the service of Christ; they fear not the wrath of kings and princes; neither can confiscation of goods, imprisonment of body, racks, tortures, or death itself, scare them from a profession of Christ and his gospel; but viewing all these with an undaunted courage, say, ‘Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?’ instances of this we have in Daniel and his companions, the apostles of Christ, the believing Hebrews, whom Paul wrote to, and thousands of martyrs for, and confessors of the truth in all ages.

**9.** These horses were not employed in ordinary service, in mere drudgery, but were selected for the service of Pharaoh, to run in his chariots. The elect of God being called by divine grace, are not, or at least, they should not be employed in the service and drudgery of sin and Satan; but being subjected to Christ, whom they acknowledge to be their Lord and King, are directed and guided by him, into those paths in which he would have them go, and so readily, chearfully, and swiftly, ‘run the ways of his commandments.’ These are not common, servile horses, which the church is here compared to, but royal ones, such that were in the service of a king.

**10.** These horses were not wild, nor loose, running at random, but being fitted for service, were joined and coupled together, and so peaceably and orderly drew one way; and perhaps, were all of the same color, and of an equal size and bigness, which is usual in the chariots of princes. The church is not a company of wild and unconverted sinners, running loose, and enjoying their carnal liberty; but of persons, who, by divine grace, are put under the yoke of Christ, being joined together in gospel-bonds, and ‘strive together for the faith of the gospel, worshipping the Lord with one shoulder and one consent;’ and when they are all of the same faith, of the same mind and judgment, speak the same things, and harmoniously agree together, without disorders, contentions, and divisions, then may they be said to be like ‘a company of horses in Pharaoh’s chariots.’ But,

**III.** It may be inquired, why this comparison is made and mentioned here; which was,

- 1.** To comfort and support her under the mean apprehensions she had of herself, and also to strengthen her against the reproach and scandal that was thrown upon her by others; therefore Christ lets her know, that tho’ she was black in her own eyes, and slighted and despised by her mother’s children, yet she was glorious in his, for he had compared her to a ‘company of horses,’ etc.
- 2.** To inform her, that she was in a militant state, and that she must not expect much ease and rest, which she seemed to be seeking for in verse 7, and therefore he would have her know, that this was a time for fighting the Lord’s battles against sin, Satan, and the world; and for that purpose he had ‘made her as his goodly horse in the battle,’ <sup><380B></sup>Zechariah 10:3.
- 3.** Christ having directed her to tread in the ‘footsteps of the flock,’ and to feed her kids beside the shepherds’ tents, would have her consider, that she must expect trouble, persecution, and opposition from those other shepherds, whose flocks are mentioned as distinct from Christ’s, in verse 7. and therefore to support her under, and comfort her against these, he tells her, that he had ‘compared her, or made her like to a company of horses,’ stout, strong, courageous, warlike, and victorious; and therefore, seeing he had ‘not given her the Spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind,’ she should not be discouraged and dismayed at these troubles and afflictions that came upon her.

## VERSE 10.

*Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold.*

CHRIST in these words continues to give an account of the church's beauty and glory; and that either in opposition to what she had said in verses 5 & 6, and assures her, that her cheeks and neck were not so black as she imagined; but were like the blushing cheeks of a beautiful woman, adorned with jewels, and her fair neck adorned with bracelets, necklaces and chains of gold or pearl; see <sup><2661></sup>Ezekiel 16:11, 12; or else he continues the metaphor used in the preceding verse, where he compares her to a 'company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots' whose bridles being richly adorned, having chains of gold hung about their necks, as the camels of the kings of Midian had, <sup><0785></sup>Judges 8:26, gloriously set forth the beauty of the church; and perhaps, the church's glory under the Old Testament dispensation is represented in this verse, and a farther increase and display of it under the New Testament dispensation promised in the text. And here,

**I.** Her cheeks are said to be 'comely, with rows of jewels.'

**II.** Her 'neck with chains of gold.'

**I.** Her cheeks are said to 'be comely with rows of Jewels:' the word *jewels* is not in the Hebrew text, but supplied by our translators; and the word *Torim*, translated *rows*, sometimes signifies *turtles*, which gave occasion to the Septuagint to render the words thus: 'How beautiful are thy cheeks, as the turtle dove's.' R. Aben Ezra thinks that the bridles of those horses, to which she is compared, had the images of turtles upon them; others, <sup>f103</sup> that these were some ornaments of women, as jewels and ear-rings, which had the figures of turtles upon them, and therefore were called *turtles*, or *turturellas*, according to Drusius; even as those pieces of money, which had the figure of a lamb upon them, are called *lambs*, <sup><0139></sup>Genesis 33:19, <sup><821></sup>Job 42:11. Now the cheeks of the church being said to be comely with these, shew her innocence and harmlessness, her love, chastity, faithfulness and beauty; all which appear in this creature. The Targum renders it *bridles*, and very well refers it to the law given on mount Sinai to the people of Israel; which is as a bridle, both to restrain persons from sin, who are by nature as the horse and mule, without understanding, and also to guide and direct them in the right way, that they may not depart from it; and on these bridles were rows of jewels or precious stones. The word *Tor*, which is the singular of this in our text, signifies an order, or disposition,

and course of things; <sup>f104</sup> see ~~<1722>~~ Esther 2:12, 15 and is not amiss rendered by our translators, *rows*, that is, of jewels, or precious stones; and by them are intended, either,

**1st**, The precepts of the moral law; <sup>f105</sup> which,

1. Are beautifully ranked and disposed in order; the precepts thereof are so strictly and closely joined together, that he that offends in one point, breaks the link, and so is guilty of all.
2. These are so many rows of jewels, valuable and excellent, and are 'more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold.' Or else,

**2dly**, The ordinances of the ceremonial law; which may be compared to rows of jewels,

1. For the variety of them; this law is 'a law of commandments,' of many commandments, 'contained in ordinances,' which, as they were carnal, so they were divers, see ~~<4025>~~ Ephesians 2:15, ~~<3990>~~ Hebrews 9:10.
2. For the excellency of them, as they prefigured the Lord Jesus Christ; it is true, after Christ the substance was come, they were 'weak and beggarly elements,' useless and insignificant; but before Christ's coming, they were lively representations of him, exceeding useful to the saints, and highly valued by them.

Now the church's cheeks, that is, the outward face and appearance of the church, were comely and desireable in the eyes of Christ, being adorned with these rows of jewels; her outward conversation being according to the laws of God, she appeared beautiful and delightful, for 'holiness becomes the house of God' for ever: there was a beauty in ceremonial worship; the tabernacles of God were amiable to the saints, and the saints themselves were so to Christ, in their attendance on the service and ordinances of God: the statutes and ordinances with which the external face of the church was beautified, were such as were not given to other people during that dispensation; which manifestly shewed that God had a peculiar regard for them.

**II.** Her neck is said to 'be comely with chains of gold.' The word *gold* is not in the Hebrew text, but supplied by our translators, and the word *Charuzim*, which is only found in this place, is generally interpreted by the Jewish doctors, *chains of gold*, or *jewels and precious stones* <sup>f106</sup> bored



through and hung in a string, to be wore about the neck. A pearl necklace was in use with great personages; so the eldest daughter of Priamus had *collo monile baccatum*, <sup>f107</sup> a pearl necklace, which AENEAS made a present of to Dido; and such like was the chain of gold beset with amber, presented to Penelope by her suitors, which shone like the sun. <sup>f108</sup> And,

**1st**, I shall enquire what is meant by the church's *neck*.

**2dly**, What by those *chains of gold*, or *precious stones*, with which it is adorned and made comely.

**1st**, By her *neck* may be meant, either the grace of faith, by which the church cleaves to Christ the head, and exalts him; this is also accompanied with other graces, which are linked together as a chain, and is attended with good works: or else, by it is meant the ministers of the gospel, <sup>f109</sup> who, as the neck, are placed in the most eminent part of the body, the church, and are the means of conveying spiritual food from Christ the head, to the members thereof. But of this, see more on chapter ~~2004~~4:4.

**2dly**, By those *chains of gold*, with which the church's neck is beautified and adorned, may be meant,

**1.** The laws and ordinances of God; which the ministers of the gospel, and members of churches should be careful to observe; and are, as Solomon says, ~~2009~~Proverbs 1:9 'an ornament of grace unto the head, and chains about the neck,' of those who regard them. Or,

**2.** Those diversities of gifts which are bestowed on the ministers of Christ, by which they are made 'able ministers of the New Testament; and so become useful to many, and appear comely and beautiful, both in the eyes of Christ, and of such souls to whom they minister.' Or,

**3.** The various graces of the Spirit, with which, not only ministers, but all believers are adorned; for as sins and vices are so chained and linked together, that where there is one, there is all; so the graces of the Spirit are like chains of gold, which are so closely linked together, that they cannot be separated, but where there is one grace there is every grace, which very much beautify and adorn the believeuse This golden chain of grace which is put about the church's neck, consists of these ten links: the first is *faith*, that precious pearl and valuable jewel, which is alike precious in all saints, as to its nature and object; the fruit of electing love, the Father's gift, the Son's grace, and the Spirit's work. The second is *hope*, which is called,

‘good hope thro’ grace;’ this carries the soul chearfully through all the difficulties of life, and makes not ashamed at death; it is both the Christian’s anchor and his helmet; it is valuable in its nature, and useful in its actings. The third link in this golden chain is *love*, which is ‘the fulfilling of the law;’ this is highly valued, by Christ, see chapter <sup><2240></sup>4:10, and is of so great a price, that if a man ‘would give all the substance of his house for it, it would utterly be contemned,’ chapter <sup><2187></sup>8:7. The fourth is *humility*; which is, in ‘the sight of God, of great price;’ and the believer, being clothed with it, appears very beautiful and comely; it is a sparkling gem in this necklace. The fifth is *patience*, which is of exceeding use in the believer’s life, much recommends his character and profession, and is greatly taken notice of by Christ; see <sup><4187></sup>Revelation 2:2, 3, 19. The sixth is *self-denial*, which is required of, and should be in exercise in all Christ’s followers, but seldom appears in its lustre and splendor, being frequently sullied by carnal and selfish principles and actions. The seventh is *contentment* in every state of life; this is an exceeding great rarity; few persons are possessed of this jewel; the apostle Paul had it, as appears from what he says. ‘I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.’ The eighth is a *saving knowledge* of Jesus Christ; this is eternal life itself, and is by believers preferred to all the things of this life; who, with the apostle, ‘count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, their Lord.’ The ninth is *long-suffering* and *forbearance*, whereby saints are not easily provoked, and do readily forgive those who have offended them; this gives great grace, and is exceeding ornamental to the believeuse The tenth, and last link in this golden chain is *sincerity*; this runs through all other graces, and makes them so glorious as they are; this was exceeding bright, and shone with a great deal of lustre in Nathaniel, of whom Christ said, ‘Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.’ Or,

**4.** Those blessings of grace which are laid up in an everlasting covenant, come through the blood of Christ, and are communicated to all his people, may be meant by these chains; they go inseparably together; where a person is blessed with one, he is blessed with all; for though our interest in them may be gradually discovered to us, yet are we blessed at once, ‘with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.’ Not one of these links can be broken; this golden chain of grace and salvation is excellently described by the apostle, when he says, <sup><4183></sup>Romans 8:30. ‘Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also

justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified;’ where we may observe, how all the blessings of grace are inseparably linked together; and which being put about the believer’s neck, must needs make him look very beautiful and comely.

## VERSE 11.

*We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver.*

CHRIST having described the church’s comeliness in the former verse, as she was beautiful under the legal dispensation, with the precepts of the moral and ceremonial law, and with that measure of grace which was then bestowed on her, proceeds in this verse to promise in his own, and in the name of the other two persons, a greater glory, and a larger measure of grace unto her, under the gospel dispensation. And,

**I.** The thing promised is, to ‘make her borders of gold, with studs of silver.’

**II.** The persons by whom this is to be performed, who are more than one; ‘We will make thee,’ etc.

**I.** The thing promised is, that she shall have borders of gold, with studs of silver’ made her: some read it, ‘turtles of gold:’ the Septuagint render it ‘similitudes, or likenesses of gold’; <sup>f110</sup> and it is probable they mean the images of some things, perhaps turtles, which might be wrought in silver studs, with pieces, or plates of gold, which also R. Aben Ezra seems to intimate; others translate it, ‘rows of gold’, <sup>f111</sup> as in the former verse, it being the same word which is used there; our translators render it *borders*, respecting the borders of garments, where the Jews wore their fringes, and which, in Christ’s time, the Pharisees, who were ambitious of being esteemed more holy than others, wore very large. Now a promise of golden borders may here intend the glorious righteousness of Christ; that golden and silver studded work of his, that raiment and needlework and curious piece of embroidery, with which the church and all believers are beautified and adorned; in which the church, the queen, stands at the right hand of the King, the Lord Jesus Christ, as one clad in gold of Ophir. Moreover, by these ‘borders, or rows of gold, with studs of silver,’ may be meant, either,

**1st,** The ordinances of the gospel, which are far preferable to those under the law; the church's cheeks and neck were comely with these rows and chains, under the legal dispensation; but these are not said to be rows or chains of gold; the words *jewels* and *gold* are not in the original, but supplied by our translators, as has been there observed; but when he speaks of gospel-ordinances, which he would appoint, and his church should enjoy under the gospel-dispensation, he makes mention of gold and silver; as the Lord does in the prophecy of Isaiah, when he is speaking of, and promising glory to the church in those times, saying, ~~23017~~ Isaiah 60:17. 'For brass, I will bring gold; and for iron, I will bring silver; and for wood, brass; and for stone, iron.' Gospel ordinances are preferable to the law:

**1.** They are more easy, pleasant, and delightful; the ceremonial law was a yoke of bondage, and some of the ordinances of it intolerable; but Christ's yoke, under the gospel dispensation, 'is easy, and his burden is light;' those ways were 'ways of pleasantness,' in which God would have his people walk under the law, much more are those which they are directed to under the gospel; if those statutes and carnal ordinances were 'more to be desired than gold, yea, than fine gold,' much more are those which believers enjoy now; the ordinances of that legal dispensation were servile and slavish, and suited to persons who were under a spirit of bondage; but those of the gospel became Christ's freemen, to be found in obedience to, and are no ways an infringement of their spiritual liberty, but rather an advancement of it; these commandments are no ways grievous, but every way delightful and pleasant, and are suited to a free, ingenuous, and gospel-spirit.

**2.** They are more lasting and durable; the ordinances of the Mosaic dispensation were imposed upon the Jewish church until 'the time of reformation,' that is, until the coming of Christ in the flesh, and the oblation of his sacrifice; for when he, the substance of all those shadows, was come, they vanished and disappeared; 'the middle wall of partition is now broken down; the law of commandments, contained in ordinances,' is entirely abolished, and the whole economy is at an end but the ordinances of the gospel will last till time shall be no more; when there will be no more need of such helps as these to assist our sight, or such lights as these to direct us in our way; they will last till the coming of Christ, till the 'Sun of righteousness arises with healing in his wings:' these are things which will remain, till then, unshaken and immoveable; the gospel-dispensation is a 'kingdom which cannot be moved,' in opposition to the legal one, which is already moved, and entirely abrogated.

**3.** They are more clear and perspicuous; there was a great deal of obscurity in the legal dispensation; the faith of God's children was led to Christ through dark representations and cloudy types and figures; but now, under the gospel dispensation, we all with open face beholding through those ordinances, which we now enjoy, 'as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.'

**4.** They are more spiritual; the ordinances of the ceremonial law are called *carnal ordinances*, <sup><8910></sup> Hebrews 9:10. The external worship of the Jews was attended with a great deal of pomp and splendor, but not with so much spirituality and power of godliness as that of believers under the gospel, who 'worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.'

**5.** The obedience which was performed under the legal dispensation, was not so free and ingenuous as this, which is performed by believers under the gospel; that sprang from fear, and was performed under a spirit of bondage, but this from principles of love and grace. Believers, in their obedience to Christ, as under the constraints of love, are guided, influenced, and assisted by the Spirit of God, who is a free Spirit, or a spirit of liberty; for 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' Or else,

**2dly**, The doctrines of the gospel may be here intended; which being 'words fitly spoken, are like apples of gold in pictures of silver:' these may be called 'rows, or borders of gold studded with silver;' for the doctrines of grace are by the apostle, in <sup><4182></sup> 1 Corinthians 3:12, compared to gold, silver, and precious stones, as are the doctrines of man's invention to wood, hay, and stubble. Now these may be very well called 'borders of gold studded with silver,'

**1.** For their valuableness; they are valued by souls who have tasted the sweetness, and felt the power of them, more than 'thousands of gold and silver,' yea, more than their necessary food, nay, more than life itself; they contain riches of grace and glory, yea, 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.'

**2.** For the glory and splendor of them; they give a glorious display of the divine perfections, and in a resplendent manner represent the glory of Christ's person, office, and grace; and therefore the gospel is called the 'glorious gospel of God and Christ,' <sup><5011></sup> 1 Timothy 1:11, <sup><4704></sup> 2 Corinthians 4:4.

**3.** For their being tried ones; ‘The words of the Lord,’ says the Psalmist, <sup><9126></sup>Psalm 12:6. ‘are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times:’ they have been tried by saints, and have never failed to support and comfort them, nor to guide and direct them in the right way; they have been tried by enemies, and have stood the brunt of all their rage, malice, and persecution.

**4.** For their durability: they are as lasting as ‘borders of gold studded with silver.’ Attempts have been made to destroy the gospel, and remove it out of the world, but have all proved abortive; it is an ever-lasting gospel, it is immovable, a burdensome stone to all those who endeavor to subvert or remove it; though all things in nature are fading, perishing, and subject to change and alteration, yet ‘the word of God liveth and abideth for ever.’


**5.** They may be called ‘rows of gold,’ for their orderly disposition and connection; there is an entire harmony and agreement between the truths of the gospel; one truth has an entire dependance upon another, and they have all close connection with each other; this is what the apostle calls the proportion or analogy of faith, <sup><5126></sup>Romans 12:6.

**6.** The gospel is full of the silver specks or studs of exceeding great and precious promises; it abounds with them, and is delightfully studded by them; it is filled with such a variety of them as are both useful and pleasant to believers.

Now there being such a display of the doctrines of grace, under the gospel dispensation, it appears to be far more glorious than the legal one; it is true, the law had a glory attending it, but the gospel has an excelling one; the law was ‘the killing letter, and the ministration of death,’ but the gospel is the ministration of life, ‘the spirit that quickens;’ the law is the ‘ministration of condemnation,’ but the gospel is the ‘ministration of righteousness;’ the law is that ‘which is done away,’ but the gospel is that ‘which remaineth,’ and will abide for ever. Or else,

**3dly,** By these ‘borders of gold, with studs of silver,’ may be meant the rich and glorious graces of the blessed Spirit, and a larger increase of them under the gospel-dispensation; which are,

**1.** Rich and enriching, excellent and valuable as gold and silver; nay, grace is ‘much more precious than gold that perisheth;’ it is rich in its own nature, and enriches all that are possessed of it; therefore, says Christ,

 Revelation 3:18. 'I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayst be rich.'

**2.** The graces of the Spirit adorn and beautify a soul, as much, nay, more than 'borders of gold studded with silver' do the body; on the account of these the church is said to be 'all glorious within;' and though believers in their nature-state were black, like those who 'have been among the pots,' yet being called by, and adorned with the grace of God, are like 'the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.'

**3.** The graces of the Spirit, are us lasting and durable as golden borders with silver studs; nay, more so, they shall not perish, can never be lost; grace is an immortal and incorruptible seed, which remains in the believer, and shall do so for ever.

**4.** A larger measure of grace is dispensed under the gospel-dispensation than was under the legal one; it was neither so clearly revealed, nor so largely communicated before Christ appeared in the flesh, 'full of grace and truth,' as it was afterwards; and such a larger revelation and increase of grace must needs make the church look more glorious under the one than it did under the other. Or else,

**4thly**, These 'borders of gold' intend the ground-work of a believers faith and hope, which is Christ, as 'Jehovah our righteousness,' who is the only sure and safe foundation, and the 'chief corner stone;' and the 'silver studs' may the curious work of sanctification, with all the delightful fruits thereof, even those 'beauties of holiness' which are so ornamental to, and do so much become the believer; Christ's righteousness, imputed to us, is the ground-work and foundation of faith and hope; and his grace imparted to and wrought in us, is the superstructure that is raised upon it; the one the golden 'borders,' the other the silver 'studs.' Or,

**5thly**, Souls called by divine grace are meant, even the 'precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold;' and as a great number of these being called in, enlarge the borders of the church, so they likewise increase the glory of it; this is one way by which Christ 'beautifies the place of his sanctuary, and makes the place of his feet glorious.' Or,

**6thly**, and lastly, The glories of heaven may be here intended; for as Christ gives his people grace here, so he will give them glory hereafter, which he and the other two persons are preparing and making ready for them; and

we need not wonder that these heavenly glories are represented by ‘borders of gold studded with silver; when the new Jerusalem is described, <sup><6218></sup>Revelation 21:18, 19, 21 as a ‘city of pure gold, like unto clear glass, and the street of it pure gold, as transparent glass, the wall of it of jasper, the foundations thereof garnished with all manner of precious stones, and the twelve gates, said to be twelve pearls.’ Can any thing appear more glorious and magnificent than this account of that city, which has ‘foundations whose builder and maker is God?’ and those, who are enriched by divine grace here, need not doubt of being partakers of the celestial glory hereafter. But let us now consider who they are that promise and will perform all this. For,

**II.** As the things promised are here mentioned, which are ‘borders of gold with studs of silver;’ so the persons who promise to make these, are intimated in those words, ‘we will make thee,’ etc. It is not the chorus of virgins, or the daughters of Jerusalem, who here speak; nor angels, who are both incapable of and unfit for such an undertaking; nor is God introduced here speaking *regio more*, in the manner of kings who sometimes use to speak in the plural number, when they only mean themselves; but a trinity of persons is, no doubt, here intended, even ‘the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, which three are one,’ and are jointly concerned in all the works of grace, as they were in the works of creation: it is a way of speaking much like that in <sup><0026></sup>Genesis 1:26. R. Solomon Jarchi paraphrases it thus, “I and my house of judgment,” as he also does <sup><0124></sup>Genesis 19:24. Now the ancient Jews by this speech meant a trinity of persons, though the modern unbelieving ones, as Ainsworth observes, are ignorant of it; yet still retain the phrase, and use it as the forementioned Rabbi does, in those places where a trinity of persons manifestly appears: for the house of judgment never consisted of less than three persons. Now this work may very well be ascribed to them; for,

**1st,** The ordinances of the gospel are the institutions of all the three persons; divine adoration is given to them in all; and they are enjoined on believers, and are regarded by them, as being all equally concerned in authorizing them, and in sharing the glory which arises from them; thus for instance, baptism is required to be performed ‘in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,’ <sup><0129></sup>Matthew 28:19 and accordingly is performed in this manner,



**2dly**, The gospel itself is the work of all the three persons; God the Father is the author of it, and therefore it is called the ‘gospel of God,’

~~☞~~Romans 1:1, and so is Christ, hence it is also called his, verse 16. and so is the Spirit, and therefore it is called ‘the ministration of the spirit,’ ~~☞~~2 Corinthians 3:8. The grace of all the three persons is discovered by it, and the glory of them all concerned in it; the Father sends it, Christ is the sum and substance of it, and the Spirit powerfully applies it.

**3dly**, The work of grace upon the soul is performed by all the three persons; thus the regeneration and quickening of a sinner, ‘dead in trespasses and sins,’ is ascribed to God the Father, ~~☞~~1 Peter 1:3 to the Son, ~~☞~~John 5:21, and to the Spirit, ~~☞~~John 3:5.

**4thly**, The increase of grace, which seems to be the thing here intended, is owing to them all; thus grace and peace, that is, a larger measure of them, is wished and prayed for by John for the seven churches of Asia, from all the three persons, ~~☞~~Revelation 1:4, 5.

**5thly**, All that glory which saints shall have hereafter, is procured and prepared by them all; the Father, he has prepared the kingdom for them from the foundation of the world, and it is his pleasure to give it to them; the Son he has opened the way to it with his blood, and is gone to prepare a place for them; and the Spirit, he is the earnest and pledge of it, he discovers the invisible glories of it to them, and will never leave them till he has made them meet for, and brought them into the enjoyment of them. So that all the three persons, in all these senses, may be very well understood as promising to make for the church these ‘borders of gold with studs of silver:’ which shews,

**1.** That believers should have a great value for the gospel, and the ordinances thereof; seeing they are not only so valuable in themselves, being preferable to gold and silver, and are so useful and ornamental to the church, but are also the work of all the three persons,

**2.** That the work of grace upon the heart of a sinner, and the carrying it on to perfection, is done by an almighty power, and is the work of the eternal Three; the renewing of men requires the same power, and is effected by the same hands, as the first making of them did; those who said at the creation of man, ‘Let us make man,’ say at this new creation, and in the carrying on and perfecting of the work, ‘We will make thee borders of gold,’ etc. as

they were all jointly concerned in the one, so they are in the other, which shows the greatness and glory of it.

**3.** That all these ‘borders of gold studded with silvers,’ are made for the comfort, glory, and happiness of the church, ‘We will make thee, or for thee,’ etc. the whole gospel, with all its doctrines and promises, are given for their instruction and consolation; all the ordinances thereof, for their comfort and improvement, as well as for God’s glory; all the grace which is provided in Christ, wrought by the Spirit in their hearts, as well as the glory which is laid up in heaven; all, I say, is to make them ‘a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.’

## VERSE 12.

*While the King sitteth at his table,  
my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.*

CHRIST having given very large commendations of his church, and promised a great deal of grace and glory to her; she in this and the two following verses, declares what advantages she received by him, how lovely his person, and how delightful his company were to her. These words may be understood either,

**First,** Of the time of Christ’s not being manifested in the flesh, after the promise of it, and of the exercise of the faith, hope, love, desire, expectation, etc. of the Old Testament-saints, respecting his coming in the flesh: and then the sense is this, Whilst he, who is constituted king of saints, is appointed to be the mediator between God and man, the promised Messiah and Savior of the world, is With God, as ‘the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father,’ and not yet manifested in the flesh; ‘my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof,’ that is, my grace is in exercise; my soul is breathing with earnest desires after him; I long for his coming, and am in earnest expectation of it; I live in the hope of enjoying this valuable blessing; I firmly believe that he will come according to the divine promise, though his stay is long, and therefore will patiently wait the appointed time. Christ did exist from eternity, as the Son of God; was set up as the head and mediator of God’s elect, and was appointed and constituted king over God’s ‘holy hill of Zion.’ He bore this character throughout all the Old-Testament-dispensation; and being promised to be the Messiah and Savior of sinners, from the time of the first declaration and

publication of it, the Old-Testament-saints lived in the faith, hope, and earnest expectation of his coming in the flesh. Or else,

**Secondly,** They may be understood of the time of Christ's being in the temple, or in Jerusalem, or in the land of Judea; during which time the gospel was preached, and the sweet odor of it diffused throughout all the parts thereof. Christ was promised to come into the world as the church's King; 'behold thy King cometh,' etc. <sup><300></sup>Zechariah 9:9, and as such he did come; the wise men of the East sought him under the character of 'the King of the Jews:' He was accused of making himself King, and for it was put to death: Hence this superscription was wrote on the cross, 'This is the King of the Jews;' though most were ignorant of the nature of his office and kingdom, which were 'not of this world.' Now whilst this great King was here on earth, the savor of the gospel was spread abroad; it was preached by Christ himself, in the temple, in the synagogues of the Jews, and in several parts of the land; for he was 'not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel:' He sent out his disciples to preach it, but limited them to Judea's land, and forbad them to 'go in the way of the Gentiles,' or enter into any of the cities of the Samaritans. So that the sweet odor was then confined within that land; though after his resurrection he enlarged the commission of his disciples, and bid them go and preach the gospel to every creature, beginning at Jerusalem; which they accordingly did, and their ministry was owned for the conversion of many. but afterwards being rejected by the Jews, they turned to the Gentiles; for it was proper and necessary, that the word should be first preached to them, that 'out of Zion might go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.' Or,

**Thirdly,** These words may be understood of Christ's being now in heaven, whither, after his resurrection, he ascended, where he now is, and he will continue till his second coming, 'whom the heaven must receive, until the times of the restitution of all things;' it is from thence that saints expect him: Now these words, 'while the King sitteth at his table,' very well suit with Christ's exalted state in heaven; his kingly office and power appear more manifest, he is now declared to be 'both Lord and Christ;' his posture there is, 'sitting at the right hand of God,' where he is 'in his circuit' <sup>f113</sup> as the words may be read; it being the usual custom anciently among the Jews, to sit at table in a circular form, <sup><061></sup>1 Samuel 16:11. Christ being in heaven, is 'in his circuit,' encompassed about with angels and glorified saints; thus in <sup><066></sup>Revelation 5:6-11, 12, a large number of angels and saints are said to be 'round about the throne,' (and Christ, the lamb, in the

*midst* of them) singing his praises, and feasting with him on those joys which will never end.

Now, whilst Christ is thus solacing himself with saints above, at such a distance from his church below, he is not unmindful of her, but gives such large communications of his grace, as cause her 'spikenard' to 'send forth the smell thereof:' Which may be meant, either,

**1st**, Of the graces of the church being in exercise on Christ: Christ, though now in heaven, and so invisible to the bodily eye, yet is the object of faith, love, hope, and joy; 'whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,' <sup><f108></sup>1 Peter 1:8. The distance of place no way hinders either the communications of grace to us from Christ, or the exercise of our grace on him; but while he is there, he is giving it forth to us, and we are exercising it upon him; it is the manifestation of Christ's love and grace to us that makes our *spikenard* send forth its smell. Or else,

**2dly**, The prayers of the saints may be intended by it; which are odorous, and of a sweet-smelling savor to God, being perfumed with Christ's mediation, and offered up with his 'much incense;' and therefore says David, <sup><f102></sup>Psalms 141:2; 'let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense.' R. Aben Ezra thinks, that by the smell of the spikenard, is meant the smell of the incense, which was burnt under the law. Now while Christ is in heaven, the saints put their prayers into his hands, who takes notice of them, and is always ready, with his *golden censer*, to offer them up to his Father on the *golden altar*, in which he smells a sweet savor; and therefore the prayers of the saints are called *odors*, <sup><f103></sup>Revelation 5:8. See also <sup><f103></sup>Revelation 8:3, 4. Or rather,

**3dly**, This may be expressive of the gospel, and the sweet 'savor of the knowledge' of Christ, which by it is made 'manifest in every place,' wherever it comes, <sup><f124></sup>2 Corinthians 2:14. Now the gospel may be compared to *spikenard*,

**1.** Spikenard is but a small, low plant or shrub; <sup>f114</sup> the gospel is mean and contemptible in the eyes of the world; it is accounted foolishness by them, and the preachers of it are abject and despicable persons in their esteem. Yet,

2. It is very excellent; it is by Pliny <sup>f115</sup> accounted the chief and principal ingredient in ointments; and therefore, ~~412B~~ John 12:3, the ointment of spikenard, which Mary took and anointed the feet of Christ with, is said to be ‘very precious and costly.’ The gospel is valuable and excellent, both in its nature and effects; it is a rich and an enriching gospel; and therefore called ‘the unsearchable riches of Christ,’ an exceeding valuable treasure, that is put in earthen vessels; it is a revelation and declaration of the riches of grace, which Christ bestows upon sinners here, and of those riches of glory which saints shall be made partakers of hereafter.

3. It is of an exceeding sweet smell, so is the gospel; there is such an efficacy in the odor of it, that it enlivens dead sinners, and therefore is said to be the ‘savor of life unto life,’ and will revive the spirits of fainting believers: though it is reported of spikenard, <sup>f116</sup> that by its being carried over sea it grows mouldy and rots, whereby it loses its sweet smell, and stinks exceedingly; so the gospel, to those that perish, is not only of an ill smell, and abhorred by them, but is ‘the savor of death unto death.’ Many of the Jewish writers <sup>f117</sup> understand the smell of the spikenard here as an ill one.

4. Spikenard is of a hot nature <sup>f118</sup> and digestive of cold humours; it is hot in the first, and dry in the second degree: The gospel being powerfully applied by the Spirit of God, warms the hearts of God’s children, makes them burn within, and drives away luke-warmness, deadness and dulness, occasioned by indwelling sin. 5. It is of a very comforting and strengthening <sup>f119</sup> nature to the stomach, it exhilarates the spirits; so are the doctrines and promises of the gospel to the souls of believers; these strengthen and nourish, comfort and refresh them; they, like Jeremiah, find the word and eat it, and it is ‘the joy and rejoicing of their hearts.’ For these reasons the gospel may be compared to spikenard; which some of the Jewish <sup>f120</sup> writers think is musk, others a kind of spice somewhat like saffron; but it is best to understand it of nard, of which there are many sorts; the best of which is that which grows up in spikes, and therefore is called spikenard, which is what is here intended. Again,

**Fourthly,** These words may be understood of Christ’s feasting with his saints here below, during which time their grace is in exercise; there is a mutual feasting between Christ and believers, he sups with them, and they with him; Christ has furnished a table for his people in this wilderness, with plenty, and variety of suitable food; and though he is a King, constituted by

his Father, and acknowledged by his church, yet he sits at this table, with poor, mean, and worthless creatures, and welcomes them to those sweet provisions, saying, ‘Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.’ Moreover, Christ’s presence with his people, and his grace manifested to them, have a mighty influence to draw forth their graces into exercise, even as the rising sun opens the flowers, and exhales the odor thereof, and agreeable breezes spread it abroad. Thus when the graces of believers are in exercise under the influences of Christ, and the enjoyment of his presence, they are exceeding odorous, both to Christ and others; their *spikenard* may then be said to ‘send forth the sweet smell thereof.’ On this table, which is sometimes called ‘the table of the Lord,’ are set the body and blood of Christ, whose ‘flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed;’ on which believers, being encouraged by Christ’s presence, and assisted by his Spirit, feed plentifully; and he sits there and delights himself by viewing the graces of his own Spirit in exercise: thus at this table they are both mutually feasted and delighted. Yet there seems to be an emphasis on the phrase *his table*, as if it was a table peculiar to himself; and it was usual with great personages, and at grand entertainments, for the master of the feast and each of his guests to have separate tables, though together in the same room; this was formerly a custom with the Jews though now disused, <sup>f121</sup> and with the ancient Greeks, <sup>f122</sup> and with the old Germans <sup>f123</sup> also, and it seems with the Romans, <sup>f124</sup> but this did not hinder their mutual pleasure.

The conjecture of a certain Expositor, <sup>f125</sup> that Christ himself is intended by the *spikenard*, is not to be slighted, he being called a ‘bundle of myrrh,’ and a ‘cluster of camphire,’ in the following verses: It was usual in feasts to anoint the head and hair as well as feet of persons invited thereunto; and ointment of spikenard was often used, <sup>f126</sup> as is manifest from ~~414B~~ Mark 14:3, ~~412B~~ John 12:3; to this custom the Psalmist alludes, ~~427B~~ Psalm 23:5. At royal banquets in Syria, as this here was one, it was usual to go round the guests and sprinkle them with Babylonian ointment. <sup>f127</sup> Now the church was at table with Christ as a guest, and was entertained with the most delicious fare; here was nothing wanting to render the entertainment delightful and pleasant; Christ himself, as he is both the master and the feast, so he is the ointment of spikenard to his guests: and it is as if she should say,

“I am now at a sweet and heavenly repast with my beloved, he sits at the table, and I with him; and as he is my food, so he is my

spikenard; <sup>f128</sup> he is my ‘all in all;’ as long as he is here I need no flowers to delight me, no spikenard, myrrh, cypress, or unguents made of these to refresh me, for he is all this, and much more unto me.”

Christ’s person and grace, his sacrifice, blood and righteousness, are, like spikenard, of an exceeding sweet smell; his person is ‘altogether lovely; the savor of his graces or ointments’ attract the love of his people; his ‘sacrifice is of a sweet-smelling savor to God,’ and to all believers; his garments, or robe of righteousness, ‘smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia,’ and in them believers are acceptable and well-pleasing to God.

### VERSE 13.

*A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me;  
he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.*

THE church in these words continues the account of that comfort, delight and satisfaction which she had in Christ, expressing the greatest love and strongest affection for him: and therefore she compares him to the very best herbs and spices, and declares that if her *spikenard*, or the graces of the spirit in her sent forth an agreeable smell to him, whilst he was at his table, much more grateful and odorous was he, being as ‘a bundle of myrrh’ unto her,

**I.** Here is a title or character which she gives him; ‘my well beloved.’

**II.** What Christ is unto her; ‘a bundle of myrrh.’

**III.** The entertainment she is resolved to give him; ‘he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.’

**I.** Here is a title or character which she gives unto him, ‘my well beloved.’ Ainsworth observes, that the Hebrew word *Dodi*, which is thus translated, is written with the same letters as David is, a name which is frequently given to Christ in the Old Testament. See <sup><280B></sup>Jeremiah 30:9, <sup><523></sup>Ezekiel 34:23, 24; <sup><2085></sup>Hosea 3:5. David was a type of Christ, and of him, according to the flesh, he came; for he is ‘the root and offspring of David;’ as he is God, he is David’s Lord; and as he is man, David’s son; both words, *Dodi* and *David*, signify *beloved*, and both *David* and *Christ* are beloved of God. ‘David was a man after God’s own heart,’ and *Christ* his ‘beloved Son, in

whom he is well pleased,' and both of them beloved of God's people. The Septuagint render it by a word which signifies a *nephew*, <sup>f129</sup> a brother or sister's son, Christ is near akin to his church, he is partaker of the same flesh and blood as they are, is of the same nature with them; they are 'members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones;' the Hebrew word *Goel*, which is frequently rendered a *Redeemer*, signifies also a near kinsman; and being applied to Christ; as it is in ~~1805~~ Job 19:25, shews, that he, who is our Redeemer, is also our near kinsman: but the word is very well rendered here, 'my beloved, or well beloved,' and is expressive,

**1st**, Of Christ's love to the church; he is her 'well beloved,' and has shewn his love by undertaking her cause, espousing her person, assuming her nature, and dying in her room and stead; which love of his is eternal, free, sovereign, unchangeable and unparalleled, and is the strongest motive to, and has the greatest influence upon her love to him; therefore she may well call him her 'well beloved.'

**2dly**, It is expressive of her love to Christ, which springs and arises from the manifestations of his love to her, for 'we love him, because he first loved us;' which love was now in exercise in her soul, he being present with her; and therefore she gives him this affectionate title as an evidence of it.

**3dly**, It shews that she had a sense of her interest in him, and his love; a greater blessing a soul cannot be possessed of, than an interest in Christ and his love, whose person is 'the chiefest among ten thousand, and whose loving-kindness is better than life,' and all the comforts and blessings of it; and next to this is a knowledge and sense of it; a soul may have an interest in Christ, and yet not have the sense of it; the former renders this state safe and secure, the latter makes his life comfortable and pleasant, and is an additional blessing and favor; for a person is then able to say, he 'hath loved me, and hath given himself for me.'

**II.** She declares that Christ her 'well beloved, was a bundle of myrrh unto her.' By 'a bundle of myrrh,' we are not, I think, to understand the twigs or branches of the myrrh-tree bound up in faggots, which the Arabians used to make fires with, the fumes whereof were very noxious and pernicious, as the historian <sup>f130</sup> tells us, and unless they burnt the gum, called *storax*, would produce incurable diseases; but either the little sprigs or flowers thereof bound up together, and put in the bosom as a pleasant



nosegay to smell to, may be meant; for Christ is exceeding sweet and delightful to the believer, being ‘the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the vallies:’ or else the gum *stacte*, which springs from the myrrh-tree, and so the Septuagint read it, ‘a bundle of stacte;’ or liquid myrrh, which sweats from the tree of its own accord, without incision, and is accounted the best: and then by a *bundle* of it is meant a *bag*,<sup>f131</sup> or bottle of it, the same word which is used is translated a *bag*, in ~~3006~~Haggai 1:6; ~~3847~~Job 14:17, and is an allusion to persons who carry bags of perfumes, and sweet powders, or smelling-bottles in their bosoms, for the reviving of their spirits; now what these are to such persons, that and much more is Christ to his church. R. David Kinchi<sup>f132</sup> relates out of Midrash Chazith, that Abraham, the father of the faithful, is there compared to myrrh; but Christ, who was the object of Abraham’s faith and joy, may be much better and more aptly compared thereunto<sup>f133</sup> which I shall now consider. And,

**1st**, Christ may be compared to myrrh, if we regard the nature and properties of it; it being,

**1.** An excellent spice, and one of the most precious and principal spices; it is reckoned among the chief spices, chapter ~~2044~~4:14, and as such Moses is ordered to use it in the anointing oil, ~~1072~~Exodus 30:23. Christ is ‘the chiefest among ten thousands,’ and exceeding precious to every believer, in his person, office and grace; there is none among the angels in heaven, or saints on earth, so desirable to them as he is; nor none who deserves to have the preeminence in, and over all things, as he does; seeing he is ‘the image of the invisible God, and the first-born of every creature.’

**2.** It is very odorous, it is called ‘sweet-smelling myrrh,’ chapter ~~2076~~5:5, and the church is said to be perfumed with it, chapter ~~2076~~3:6. Christ, in his person, sacrifice, and righteousness, is of a sweet-smelling savor, both to God and believers, as has been shewn on verse 12. Believers smell a sweet smell in all his offices, characters and relations; he is in all these as a bundle of myrrh, exceeding delightful to them.

**3.** Yet it is somewhat bitter in taste, it is *gustu leniter amara*, as Pliny<sup>f134</sup> observes; which may be expressive,

(**1.**) Of the sufferings of Christ; which, though they were grateful, and of a sweet-smelling savor to God, for it pleased the Lord to bruise him; here was not only *voluntas Dei*, the will of God, but here was also *voluptas Dei*, the pleasure of God; yet they were bitter to Christ,

witness his agonies in the garden, his sorrows on the cross, and the spiritings, buffettings, scourgings, and revilings of his enemies; his head being crowned with thorns, and his hands and feet pierced with nails; being forsaken by his God, and by his friends, could not be grateful and pleasant to him: but though these were so bitter to Christ, yet, like myrrh, how sweet and odorous is a crucified Christ to believers! they desire to know none but Christ, and him crucified; the bitter cup, which he drank, is the ground of their joy and triumph; his death and sufferings are the foundation of their comfort, and which only can secure them against the fears of hell and wrath; it is this which embitters sin unto them; sin never appears more odious than in the glass of Christ's sufferings; and they never mourn for it in a better or truer sense, than when they 'look upon him whom they have pierced;' repentance is a tear that drops from faith's eye, and is never more evangelic than when faith views a sin-bearing and sin-atonement Savior; now from the sufferings of Christ, or from a crucified Christ, distil and drop down the sweet-smelling myrrh of spiritual blessings, as justification, sanctification, adoption, pardon of sin, peace, reconciliation, and a right to eternal glory; all which come to us through the blood, sufferings, and death of a crucified Jesus.

(2) The myrrh, being bitter in taste, though sweet in smell, may shew, that the cross goes along with Christ; for as Luther says, *Christianus est crucianus*, a Christian is a cross-bearer; it is required of every one that will follow Christ, that he take up the cross; for he that would wear the crown, must bear the cross; and he who would have the sweet, must have the bitter; indeed, the Christian generally has his share of afflictions, crosses and trials in this life. The passover-lamb was eaten with bitter herbs, to shew, that he that 'will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution;' yet so sweet is Christ, this bundle of myrrh, to believers, and communion with him, under all afflictions, so delightful, that they would not be without him, though they might be freed from them; this tree of life sweetens these bitter waters of Marah; they have peace in him, when in the world they have tribulation: they are contented with, and rejoice in their portion, and are willing to have the bitter, so they may have but the sweet; for these bitter afflictions and tribulations which they endure for Christ's sake, distil and drop down some precious gums of faith, patience, experience, and hope; see ~~888~~ Romans 5:3, 4, 5.

**2dly**, Christ may be compared to myrrh, for the use that has been made of it.

**1.** It being very valuable, and highly esteemed of, was used in gifts and presents to great persons; thus we find it in the present that Jacob made to his son unknown, then governor of Egypt, <sup><0491></sup>Genesis 43:11, and it was part of that which the wise men of the East brought to Christ at his incarnation, <sup><0121></sup>Matthew 2:11. Christ is the great gift of God's grace to sinners, and an *unspeakable* one he is, which does not go alone, for 'with him he freely gives all things:' When God gave Christ, he gave a manifest proof of his greatness and goodness; he gave like himself, and what was statable to us sinners; a favor which we neither deserved, desired, nor expected. O boundless grace! amazing love!

**2.** It was used, and was a principal ingredient in the anointing oil; see <sup><0213></sup>Exodus 30:23. and may signify that 'oil of gladness which Christ is anointed with above his fellows,' which being poured upon his head, in its fullness, ran down to all his members, like the oil on Aaron's head, which ran clown to the skirts of his garments; for it is from him that we receive that 'anointing which teacheth all things.'

**3.** The *stacte*, which is the gum that drops from the myrrh-tree, was used in the sweet incense; see <sup><0234></sup>Exodus 30:34. and may represent the intercession of Christ, who stands at the golden altar, with a golden censor in his hand, to offer up the prayers of all his people, which he perfumes with his much incense; which is exceeding grateful and odorous, like sweet-smelling myrrh unto the saints.

**4.** It was used to render persons comely and acceptable in the eyes of others; thus Esther, and the rest of the maidens, were purified with oil of myrrh, for their admission into the presence of king Ahasuerus, <sup><0122></sup>Esther 2:12, it is in Christ the beloved, that saints only are accepted with God, being cloathed with those garments of his, which 'smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia:' Thus they have liberty of access into God's presence now, and shall have a ready admittance into his kingdom and glory hereafter.

**5.** It was used in the embalming of dead bodies, being useful to keep them from putrefaction and corruption; for this purpose Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes to preserve the body of Jesus, <sup><0123></sup>John 19:39, 40, an interest in Christ, this 'bundle of myrrh,' and an application of him to our souls, will secure us from going down into the 'pit of corruption,'

and will eternally save us from perishing; nothing safer and better than to have this in our bosoms, without which sinners, 'dead in trespasses and sins,' will rot and putrify.

**6.** It is very useful in healing <sup>f135</sup> wounds and ulcers. Christ is the great physician that heals all the diseases of his people, freely, perfectly, and infallibly, which he does in an uncommon and unusual way; he performs his cures by his blood and stripes; his blood is a *panacea*, a sovereign medicine for all diseases, and 'by his stripes we are healed,' <sup>25315</sup> Isaiah 53:5.

**3dly**, Christ may be compared to 'a bundle of myrrh.'

**1.** To denote the abundance of the spiritual odors of divine grace in him, he is 'full of grace and truth,' as a man and mediator; 'for it hath pleased the Father, that all fullness should dwell in him;' which is communicated to believers, as they stand in need of it; who sometimes receive such large measures of it, that they can say, 'the grace of our Lord is exceeding abundant' in them; Christ is 'a bundle of myrrh' unto them; they have large views of his love, and sweet communications of his grace.

**2.** To shew the security of this grace in Christ; our life is sure in Christ's hands, being bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord our God, 'with all the mercies and blessings of it, both for time and eternity; therefore they are called 'the sure mercies, of David, being hid with Christ in God, so that they can never be taken away from us.

**3.** To shew the inseparableness of Christ and his grace; Christ and the blessings of his grace never go separate; where God gives his Son, he gives all things with him; and where a soul enjoys Christ, he possesses all things; peace, pardon, righteousness, and life are all in Christ; and the believer is blessed with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in him.

Now. Christ is not so to all persons, only to them that 'believe he is precious,' and to none but them; Christ is a 'bundle of myrrh' to none but his church; 'my beloved, is unto me, etc.; which shews not only the strength of her affection to Christ, the value that she had for him, and the delight she took in him; but also a particular application of him by faith, to her own soul; which is also expressed in the following verse, 'my beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire, etc.'

**III.** In these words we have also the entertainment which she resolves to give him; ‘he shall lie all night betwixt my’ breasts:’. Wherein is to be considered,

**1st,** The place she appoints him, ‘betwixt her breasts.’

**2dly,** How long we would have him lie there, ‘all night.’, And,

**3dly,** For what ends and purposes.

**1st,** The place allotted Christ by the church is, ‘betwixt her breasts.’ R. Aben Ezra understands by them the two cherubim., or the midst of the camp of Israel; R. Solomon Jarchi, the two bars of the ark; <sup>f136</sup> but it would be much better to understand them either of the two Testaments, the Old and New, which are both full of Christ, where he is to be found, and does abide; or else of the two ordinances of the gospel, baptism and the Lord’s supper, which may be called the church’s ‘breasts of consolation;’ see chapter <sup>248</sup>4:5; in these ordinances Christ shews himself, and grants his presence to his people: or rather by Christ’s lying ‘betwixt her breasts,’ is meant his dwelling in her heart by faith, than which nothing, is more desirable to the saints; they have no better room than their own hearts, and therefore are desirous that he would lodge there; as Christ lays them in his bosom to testify his love to them, so they would have him dwell in their hearts to testify their love to him; and a wonderful condescension it is in Christ, who is ‘the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity,’ to take up with such a residence as this. So R. Alshech explains the phrase ‘betwixt her breasts,’ of being ‘in her heart.’

**2dly,** The time she mentions, is *all night*; by which may be meant the night of affliction, temptation, etc, it being in Christ alone that she could meet with any relief or comfort, under such dispensations; or else it means that she would have him with her, not as a stranger, sojourner, or guest for a short time, but would have him dwell in her heart, lie in her bosom, and grant her intimate communion with himself, all the night of this life, until the everlasting day of glory breaks: communion with Christ here is frequently interrupted, which the church had a long experience of, to her grief and sorrow: and therefore she desires to enjoy it without interruption.

**3dly,** The ends and purposes for which she was desirous that he should lie all night betwixt her breasts, were,

1. For ornament; sweet flowers in the bosom are ornamental and are placed there often for that purpose. Christ ‘the rose of Sharon and the lily of the vallies,’ being carried in the hand of faith, or in the bosom of love, exceedingly adorns the believer.
2. For delight, pleasure, and refreshment; nosegays are carried in the bosom, to delight the eye and refresh the spirits. Nothing more delightful to the eye of faith than Christ; and nothing more savory and of a sweeter smell to a believer, than his person, blood, and righteousness; the most delightful and sweet-smelling flowers fail short of expressing Christ’s beauty and savor.
3. That she might always have him in her eye, mind, and memory; persons out of sight are too apt to be forgotten, even our dearest friends and best enjoyments: The church had, no doubt, some experience of this, and therefore to remedy it, she would have Christ, this bundle of myrrh, always in her bosom, and in her sight, to contemplate upon and wonder at; as the Psalmist did, who says, <sup>1916B</sup>Psalm 16:8. ‘I have set the Lord always before me.’
4. That she might keep him safe; thus persons often put things into their bosoms; which they would not lose; she had often lost a sight of Christ, and been without an enjoyment of his presence, which had given her a great deal of uneasiness; and for the future was therefore resolved to be more careful in keeping him, and for that reason would have him lie in her bosom.
5. To shew her singular value for Christ, and her invaluable chastity to him; she sets him in the highest places and gives him the best entertainment; she gives him admittance where she would allow none else; he, and none but he, ‘shall lie all night between nay breasts;’ these were inaccessible to any but to Christ.

#### VERSE 14.

*My beloved is unto me at a cluster of camphire, in the vineyards of Engedi.*

THE church having had such sweet communion with Christ at his table, verse 12, which excited and drew forth her grace into exercise, enters into a commendation of him, verse 13, and finding so much sweetness in him, she scarcely knew what was excellent enough to compare him to, that thereby she might express his excellency, in himself, his usefulness to her,

and that delight and pleasure which she took in him; having declared that he was ‘a bundle of myrrh’ to her, which she desired might always have a place in her bosom, she does, in these words, compare him to ‘a cluster of camphire.’

**I.** She gives him the same title or character as before; ‘my beloved.’

**II.** Says that he was, to her, ‘as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi.’

**I.** She gives the same title or character to Christ here, which she had in the former verse, ‘my beloved;’ which teaches us,

**1.** That Christ being once the believer’s beloved, is always so; he has always an interest in Christ, and can never lose it; it is true, he may not always have the manifestations of Christ’s love, but he has always an interest in him, as his beloved; for nothing can ‘separate him from the love of Christ.’

**2.** This shews, that her faith in him, and her love towards him, still continued; these two graces are never separate; they are implanted in the heart at one and the same time; they grow up and increase together, ‘faith works by love;’ they continue together, and can never be lost; they are not indeed always alike in exercise, but they are always in being; but here they were in exercise as before, and rather increased, while she was contemplating and commending her beloved’s excellencies.

**3.** From hence it appears, that she was not ashamed of Christ under this character, and therefore she repeats it, and indeed she had no reason: for her Maker was her husband, ‘the Lord of hosts is his name, the God of the whole earth shall he be called;’ he had more reason to be ashamed of her, she being a poor, sinful, and despicable creature in herself, and he the Creator of all things, and the holy One of Israel; and indeed, she was so far from being ashamed of Christ as her beloved, that she took a pleasure in looking on him, and conversing with him as such.

**4.** Her repeating it, shews not only the vehemence of her love to him, but also the singular esteem that she had for him; that he was her beloved, and none else; that she chose, approved of, and valued him above all others; he was to her ‘the chiefest among ten thousands,’ and preferable to all other beloveds.

**II.** She compares him to ‘a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi:’ it is somewhat puzzling and perplexing to interpreters, to know what this *copher*, which is translated *camphire*, was.

**First,** It is, by the Septuagint, rendered Cyprus, by which is meant either the island so called, of which we read, <sup><4119></sup>Acts 11:19, 20 and 27:4, and then we must understand, by ‘a cluster of Cyprus,’ a cluster of the grapes of those vines which grew in Cyprus, which were the best and largest vines, as <sup>f137</sup> Pliny observes; and these being said to be in the vineyards of Engedi, mean either those vines that were brought from Cyprus, perhaps, in Solomon’s time, and planted in the vineyards of Engedi; or else, some of the best vines in the land of Canaan, which were much like to those in Cyprus: The land of Canaan was very fruitful of vines, and some of the best sort, which bore very large dusters; such an one was that which was carried by two men upon a staff, who were sent by Moses to spy the land, <sup><4123></sup>Numbers 13:23, 24, in memory of which the place from whence it was taken was called *Eshcol*, the same word that in this text is rendered *a cluster*; and it is highly probable, that those vines, which grew in the vineyards of Engedi, were the best of all: R. Solomon Jarchi relates, out of the Agadah, <sup>f138</sup> that these vineyards brought forth fruit four or five times a year, and R. Alshech says seven times. Now Christ may be compared to a cluster of grapes, which grew in these vineyards; he compares himself to a vine, <sup><4301></sup>John 15:1, and therefore may be very well compared to a cluster of grapes that grew upon the vine. And that,

**1st,** For the number of berries that there are in a cluster of them.

**1.** In Christ is a cluster of divine and human perfections; ‘in him dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily; every divine perfection is to be found in him; eternity, immutability, omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, etc. are as it were in a cluster in him: and as all divine, so all human perfections are in him; for he is perfectly man, as well as perfectly God; he is ‘God manifest in the flesh;’ he was made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted, which is the greatest imperfection of human nature.

**2.** In Christ is a cluster of all spiritual graces; he is ‘full of grace and truth;’ he is full of grace to communicate to others, as Mediator and has all grace habitually in his human nature, God having not given ‘the Spirit by measure’ to him; for he is ‘anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows;’ a cluster of the graces of the Spirit, which are in the human nature



of Christ, may be seen in <sup>3101</sup>Isaiah 11:1-3. The Jews used to call such men who had all excellencies and virtues in them, **twl wkça** *esbcloth*, clusters; hence they have a saying <sup>f139</sup> that “after the death of Jose Ben Joezer, a man of Tzereda, and Jose Ben Jochanan, a man of Jerusalem, the clusters ceased, according to <sup>3101</sup>Micah 7:1” and say they <sup>f140</sup> “what is **l wkça** *esjcol*, a cluster! why say they, “it is **wb l khç çya** *ish shehaccol bo*, a man that has all things in him,” that is, that has all virtues, a perfect knowledge of the law, etc. Now Christ is such a cluster that has all moral and spiritual perfections in him; all virtues and every grace are clustered together in him.

**3.** In Christ is a cluster of all spiritual blessings; all the blessings of the everlasting covenant are in his hands, and at his dispose; and saints are ‘blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in him; he is the believer’s ‘wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption;’ there is not a mercy we want, but, is in him; nor a blessing we enjoy, but what we have received from him; he is the believer’s ‘all in all.’

**4.** In Christ is a cluster of ‘exceeding great and precious promises,’ all suited to the various cases of God’s children, and to advance his glory; for ‘in him are all the promises, yea, and in him, amen, to the glory of God by us;’ and these look like ‘a cluster’ of grapes growing in the vineyards of Engedi.’

**2dly,** Christ may be compared to a cluster of grapes for the abundance of juice that is in them,

**1.** The cluster is squeezed and pressed, that the juice may be obtained; so Christ was ‘wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, under the severest strokes of justice, and pressure of his Father’s wrath; for ‘it pleased the Lord to bruise him,’ and all this for our good, that our sins might be expiated, our souls comforted, and persons accepted with God.

**2.** The juice squeezed out of this cluster may denote the blood of Christ and the efficacy of it; which being ‘shed for the remission of sin,’ perfectly procured it; it ‘cleanseth from all sin,’ and purgeth ‘the conscience from dead works,’ and has an influence in our justification, and in every other blessing of grace.

**3.** As the wine, which is the blood of the grape, is of a chearing and refreshing nature, so is a crucified Christ to a poor sinner; that there are

salvation, righteousness, peace, and pardon through his blood, for the chief of sinners, is a reviving cordial to those that see themselves so, and the best and most acceptable news that they can hear of; this is more cheering and refreshing than the choicest wine. Or else,

By *Cyprus* is meant the Cyprus-tree,<sup>f141</sup> which grew upon the banks of the Nile, and at Ascalon in Judea, and very probably in the vineyards of Engedi, here mentioned, as it did also in the island of Cyprus, from whence, perhaps, it had its name. The word Copher is used in the Misnah<sup>f142</sup> and translated Cyprus; and Maimon and Bartenora<sup>f143</sup> say, it is the same which in Arabic is called **anhla**, the Alhenna, and refer to this place; and observe, that there are some that say it is the spice called the clove. Of the Alhenna Dr Shaw<sup>f144</sup> says, "this beautiful and odoriferous plant, if it is not annually cut and kept low, grows ten or twelve feet high, putting out its little flowers in clusters, which yield a most grateful smell, like camphire." There seems to have been a likeness between the Cyprus-tree and the vine, especially in their flowering; and it is said to bear a flowery fruit like a grape in flower; and hence as vines when they flower are said to Cyprize, as in the Greek version of chapter ~~<2125>~~2:15, so a bunch of Cyprus-flowers in likeness to the vine, is called here a cluster;<sup>f145</sup> and with propriety is the flower of the Cyprus referred to, since it induces sleep;<sup>f146</sup> see verse 13. And,

1. The<sup>f147</sup> seed of the Cyprus-tree is much like a coriander seed, which the manna also resembled, ~~<04107>~~Numbers 11:7, which was typical of Christ, who is called 'the hidden manna,' ~~<6027>~~Revelation 2:17, being exceeding sweet, delightful, pleasant, and nourishing to believers.
2. The<sup>f148</sup> flower of this Cyprus-tree which may be chiefly designed, is of a white color, and a sweet smell; and may denote the purity of Christ's nature, and the innocence and holiness of his life, who in both appeared to be 'holy, harmless and undefiled;' as also the sweet fragrantcy of his person, blood, sacrifice and righteousness.
3. The<sup>f149</sup> leaves thereof are good for the healing of ulcers, etc. 'So the leaves of the tree of life,' which is Jesus Christ, are said to be 'for the healing of the nations;' that is, for the healing of their spiritual maladies and diseases.
4. An excellent<sup>f150</sup> oil was made out of it; and of this with other things was made an ointment, which by Pliny, is called *the royal ointment*.

Christ is by the holy Spirit anointed above measure with the ‘oil of gladness,’ and is possessed of those good ointments which are exceeding savory; and from him do saints receive that ‘anointing, which teacheth all things.’

**Secondly,** Some <sup>f151</sup> think that the Cyprus or Cypirus, of which Pliny writes, lib. 21. c. 18 is here meant, which is a kind of rush or sword-grass, is of a sweet smell, and has bulbous roots, to which it is thought the allusion is here made. And,

**1.** The smell of it, as Pliny, in the place before cited, writes, is much like that of spikenard; and for the same reasons that Christ may be compared to the spikenard, in verse 12, may he be compared to the cyperus here.

**2.** The smell of it, as the same naturalist observes, makes men *vegetiores et firmiores*, more lively and strong, active and robust: in Christ is all a believer’s strength, and from him they receive fresh supplies of it; and the more they exercise faith on him, the stronger they are; so that though they are poor weak creatures in themselves, yet they ‘can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth them.’

**3.** The root of it, as is observed by the same author, is good against the bitings of serpents, especially scorpions. Christ, who is ‘the root of Jesse,’ was typified by the brazen serpent, which Moses, by a divine command, erected upon a pole, that every Israelite that was bitten by the fiery serpents, might look to it and have a cure, Christ was lifted up on the cross, and now is in the gospel, that whosoever looks unto him may live and not perish; see <sup><40B4></sup>John 3:14, 15 he is a sovereign and infallible remedy against the bitings of those fiery serpents, within, our own sins and corruptions, and of that old serpent without, the Devil.

**Thirdly,** Others have thought that a cluster of dates, the fruit of the palm-tree, is here intended, which is the opinion of R. Aben Ezra and other Jewish writers; and indeed Engedi, as is manifest from Pliny, <sup>f152</sup> was famous for those sort of trees, as was Jericho, which is therefore called *the city of the palm-trees*, <sup><634B></sup>Deuteronomy 34:3, and it is very probable that Engedi was called Hazzazon-tamar, as it is <sup><40E></sup>2 Chronicles 20:2, for the same reason: also the <sup>f153</sup> fruit of this tree grows in clusters, and is very sweet and luscious, and may be expressive of Christ, and the fruits of divine grace, which souls receive in clusters from him, and are exceeding sweet to their taste.

**Fourthly,** Others think, and particularly Sanctius, that the balsam-tree is here intended, which only <sup>f154</sup> grew in the land of Judea: this place Engedi, <sup>f155</sup> was remarkably famous both for that and palm-trees; so Origen observes, <sup>f156</sup> that Engaddi abounded not so much with vines, as with balsams; the *vine-dressers* in <sup>2526</sup> Jeremiah 52:16 are interpreted by R. Joseph, <sup>f157</sup> of *the gatherers of balsam*, from Engedi to Ramatha; and places where those trees grew might with propriety be called vineyards, since the balsam-trees were like to vines, <sup>f158</sup> and were cultivated after the manner of vines. <sup>f159</sup> From this tree dropped the precious balsam, which was of a sweet smell, and of an healing nature; to which Christ may be very well compared, who is the great and only physician of souls, whose blood is a balsam for every sore, and has virtue to cure every disease.

**Fifthly,** The word *Copher* is by our translators rendered *camphire*, and so it is by ‘Pagnine, David de Ponsis,’ and others; which <sup>f160</sup> is of a sweet smell, is a very good remedy against the pains and aches of the head, a reviver of the spirits, and a refresher of the brain; and, if intended here, may be expressive of that sweet consolation and divine refreshment which believers enjoy, resulting from views of acceptance in Christ’s person, pardon through his blood, and justification by his righteousness. Though what we call *camphire*, seems not to be known to the ancients, nor does it grow in clusters; but is the tear or gum, or something of a resinous nature, which drops from an Indian tree.

**Sixthly,** There is one thing more to be remarked, and that is, that the Hebrew word **rp̄k** *copher* signifies ‘an atonement or propitiation;’ and so may very well be applied to Christ, who is ‘the propitiation for our sins,’ and has made full atonement for them by ‘the blood of his cross.’ Bishop Patrick <sup>f161</sup> observes, that the ancient Hebrew doctors, by dividing the first word **l̄ k̄ç̄a** ‘eshcol a cluster,’ found out the mystery of the Messiah in these words, and considered them as if they were read as, **rp̄wk̄ l̄ k̄ ç̄ya** *ish col copher* ‘my beloved is unto me the man that propitiates or expiates all things,’ that is all sins and transgressions. In the Talmud <sup>f162</sup> it is explained, “He whose all things are, has atoned for my iniquity.” Both the Targum and R. Sol. Jarchi carry it in the sense of atonement, though not as made by the Messiah: but it is certain that the great atonement for sin was to be, and is completely made by the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Messiah; in which appeared a cluster of all the divine perfections, shining in equal glory; here grace and mercy, justice and holiness, truth and faithfulness,

sweetly joined and harmonised together; whereby also a cluster of divine blessings was procured and eternally secured to all his redeemed ones, such as peace, pardon, justification, etc. all which are sweet and comfortable, and fill them with unspeakable joy and pleasure.

## VERSE 15.

*Behold, thou art fair, my love: Behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes.*

THE church having spoken in the three former verses of the glory, excellency and sweetness, which she saw and experienced in Christ; he reassumes his part in this verse, and sets off the fairness and beauty of the church. In which,

**I.** Is a general assertion that she is fair; 'Behold, thou art fair, my love: Behold, thou art fair.'

**II.** A particular instance of her beauty given; 'Thou hast doves' eyes.'

**I.** Here is a general assertion of her fairness: In which we have, 1st, The thing asserted, that she is fair. 2dly, An 'ecce, a behold,' prefixed to it; 'behold thou art fair.' 3dly, A loving character given, 'my love.' 4thly, The assertion repeated.

**1st,** The general assertion is, that she is 'fair;' not on the account of her good works, or any righteousness performed by her, which is as filthy rags and 'an unclean thing,' as the Targum and R. Sol. Jarchi interpret it; but on the account of her being clothed with Christ's righteousness, washed in his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit, as has been shewn on verse 5.

**2dly,** To this general assertion is prefixed an *ecce a behold;* which is sometimes,

**1.** A note of attention; and may be here designed to stir her up more seriously to consider her own beauty, which she had in and from him: believers are too apt to keep their eyes upon their blackness, sins and imperfections, which fills them with sorrow, weakens their faith, and inclines them to diffidence; and though a consideration of this is sometimes necessary for the humbling of our souls, and the magnifying of divine grace; yet we should not have our eyes so fixed upon these things, as to be unmindful of and not regard our perfection, completeness, beauty and

comeliness, we have in Christ, who is both our ‘sanctification and our righteousness.’

**2.** It is sometimes a note of admiration: Christ here, setting forth the greatness and excellency of the church’s beauty, is introduced wondering at that ‘comeliness’ which he himself had put upon her, she being in his eyes ‘the fairest among women;’ and much more reason have we to wonder at it, that we who are ‘by nature children of, wrath,’ whose natures are corrupted and depraved, who are both by actual and original sin, black, uncomely and deformed, yet are now fair and beautiful in Christ, through his blood and righteousness; that we, who were clothed with the rags of sin, are now arrayed with ‘the sun of righteousness; that we who were cast out into the open field, to the lothing of our persons, in the day that we were born, yet now should be clothed with raiment of fine linen, silk, and brodered work,’ and be adorned with bracelets, chains, jewels, and earrings; O stupendous grace! astonishing love!

**3.** It is sometimes a note of asseveration; and may be so used here, to assure her of the truth of what he asserted concerning her. Believers are very apt to call in question their fairness and completeness in Christ; and to indulge themselves in fears, doubts and unbelief about it, especially when they consider how full they are of imperfections, sins and spots; in the view of which they are very hardly brought to believe, that they are ‘all fair, and there is no spot in them:’ Christ therefore to remove his church’s doubts and fears, banish her unbelief, and strengthen her faith, uses this way of speaking.

**3dly,** Christ gives his church here a very affectionate title, ‘my love,’ which has been already considered and explained on verse 9 and is here mentioned again to let her know, that she was still the object of his love, pleasure, and delight that his love towards her was great, strong, lasting, and unchangeable; as also how much his heart was ravished with her.

**4thly,** This assertion of Christ’s, respecting the church’s beauty, is repeated, ‘behold thou art fair;’ which repetition is,

**1.** To shew the exceeding greatness of it: she was ‘fair, fair,’ that is, exceeding fair; no such beauty to be found in any as in Christ, he is ‘fairer than the children of men;’ and next to him is the church; she is ‘the fairest among women;’ it is a superlative, surpassing and excelling beauty that she is possessed of.

**2.** It being repeated, shews the reality of it; this is inward and real, and not merely outward, nor painted: outward favor is deceitful, and natural beauty is vain; but such is not the church's, which is supernatural, spiritual, glorious, and perfect.

**3.** It manifests the great value and esteem which Christ has for her, and her beauty, and how much he desired it; none so beautiful in his sight as she is; nor any beauty so desirable to him as hers; his thoughts are fixed upon, his eyes are sweetly delighted, and his heart surprisingly and divinely ravished with it; therefore he repeats it here and elsewhere, again and again in this Song.

**4.** It is repeated to shew that she was both inwardly and outwardly fair; she was fair, both with respect to justification and sanctification.

**II.** He gives a particular instance of her beauty, 'thou hast doves eyes,' or eyes like doves: <sup>f163</sup> her eyes are taken notice of, because much beauty lies in the eyes, either in the size or color of them; <sup>f164</sup> and the eyes of doves are observed, because of some distinguished properties in them: the dove is a creature which furnishes out much matter for poets, which they apply to lovers. <sup>f165</sup> By her eyes may be meant, either,

**1st,** The ministers of the gospel; who are that to Christ's body, the church, as eyes are to an human body; and what Job says of himself, may, with as much justness, be applied to them: 'I was,' says he, <sup><8915></sup> Job 29:15. 'eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame;' and the apostle seems to intimate this in <sup><6126></sup> 1 Corinthians 12:16-21. Now these may be called the church's eyes,

**1.** Because as the eyes are placed in the eminent part of the body, so are ministers set in the highest post and place in the church; and therefore are said, <sup><3162></sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:12, to be over others in the Lord; and it is as necessary and proper that they should be so, as it is, that the eyes should be in the head.

**2.** As the eyes are set there to watch and observe lest any hurt comes to the body, so ministers of the gospel are placed in the church for much the same purpose; for this reason they are frequently called *watchmen*, and their business represented to be a watching for or over the souls of men committed to their care, and to give them warning and notice of any danger that is like to befall them; of which we have instances both in the Old and

New Testament; see <sup><2818></sup>Isaiah 52:8 and 62:6, <sup><2819></sup>Ezekiel 33:7-9, <sup><2827></sup>Hebrews 13:17, <sup><2845></sup>2 Timothy 4:5.

**3.** They may be called the church's eyes, because they pry, search into, and make a discovery of gospel-truths to others; for which reason they are called the 'light of the world,' and more especially are the lights of the church: they are the stars which Christ holds in his right hand, and. maker. use of to hold forth the 'word of life' and light to others; they shine not in their own, but in a borrowed light; they receive all from Christ; they would not be capable of looking into and discovering the precious truths of the gospel, nor be able to shew to others the way of salvation, did not the Spirit of truth, **ὁδηγήσει**, go before, lead the way, and guide into all truth.

**4.** As the eyes observe, order, and direct the members of the body in their several actions; so the ministers of the gospel, being appointed inspectors and overseers, observe the life and conversations of the members of the church; and if any thing disorderly appears, in a proper way correct, admonish, and reprove them for it; they make it their business to teach the whole church all things which Christ has commanded; to guide, direct, and instruct them how to behave themselves in their whole walk and conversation, both in the church and towards them that are without.

Now these eyes of the church may be very fitly compared to doves,

**1.** For clearness and perspicuity; the eyes of doves <sup>f166</sup> are clear and sharp, sighted, so are ministers to search and penetrate into gospel-truths: it is with much more clearness they behold, and plainness they deliver gospel-truths now, than they could under the legal dispensation; and there is a time coming, when they shall do it with much greater evidence and perspicuity, when 'the watchmen shall see eye to eye;' though in this imperfect state we know but in part, and prophesy but in part, and see through a glass darkly, in comparison of that light and evidence, in which those glorious truths shall appear to all believers in another world.

**2.** For their sincerity and simplicity; when Christ sent forth his disciples to preach the gospel, he bid them be 'wise as serpents, and harmless as doves:' those who are his faithful ministers, act with all simplicity and godly sincerity, and dare not, 'as many, corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of *God*, in the sight of God, speak they in Christ:' they use no artful methods to conceal their principles, and bring off



persons from the plain truths of the gospel into a reception of erroneous doctrines; but they are such who have ‘renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending themselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God:’ they are exceeding careful and jealous lest souls, who are under their care, and are made their charge, should by any means be ‘corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.’

**3.** For bringing in the olive-leaf of the gospel; Noah’s dove brought an olive-leaf in its mouth, which was an indication that the waters of the flood were abated: the ministers of the gospel bring the good tidings of good things; they publish salvation by Christ, and bring the news of peace and pardon by his blood, justification by his righteousness, life through his death, and acceptance in his person.

**4.** For those dove-like gifts of the Spirit, with which they are endowed, and by which they are qualified for that work which they are called unto; there are diversities of them, of which one and the same spirit is the author, and these being given unto them, make them able ministers of the New Testament; so that they become both useful and beautiful. The Jews <sup>f167</sup> interpret those eyes of the Sanhedrim. Or else,

**2dly,** By the church’s eyes may be meant the eyes of ‘her understanding being enlightened’ by the Spirit of God; and more especially the eye of faith, by which a soul takes a view of Christ’s glory, fullness, and suitableness, and looks unto him alone for life and salvation; which may be compared to doves eyes:

**1.** For the clearness and perspicuity of it; the dove, as has been already observed, is a quick and sharp sighted creature; the eve of faith penetrates into those things ‘within the veil,’ brings distant things near, and makes unseen things manifest unto the soul; for it is ‘the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen:’ the things which the eye of nature and carnal reason could never take cognisance of, are observed by faith; whose object is an unseen Christ, and the invisible things of another world, which ‘eye hath not seen, nor ear heard.’

**2.** For its singleness and simplicity in looking only to Christ: the dove <sup>f168</sup> is an exceeding chaste and loving creature to its mate; the eyes of doves look only to their mates, to whom they keep an inviolable chastity: faith looks

only to Christ, and nothing else; it looks only to his person for acceptance with God, and not either to its duties or its graces; it looks only to Christ's righteousness for justification, and not to its own works, whether they be moral or evangelical, works done before or after conversion; it looks only to his blood for pardon and cleansing, and not to its tears of humiliation and repentance; it looks not to its frames, nor grace received, for its supply and support, but to an all-sufficient and inexhaustible fullness of grace in Christ: now this is the pure, single, and chaste look of faith, which is so pleasant and delightful to Christ Jesus.

**3.** For finding out, and feeding upon the pure and wholesome doctrines of the gospel: the dove <sup>f169</sup> singles out and feeds upon only pure seed and grain, and rejects all other, as not being agreeable and proper food; so a believing soul cannot feed and live upon any thing; he cannot live upon the husks which swine eat, but upon the 'wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ;' any food will not do, none but the 'bread of life and the hidden manna;' it is the earnest desire of such a soul, that the 'life which he lives in the flesh, might be by the faith of the Son of God;' he would always live on Christ and with Christ, and cannot be satisfied with any thing short of him; for having once tasted 'that the Lord is gracious,' he evermore desires this bread.

**4.** For the exceeding beautifulness of it an Christ's eye; as the eyes of doves are beautiful and delightful, so as this eye of faith to Christ, his heart is even ravished with it; 'thou hast ravished my heart,' says he, in chapter ~~2019~~4:9. 'with one of thine eyes:' Christ's eyes, for the beauty and glory of them, are said to be, in chapter ~~2152~~5:12. 'as the eyes of doves; by the rivers of water, washed with milk, and fitly set;' and so are the church's here; nothing more beautiful than the eye of faith.

**5.** For the meekness and humility of it; doves eyes are meek and humble, not fiery, fierce, and furious, as some creatures', nor proud and lofty as others. Faith is a low and humble grace, it takes nothing to itself, but ascribes all the glory to Christ; it renders the disposition of a soul possessed of it mild and meek, not fierce and cruel, for 'faith works by love:' a fiery temper, and a furious disposition do not become a believer; nor is it either excited or encouraged by faith; which promotes a meek, humble, and lowly spirit, of which Christ, the object of faith, is the best example, who says, 'learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart;' who

checks the furious, and resists the proud, but takes delight and pleasure in the humble soul, whose eyes are up unto him alone.

## VERSE 16.

*Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant; also our bed is green.*

THE church having heard her own praises in the former verse, and being conscious to herself of her sins and infirmities, and that what beauty was in her came from her beloved; she, as it were, breaks in upon his discourse, and ascribes it all to him; and it is as if she should say, Dost thou say that I am fair? thou only art eminently, essentially, and originally so; for all the beauty which I am possessed of, as it is by way of eminency in thee, so it is derived from thee; therefore the praise of it is not due to me, but to thyself, to whom be all the glory. In these words,

**I.** The same thing is asserted by the church concerning Christ, which he had asserted concerning her in the former verse; ‘behold, thou art fair, my beloved.’

**II.** An addition to it, ‘yea, pleasant.’

**III.** That their bed, which belonged in common to them both, ‘was green.’

**I.** The same thing is here asserted by the church concerning Christ, which he had asserted concerning her, and that much in the same manner. For,

**1st,** The title which he gave her is, ‘my love,’ and that which she here gives him is, ‘my beloved.’ They seem, not only in these two verses, but indeed throughout the whole Song, to be, as it were, attiring to outdo each other in their mutual expressions of love; but this title has been already explained on verse 13.

**2dly,** She asserts of this beloved of hers in the very same words, that he is fair; she returns it to him, to whom she judged it more properly belonged; whose beauty is natural and essential, hers not so; his original and underived, but hers derived from him; his infinite, inconceivable, inexpressible, and transcending all others, but hers of an inferior nature. Now her returning the same commendation back to Christ, shews that she not only looked on her beauty as far inferior to Christ’s, and not to be mentioned with it; as also that it was derived from him; and that if she was

in any sense comely, it was through that comeliness which he had put upon her; but likewise it shews her modesty and humility, as well as the nature of true faith, which gives all the glory of what the soul is, or has, to Christ and his grace; its usual and common language is, ‘not I, but the grace of God which was with me, and it is by the grace of God I am what I am.’ Now Christ may be said to be fair,

**1st,** As he is man; and so he is, both in body and soul, that body which was prepared him by the Father, and which was in an unspeakable and surprising manner conceived in the Virgin’s womb by the power of the Holy Ghost, as it was free from sin, so was no doubt free from all the blemishes and defects of nature; and in this sense, as well as in some other, may he be said to be ‘fairer than the children of Adam;’ and more especially he was so at his transfiguration, when ‘his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light;’ though what with sorrows and sufferings, with tears, dust, sweat, and blood, ‘his visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men;’ yet now being raised from the dead, and exalted at his Father’s right hand, is beautiful and glorious; for that same human nature, which here below was the ridicule of men, is now the wonder of angels; that head which ‘was crowned with thorns, is now ‘crowned with glory and honor;’ and that face which was spit upon, will be the delightful object of the saints’ everlasting vision, after the resurrection morn; when with their bodily eyes they shall gaze on the glory of Christ’s human nature, who they ‘shall see for themselves, and not another:’ in short, Christ’s glorious human body will then be the pattern and exemplar, to which our bodies shall then be fashioned and made like. Moreover, as he is fair in his human body, so likewise in his soul; the powers and faculties of which act in an agreeable order, nothing being misplaced, nor any disorder in the whole frame or contexture of it, being free from all sin, and full of every grace: holiness here appears in its beauty, and knowledge and wisdom in their perfection; all which were manifest and evident throughout the whole of his life. In short, the whole human nature had an immeasurable unction of the Holy Spirit, on the account of which he is said to be fairer than others; he was ‘anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows;’ grace was poured plentifully into his lips, from whence it freely dropped like ‘sweet smelling myrrh.’

**2dly,** He may be said to be fair, as God-man and Mediator, which I suppose is chiefly designed here; for as such, this branch of the Lord is exceeding beautiful and glorious in the eyes of believers. For,

1. The glory of all the divine perfections is resplendent in him; as such, he is ‘the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person;’ all God’s creatures, works, and actions, shew forth the glory of his perfections in some measure; but they are no where so clearly discerned, nor so gloriously displayed, as they are in the person and office of Christ as Mediator; for ‘the light of the knowledge of the glory of God’ is given us in the face, or person of Jesus Christ; and a glorious, delightful, and ravishing sight it is to a believer.
2. There is a mediatorial glory which he is possessed of, which makes him look exceeding fair and beautiful; this is what was given him before the world began, when he first entered into covenant with his Father, became our surety, and was set up as the Mediator of God’s elect; which, when he had finished his work, he desired might be given to him, that is, might be more clearly manifested, and a greater display of it given to the world, and is what shall feed the eyes of his saints with wonder and pleasure to all eternity. This is what Christ desires that they may be with him for, namely, ‘to behold his glory,’ for then indeed shall they ‘see him as he is:’ now, in the glass of the gospel, saints behold a great deal of the glory of Christ Jesus, which gives them much pleasure and delight; but this is but little in comparison of What they shall be everlastingly indulged with.
3. Christ appears with much fairness and beauty to believers, as he is possessed of all grace; this was the glorious and soul-ravishing sight which the evangelist John, together with others, had of him, which he takes notice of, saying, ~~John~~ John 1:14. ‘we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;’ and what makes it still more delightful is, that all this grace is treasured up in him for them, that they from ‘his fullness may receive, and grace for grace:’ there is every thing in him that souls want, and every thing they want they may have from him, for ‘he is of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption,’ which consideration must needs render him fair, beautiful, and delightful in the believer’s eye.
4. Christ is fair in believers eyes, in all he is unto them, or has done and suffered for them; their souls are delighted in the views of him, as their prophet to teach and instruct them, whose ‘lips are like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh’ of gospel doctrines, counsels, and promises; as their priest, who by his active and passive obedience, has made full satisfaction to the righteous law, an atonement for their sins by his blood, and is now

interceding for them in heaven, and therefore, his ‘hands are as gold rings set with the beryl; and his legs as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold;’ and as their king, to rule, govern, protect and defend them, whose head ‘is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven.’ Moreover, he is exceeding fair and beautiful in their eyes, considered in all the relations he bears to them; as he is their indulgent Father, their tender husband, loving brother, and faithful friend; and so he is to them, in all that he has done and suffered for them: it is an exceeding delightful sight to view him undertaking their cause, espousing their persons, assuming their name, bleeding and dying in their room and stead, arising again as a victorious conqueror sitting at God’s right hand, where he ever lives to make intercession for transgressors.

**3dly**, The same word *behold*, is prefixed by the church to this commendation, as was to the other by Christ, as wondering at that beauty she saw in him, and that one so fair should take any notice of her; and being affected with his glory herself, she stirs up others to a contemplation of it; for all have reason, upon a view thereof, to say, ‘how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty,’ ~~Zechariah~~ Zechariah 9:17.

**II.** She not only asserts the same of him as he had done of her, but also makes an addition to his character, saying, ‘behold, thou art fair, yea pleasant.’ This shews the exceeding great value and esteem that she had for him, and that she found it difficult to find words fully expressive of his excellency; and indeed all words fall short of expressing his worth. She was not contented with the former commendation of him, and therefore adds another word, striving, as it were, to exceed him in her commendations. They were not mere words of compliment she used, for her heart and affections went along with them; nay, she labored under a difficulty of finding out words, apt, strong, and full enough to express the real and just sentiments of her mind concerning him, and therefore, as she thought one word was not enough, she adds another, ‘yea, pleasant.’

**1.** The person of Christ is so to a believer: He looks pleasantly upon believers with an eye of love and grace, ‘his eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of water, washed with milk, and fitly set’ upon them, He does not look upon them in a frowning, furious, and angry manner, but as having the greatest respect for, and taking the greatest delight in them; and whilst they are enabled by faith to view him with love in his heart and smiles in his countenance their souls are filled with an universal pleasure;

for if it is ‘a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun’ in the firmament, it is much more pleasant to behold the ‘Sun of righteousness arising with healing in his wings; to see our acceptance in his person, pardon, through his blood, justification by his righteousness, reconciliation with God through his atoning sacrifice, and every needful supply of grace from his infinite fullness: O how pleasant must Christ be to a believer under all these sweet considerations!

2. Christ’s covenant and promises are exceeding pleasant to them. What can be a more delightful sight, than to view Christ as the Mediator, surety, and messenger of the covenant of grace; to see all the blessings, and the ‘exceeding great and precious promises’ of it, all secured in his hands; as also their interest in it, and in him as their covenant-head? so that they can say, as David did, <sup><A1E1F></sup>2 Samuel 23:5. ‘although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this; all my salvation and all my desire, although he make it not to grow;’ it is this will give satisfaction and content, under all the troubles and exercises of life, and fortify against the fears of death.
3. The doctrines of Christ are pleasant to believers. ‘Pleasant words are as an honey-comb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones;’ such are the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus, the doctrines of the everlasting gospel; these are sweeter to a believer’s taste than ‘the honey, or the honeycomb;’ they are saltitary and nourishing, and therefore valued by him more than his necessary food; he often, with Jeremiah, finds these words, and eats them, and they are to him ‘the joy and rejoicing of his heart.’
4. The ordinances of Christ are pleasant to them. The commands of Christ are far from being grievous, his ‘yoke is easy and his burden light;’ all his tabernacles are amiable and lovely, his ‘ways are ways of pleasantness, and his paths are paths of peace,’ especially when they enjoy his presence, have communion with him, and are assisted by his Spirit in an attendance on them.
5. Christ’s company and conversation are exceeding pleasant and delectable; no fellowship like ‘fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.’ This is the believer’s peculiar privilege, his sole delight, and the matter of his glorying: no presence like the presence of Christ, ‘in whose presence is fullness of joy; and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.’ Communion with angels, and fellowship with saints, must needs be very pleasant and delightful to believers; but not to be compared with

the enjoyment of his presence, who is the head of angels, and the king of saints; this is the saints' comfort here, and will be their eternal happiness hereafter.

**III.** Having thus given this great and glorious commendation of her beloved, she asserts that their bed, which was common to them, and which made for the glory of them both, green; also our bed is green: where we are to consider,

**1st,** What this bed is.

**2dly,** Whose it is. And,

**3dly,** What is said of it.

**1st,** It will be proper to inquire what is meant by this bed. R. Solomon Jarchi observes, that the tabernacle and temple were called so; and for this purpose cites <sup><238E></sup>Song of Solomon 3:7, <sup><210E></sup>2 Kings 11:2, 3, and so it is explained in Yalkut. Theodoret <sup>f170</sup> thinks that the scriptures are here intended, which are oftentimes the instrumental means of begetting souls to Christ; see <sup><501B></sup>James 1:18, <sup><602B></sup>1 Peter 1:23. But it seems better to understand it of the church itself, and the seat of it; where Christ and believers comfortably rest together, enjoy sweet fellowship and communion with each other, and where many souls are begotten and born again; for 'of Zion it shall be said, this and that man was born in her.'

**2dly,** Whose bed is this; she calls it our bed, which denotes a mutual property and interest that Christ and believers have in the church; it is what the Father has given him, which he has purchased with his blood, and is the author and maker of; 'behold his bed, which is Solomon's:' this he has chosen for his rest, solace and refreshment, saying, 'this is my rest for ever, here will I dwell.' Moreover, it is the bed which believers have a right to, and therefore are admitted to all the privileges of it; here they enjoy the presence and company of Christ their beloved, they have an interest in him; therefore the apostle says, 'if Christ be yours, all things are yours.'

**3dly,** It is said of this bed. that it is green, that is, flourishing and fruitful; so the word is used in <sup><204B></sup>Daniel 4:4, <sup><451B></sup>Psalms 52:8, and 37:35, and intends either,

**1.** The fruitfulness of the saints in grace and holiness, who being 'planted in the house of the Lord, flourish in the courts of our God,' as trees of



righteousness, which are filled and laden with the fruits thereof; which is owing to the refreshing dews and influences of divine grace. Or else,

**2.** The numerous increase of converts in the church; and so the Targum and R. Sol. Jarchi explain it: and it may be an allusion to a custom used in the eastern nations, in strewing the nuptial bed with green leaves and flowers; and with the Latins, *torus*, a bed, is so called from *tortis herbis* <sup>f171</sup> from herbs writhed and twisted together, and put under the shoulders of those that lay on them; and it was usual to strew them with green herbs, grass, and leaves of trees. <sup>f172</sup> A numerous increase of converts, which makes the bed, the church, look so green and flourishing, was frequently promised and prophesied of in the Old-Testament; and had a glorious fulfillment in the first dawn of the gospel, when three thousand souls were converted under one sermon; and will be gloriously and completely fulfilled in the latter day, when the church shall say, ‘the place is too strait for me, give place to me that I may dwell.’

## VERSE 17.

### *The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir.*

THESE are either the words of Christ, inviting the church into their house, which was so firmly and delightfully built; or else the words of the church, continuing the praise of Christ, and all that were about him, or belonging unto him; or rather, they are the words of the bride and bridegroom, and the virgins her companions, all joining together in a chorus, to set forth the glory and excellency of the church. in which may be considered,

**I.** What is meant by this house, which they seem to have a common interest in, and therefore call it ‘our house.’

**II.** What those beams are which are said to be cedar.

**III.** What those rafters are which are said to be of fir.

**I.** I shall consider what is meant by the ‘house, whose beams are cedar,’ and whose *rafters* are *of fir*. R. Sol. Jarchi understands it of the tabernacle, the glory and praise of which, he thinks, is here set forth; and so the Targum refers it to the temple built by Solomon, but yet acknowledges that that which shall be built in the days of the king Messiah, shall be much more glorious and beautiful. But it is much better to understand it, either,

**1st,** Of ‘our house, which is from heaven’; <sup>f173</sup> which saints know that after their dissolution they shall enter into. The word in the Hebrew is in the plural number ‘our houses,’ <sup>f174</sup> and so may intend those many mansions which are in Christ’s Father’s house, preparing by him for all his people for their everlasting entertainment; and the *beams* and *rafters* of these houses being of cedar and fir, which are trees of a sweet smell and durable nature, may represent that fullness of joy, and those delightful pleasures which are in Christ’s presence, and at his right hand for evermore:’ it shews that this ‘house is not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens;’ that these habitations which Christ has prepared for them, and will bring them into, are everlasting; and that that inheritance which they are born heirs unto, and shall certainly enjoy, is ‘incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away.’

Now if we suppose these to be the words of Christ, his design then seems to be, by commending the endless joys and never-ceasing pleasures of the saints above, to raise the affections, and quicken the desires of his church after the enjoyment of the same, that they with him may enter the nuptial chamber, and spend an eternity in everlasting communion with each other: but if they are the words of the church, then they seem to intimate the comfortable views she had of the heavenly joys, and her interest in them; she knew that when this ‘earthly house was dissolved, she had an house not made with hands,’ firmly built and delightfully furnished, which she should have admittance into, and which is ‘eternal in the heavens;’ as also, the earnest desires of her soul to be there; she saw this house afar off, what a goodly structure it was, what soul-ravishing delights it was filled with, therefore longed to be within the walls of it, and ‘groaned earnestly, being burdened with a body of sin and death, desiring to be clothed upon with her house, which is from heaven; likewise she seems to speak of this house with the utmost thankfulness to her Lord and spouse, and adoration of his grace, that had provided so convenient and delightful an habitation for her. Or else,

**2dly,** By this house may be meant the church of God here below, which seems most agreeable; for so it is called in <sup><SR15></sup>1 Timothy 3:15 where the apostle promises Timothy to instruct him how he should ‘behave himself in the house of God, which, says he, is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth;’ and so believers are said to be Christ’s house, in <sup><SR16></sup>Hebrews 3:6. ‘but Christ, as a son over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.’ Now the church may be said to be Christ’s house,

1. Because it is of his building: the ministers of the gospel are instruments in building up his church; but he is the great master-builder: the materials of this building are 'lively stones,' which are the saints; but he himself is both the 'foundation and the corner-stone; it is upon this rock he builds his church, and the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail against it.'
2. Having built it, he dwells in it, and makes it the place of his residence: the church is the habitation of all the Three Persons, and particularly of Jesus Christ; saints are built up 'for an habitation of God through the Spirit; they are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and in their hearts Christ dwells by faith: the church is the habitation of his holiness, and the place where his honor dwelleth; here he delights to be, and condescends to shew himself; here souls may expect to find him, and enjoy his presence; for he has promised to be here until the end of time.
3. Here he eats, feeds, and feasts with his people; it is not an empty house he keeps, but having built it, he furnishes it with suitable provisions, which are called 'the goodness and fatness of his house; here he makes a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refilled: this is his banqueting house,' into which he brings his people, and sups with them, and they with him.
4. Here he takes his rest with the church, his bride: 'this, says he, is my rest for ever; here wilt I dwell, for I have desired it;' here he solaces himself, and takes the utmost delight and pleasure; as houses are not only to feed in, but to rest in, so this use does Christ make of his church.
5. Here he lays up his treasure, and what he esteems his portion, and the chief part of his riches; for 'the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance;' the saints are his jewels and peculiar treasure, and these he brings into and preserves safe in his house below, until he removes them into his house above.
6. As his house, he fills, repairs, and beautifies it at pleasure; he fills it with members, and these he fills with gifts and grace suitable to their places in this house, for he is 'ascended to fill all things;' when any breaches are made, he makes them up; when it is fallen to decay, he repairs it, by bringing in a large number of converts, and beautifies this house of his glory with his own presence.

**7.** He is the master of it, and manages all the affairs of it; the key of it is in his hands, and the government of it upon his shoulders; he is sole king and ruler here; he enacts laws, demands obedience to them, and places officers here to see them put in execution; he is ‘the high priest over this house of God,’ and transacts all affairs between God and his people; he is the great prophet that teaches and instructs them; the careful husband and indulgent father that provides all for them; in short, ‘of him the whole family in heaven and earth is named;’ so that the church may be very well called Christ’s house.

But then this house is said to be the church’s also; ‘the beams of our house,’ etc. Saints are the materials of this house; Christ is the builder, the foundation, and the corner-stone: but they are the lively stones which are laid on this foundation, and so ‘are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ; they have a right to, and are in the enjoyment of all the privileges of this house; they are ‘fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;’ here they are born and brought up, have their food and education; ‘thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side,’ ~~2300~~ Isaiah 60:4; here they dwell, rest, feed, feast, and enjoy sweet communion with Christ Jesus; and therefore they may say, as David did, ~~1300~~ Psalm 134:4. ‘blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they will be still praising thee;’ as they have a great deal of reason so to do.

Also the word being in the plural number, and rendered, our houses, may intend the particular churches of Christ, which are all his houses, where he dwells; his golden candlesticks, among whom he walks, which hold forth the word of light and life to others; and his gardens, where he delights to be, eating those pleasant fruits, and feeding among those lilies, which grow there; for there is but one ‘general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, yet there are many particular churches and congregations of saints here on earth.’

**II.** The beams of this house are said to be of cedar. By cedar beams we are not to understand angels, who encamp about, protect and bear up the saints, and are ministering spirits to them, which is the opinion of some; <sup>f175</sup> but rather, the ministers of the gospel <sup>f176</sup> who may be called pillars in Christ’s house, as James, Cephas, and John were; who by their exemplary lives, savory doctrines, and undaunted courage, add much strength and glory to the church of Christ; as by rafters afterwards may be meant

weaker believers, who have all their proper places, work, and usefulness in the house of God: or else, by cedar beams may be meant in general, the saints and; people of God, which are all beams and pillars in this house, and serve to support it; for being ‘fitly framed, together, they grow up unto an holy temple in the Lord;’ and being joined and cemented to each other in faith and love, they worship the Lord ‘with one shoulder, or with one consent;’ and these are compared to cedars in scripture; see <sup><19212></sup>Psalm 92:12, <sup><02415></sup>Numbers 24:5, 6, and may be very well compared unto them,

**1.** For the height and tallness of them; the cedar-tree is a very tall tree, as may be learnt from <sup><12023></sup>2 Kings 19:23, <sup><30109></sup>Amos 2:9. The saints, though they are mean, abject, poor, and low by nature, even beggars on the dunghill, yet by divine grace they are raised on high, set among princes, and made to inherit the throne of glory; they are higher than others in their gifts and graces, faith, knowledge and experience, as well as in their privileges and attainments; they are growing up higher still in their head Christ Jesus, and are reaching forwards and upwards in their affections and desires, in hope of enjoying ‘the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.’

**2.** For their straightness and uprightness; for which reason perhaps the righteous are said to grow, not only like the palm-tree, but also like the cedar in Lebanon: the saints are upright, both in heart and conversation; they both speak and walk uprightly.

**3.** For its durableness; Pliny <sup>f177</sup> ascribes even eternity unto it; it is used for immortality; <sup>f178</sup> it will not rot, nor admit any worm into it: the saints will endure for ever; for though they have much corruption in them, yet they themselves shall never corrupt; they have that grace in them which will keep them from putrefaction, and which will never decay itself; for it is incorruptible, immortal, and never-dying seed.

**4.** For the sweet odor which it sends forth; <sup>f179</sup> it is of an excellent smell; so are the persons of the saints to God the Father, being clothed with the garments of salvation, and robe of Christ’s righteousness, which ‘smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia;’ so are the graces which are wrought in them by the Spirit to Christ himself; see chapter <sup><21410></sup>4:10, and so are all their sacrifices of a sweet-smelling savor, being offered up in Christ’s name, and perfumed with the sweet incense of his mediation.

5. The cedar-tree is well rooted, <sup>f180</sup> always green, and the older the more fruitful: believers are rooted in Christ Jesus, so as all the winds and storms of sin and temptation cannot tear them up; they are always green, and their leaf doth not wither, because they are ‘planted by rivers of water;’ where, being refreshed with continued supplies of divine grace, they bring forth fruit in old age, because the Lord, he is upright, he is their rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

III. The rafters of this house are said to be of fir. By rafters may be meant the ordinances of the gospel, which are administered in the church, and are for the comfort and edification of it. The Hebrew word here, translated rafters, is in <sup><038></sup>Genesis 30:38-41 and <sup><026></sup>Exodus 2:16 rendered gutters and troughs of water, where sheep used to be watered; and some of the Jewish writers <sup>f181</sup> would have it understood in this sense here. R. Aben Ezra observes, that if it is taken in this sense, then the word rendered fir, should signify marble stone, and be read thus, ‘our canals are of marble stone.’ <sup>f182</sup> Now these canals or gutters of water are called **רֵחַתִּים** *rehatim* <sup>f183</sup> from the Chaldee word **רְחַת** *rehat*, which signifies *to run*, because waters run in them. The grace of the Spirit is frequently, both in the Old and New Testament, represented by water; which, for its purity and purifying nature, is called *clean water*; for its quickening virtue and efficacy, water of life and living water; and for its plenty and abundance, ‘rivers of water:’ this grace is commonly conveyed and communicated to us in the use of ordinances; these are the canals or conduit-pipes in which this water runs, and is brought unto us; the first conveyance of it is usually this way; faith, conversion, and every grace that attends it, come by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; and as this, so other ordinances are the means of increasing faith, joy and comfort, and of conveying fresh supplies of grace and strength. Christ’s fulness is the fountain from whence all grace springs; and his ordinances are the golden pipes, through which the golden oil and grace of divine love run and empty themselves into our souls. Also the same word is translated *galleries*, in chapter <sup><026></sup>7:5, ‘the king is held in the galleries.’ R. David Kimchi says, <sup>f184</sup> that they were buildings in high houses, in which they walked from house to house, or from one part of the house to the other; they were such as our balconies: and they may be called by this name, because they run along the sides of houses: agreeable to this, Junius and Tremellius translate it, *ambulachra nostra*, *our walking-places*. Now the ordinances are the galleries, or walking-places, where Christ and believers walk and converse together; here he grants them

fellowship with himself, tells them all his mind, and discloses the secrets of his heart unto them: in these galleries they behold ‘the king in his beauty;’ here he shews them his covenant-love and grace, and from hence they take a prospect of the good ‘land that is very far off.’ But the word may be very well translated *rafters*, which are joined together, and run in each other; and so the Targum renders it; and in this sense is the word used both in the Misnah <sup>f185</sup> and in the Midrash. <sup>f186</sup> Now as rafters are for the strength and support of buildings, so are the ordinances to the church of Christ; by them oftentimes saints are supported and refreshed; and, whilst they are waiting on Christ in them, they renew their strength, they mount up with wings as eagles, they run and are not weary, they walk and faint not, as it is promised to them in <sup><2418></sup>Isaiah 40:31.

Now these rafters are said to be of fir. The word is only used in this place, and is so rendered by Arias Montanus, Pagnine, and others, and is so understood by most of the Jewish writers; <sup>f187</sup> the word being by the change of a single letter, to wit, **ç** into **t**, which is used in the Chaldee and Syriac languages, the same with that which is commonly used for the fir; and this, Pliny says, <sup>f188</sup> is the best and strongest wood for roofing or faltering’: now these rafters, the ordinances of the gospel, may be said to be of this, because,

**1.** The fir-tree is *hilaris aspeceu* <sup>f189</sup> of a pleasant, chearful, and delightful look; the ordinances of the gospel are exceeding delightful to believers, when they have the presence of Christ with them, and the communications of his love unto them; then are those tabernacles amiable and lovely; wisdom’s ways are then ways of pleasantness; their souls are filled with joy and pleasure; nothing so desirable to them as these, neither does any thing give them such satisfaction and contentment; and therefore with the disciples they think it is good for them to be here, and would always abide under such a roof as this, whose rafters are of fir.

**2.** It is a very shady tree, *folio pinnato densa, ut umbres non transmittat;* <sup>f190</sup> at is so thick with leaves, that it will not let through showers of rain: the ordinances of Christ are a delightful shade, under which saints oftentimes sit with pleasure, have much spiritual consolation and refreshment; in which, being protected from the enemies of their souls, they serve the Lord with liberty and enlargement of heart.

3. It is always green, <sup>f191</sup> and never casts its leaf, and therefore is called the 'green fir-tree,' in <sup>3848</sup> Hosea 14:8. Ordinances are those green pastures, into which the great Shepherd leads his sheep, and in which he causes them to lie down; which being blessed and owned by the Spirit of grace unto believers, make them fat and flourishing, fruitful in every good work, even in old age; so that their leaf does not wither in the winter season.

Others think that the cypress-tree is here intended, and so read the words, and our rafters or galleries of cypress; so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Tugurine versions, David de Petals, and others. Now these rafters may be said to be of this wood, because the cypress-wood <sup>f192</sup> is very lasting and durable; it admits of no worms, it will not rot, nor is it sensible of old age; which may be expressive of the durableness and continuance of gospel ordinances, until the second coming of Christ; for as long as Christ has an house on earth, these cypress-rafters will last, it will never need new roofing; as long as there is a church, there will be those ordinances, Which are now in force, and will continue so to the end of time, without any change or alteration in them. This wood is also of a very pleasant smell; <sup>f193</sup> which may signify the delight and pleasure which believers take in ordinances, and how grateful they are to them.

Others think that the brutine-tree is meant; so Ainsworth, Brightman, Junius, Cocceis, and Michaelis; and it may be that which Pliny <sup>f194</sup> calls *bruta*, which some take to be the tree of Paradise; and its name is near in sound to the Hebrew word *brotim* here used, the singular of which is *brot*; which, Pliny says, is much like the cypress, and of a smell like cedar; and being applied to the ordinances of the gospel, may signify, as before, the durableness and delightfulness of them; and now who but would desire to dwell in such an house, and under such a roof as this? What encouragement is here, and what an inducement should this be, to souls to come into the house of the Lord, and wait upon him there, the beams of whose house are cedar, and the rafters of fir?



## CHAPTER 2.

Here begins a new colloquy between Christ and his church; in which they alternately set forth the excellencies of each other, and express their mutual affection for, and the delight and pleasure they take in each other's company. Christ seems to begin, in an account of himself and his own excellencies, and of the church in her present state, verses 1, 2. Then she in her turn praises him, and commends him above all others; relates some clear proofs she had of his love to her, and communion with him in his house and ordinances, to such a degree as to overcome her, verses 3-6. and then either he or she gives a charge to the daughters of Jerusalem, not to disturb either the one or the other in their sweet repose, verse 7. Next the church relates how she heard the voice of Christ, and had a sight of him on the hills and mountains at some distance; then more nearly behind her wall, and through the lattices, verses 8, 9, and expresses the very words in which he spake to her, and gave her a call to come away with him; making use of arguments from the season of the year, the signs of which are beautifully described, verses 10-13, and requests that she would come out of her solitude, that he might enjoy her company, whose countenance and voice were so delightful to him; and gives a charge to her and her friends, to seize on such as were hurtful and prejudicial to their mutual property, verses 14, 15, and she closes the chapter with expressing her faith of interest in Christ; and with a petition for his speedy approach to her, and continued presence with her, verses 16, 17.

### VERSE 1.

*I am the rose of Sharon; and the lily of the vallies.*

HERE begins a new colloquy between Christ and his church, in which they alternately set forth the praises and excellencies of each other, discover the strength of their mutual affection, and express the delight and pleasure they take in each other's company: but who begins this colloquy is not so easily determined. What is here said, may be applied either to Christ or to the church; and therefore I shall consider the words in both senses.

**First,** The words may be considered, as the words of the church, expressing the excellency of her grace, loveliness, and beauty, which she had received from Christ; and at the same time intimating her being

exposed in the open field and low rallies to many dangers and enemies; and therefore tacitly desires his protection over her, which he seems to promise in verse 2. That these are the words of the church, seems to be the general opinion of the Jewish doctors, <sup>f195</sup> and is also embraced by some Christian interpreters. <sup>f196</sup> And,

**1st**, The church may be compared to ‘the rose,’

**1.** For beauty; it is called the beautiful flower <sup>f197</sup> its color is beautiful and delightful: the figure is exceeding just; nothing is more common in poems of this kind, than to set forth the beauty of women by the rose; such as Hero, <sup>f198</sup> Aspasia, <sup>f199</sup> and others; some have had the name of Rhoda from hence; and Helena for her beauty was called **Ποδοχρως** <sup>f200</sup> The church may be fitly compared to it; no ‘rose of Sharon’ can be more beautiful in color, and delightful to the eye, than the church is in the eyes of Christ; as she is clothed with his pure and spotless righteousness, adorned with the graces of his Spirit, and standing at his right-hand in cloth of gold, bespangled with the sparkling gems of divine grace; her beauty is desirable to him, she being in his eye “the fairest among women.”

**2.** For its sweet odor; <sup>f201</sup> the church and all believers are as the fragrant and sweet-smelling rose; their persons are so as considered in Christ; and all their graces, especially when in exercise; and all their duties and services, when performed in faith, and perfumed with Christ’s mediation; see chapter 4:10, <sup><1008></sup>Philippians 4:18, <sup><1008></sup>Revelation 5:8, and 8:3, 4.

**3.** For its delight in sunny places; <sup>f202</sup> it thrives and flourishes the best there, and has the most fragrant smell: Christ is ‘the sun of righteousness,’ under whose warming, comforting and refreshing beams, believers delight to be, and under which their souls grow, thrive, blossom exceedingly, and bring forth much fruit.

**4.** For its blossoming and flourishing, ‘the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;’ the church may be said to do so, when there is a large increase of members, and these much in the exercise of grace, and ‘fruitful in every good work;’ then may the church be said to be as the blossoming rose.

**2dly**, She may be compared to the ‘lily of the rallies:’ some women have their name from the lily, as Susanna; and so Sysigambis is the name of the mother of Darius <sup>f203</sup> which signifies the *white lily* <sup>f204</sup> to which for beauty women are sometimes compared; and with propriety enough may the

church be called a lily. <sup>f205</sup> She is compared to the ‘lily among thorns’ in the next verse, and saints are frequently compared to lilies in this Song. And,

**1.** She may be likened to a lily for the glory, beauty and sweet odor of it. Christ says, <sup><4063></sup> Matthew 6:29, of the lilies of the field, that ‘Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these;’ and for the same reasons that she is compared to the beautiful and sweet smelling rose, is she likewise to the lily; which Pliny <sup>f206</sup> says, *rosae nobilitate proximum est*, ‘is next in nobleness and excellency to the rose.’

**2.** For its whiteness; there are various sorts of lilies, and they are of different colors; some are of red and purple colors, others are white; and it seems to be the white lily which is intended here, for this seems best to express her beauty; for the red rose and the white lily make her look somewhat like her beloved, ‘white and ruddy,’ a perfect beauty; and of the white lily, Pliny <sup>f207</sup> says, *candor ejus eximius*, that ‘its whiteness is singularly excellent; the church, and all believers in Christ, are very aptly resembled by the white lily, who are clothed with ‘fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints,’ wrought out by Christ, imputed by God the Father, and laid hold on by faith; this is so exceeding white, that being arrayed with it, they are all fair, and ‘there is no spot in them.’

**3.** For its fruitfulness; Pliny <sup>f208</sup> says, *nihil est foecundius, us radice quinquagenos saepe emittente bulbos*: ‘nothing is more fruitful, for oftentimes one root sends forth fifty bulbs:’ and as fruitful are believers when the Sun of righteousness shines upon them, and Christ is as the dew unto them; for then ‘they grow as the lily, and cast forth their roots as Lebanon; their branches spread, and their beauty is as the olive tree.’ The church brings forth many souls to Christ; and these bring forth much fruit, to the glory both of him and his father.

**4.** For its height, for which it is commended: the lily grows very high; Pliny <sup>f209</sup> says, *nec ulli florum excelsitar major, interdiu cubitorum trium*; ‘no flower exceeds it in height; for in the day-time,’ (that is, when it erects itself,) ‘it is three cubits high.’ Believers are trees of righteousness; and plants of Christ’s Father’s planting, which do not run along the ground, and cleave to earthly things, but lift up their heads heavenwards, and grow up on high in their desires and affections, having their hearts above, where their treasure is: believers are like the flowers of the lily, open towards heaven, but shut towards the earth.

**5.** For the weakness of its body, and largeness of its head: Pliny <sup>f210</sup> says of the lily, *languido semper collo et non sufficiente capitis oneri*; that it has ‘a weak neck, or body, which is not sufficient to bear the weight of the head.’ Christ is the head of the body, the church, and far greater than that; he is not supported by it, but he supports it: the church’s strength lies in her head, as Samson’s did in his locks; she is weak in herself, but strong in Christ her head, and therefore says, ‘surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.’

**6.** The church may be compared, not only to a lily, but to ‘a lily of the vallies:’ there is a lily which is called *lilium convallium*, ‘the lily of the vallies:’ but this seems not so much to intend the distinguishing name of some particular lily, as it does the place where it grows. And,

**1.** Vallies are low places; and, when the church is called ‘the lily of the rallies,’ it may be expressive of the low estate and condition which she is sometimes in: believers are Christ’s myrtle-trees, and these are sometimes in the bottom, in a low condition; but he grants his presence with them, and the discoveries of his love to them; they are his doves, and they are often ‘like doves of the rallies, mourning every one for their iniquity, being humbled and, pressed down in their souls under a sense of sin and unworthiness; they are not only humble in themselves, and low in their own eyes, but are often in the deeps of affliction, sorrow, and distress, and out of these depths cry unto the Lord; see ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 130:1.

**2.** Lilies that grow in the rallies are exposed to danger; they are liable to be plucked up by every one that passes by, to be trodden upon, and eaten by the beasts that feed there, and also to be washed away, and destroyed by hasty showers of rain, that run from the hills and mountains down into the vallies with force and violence; so the church of Christ here on earth, in her low estate, is exposed to the rage of her adversaries, to be trodden under the feet, and torn in pieces by the teeth of those bulls of Bashan, that beset her around, and to be carried away by the flood of persecution, which ‘Satan the old serpent casts out of his mouth after her.’ Now it is a glorious instance of God’s mighty grace and power in protecting and defending his church, that this lily grows and abides in the rallies, notwithstanding all this danger.

**3.** Lilies of the rallies have more moisture, verdure, and greenness in them, than those upon the hills and mountains; because the sun has not

that power over them, as R. Sol. Jarchi observes, to scorch and dry them up, and therefore are much more beautiful and excellent: so believers, being planted by ‘rivers of water,’ are green, flourishing, and fruitful; whilst others look like ‘the heath in the desert,’ dried and parched up. Christ is to the saints as ‘rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land;’ by the one he refreshes them, and makes them fruitful; and by being the other he shades from that which would scorch them, and make them barren and unfruitful: and thus is the church the ‘lily of the vallies,’ as well as ‘the rose of Sharon.’ And the Targum here renders it, ‘the rose in the plain of the garden of Eden;’ and some interpreters think the rose is meant; and we sometimes read of roses in vallies <sup>f211</sup> and certain it is there were roses in the vale of Sharon. But,

**Secondly,** The more commonly received opinion is, that these words are the words of Christ, owning all the glory and praises the church had given him in the former chapter, and setting forth more largely the beauties and excellencies of his person, the more to affect, enamor, and ravish her soul, and make her seek and long for him: and indeed it seems best to understand them of Christ, for self-commendation does not so well agree with the church as with him. What Solomon says, <sup>217D</sup>Proverbs 27:2, is worth regarding, ‘let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips:’ though it is lawful for the saints to speak of their glory, beauty, and excellency, as considered in Christ, in order to magnify the riches of his grace, for the instruction and encouragement of others, and in vindication of themselves against the calumnies of the world, and to obviate their mistakes concerning them, as in chapter <sup>210E</sup>1:5, she says, ‘I am black but comely;’ but her chief province and design in this Song appears to be, to set forth his praises, and not her own; and indeed the majesty and agreeableness of the stile with Christ’s language in the New Testament, such as, ‘I am the door, I am the good shepherd, I am the vine, I am the way, the truth, and the life,’ etc. as well as the connection of the words with the following verse, as one well observes, <sup>f212</sup> manifestly bespeak them to be the words of Christ, who may very well be called,

**1st,** ‘The rose of Sharon.’ Christ fitly compares himself to a rose, which, as Bishop Patrick observes, is still one of the goodliest things to which a great prince can be likened in those Eastern countries; and gives an instance of it in the great Mogul complimenting one of our kings, as being like a rose in a garden: in the Misnah, <sup>f213</sup> mention is made of the king’s lily, or the king’s

rose, being the king of flowers, and fit for a King, and an emblem of one; so the men of the great congregation of Ezra are compared to roses, in the Targum of <sup><2100></sup>Song of Solomon 7:2 and the ancestors of Melissus the Theban, after many calamities, are compared to the flourishing rose, for the height of honor and power they arrived unto. <sup>f214</sup> Nor is this simile unfitly used by the bridegroom of himself, since it is sometimes given to men by their lovers; <sup>f215</sup> and is very properly used in a Song of love, as this is; seeing the rose, as Philostratus calls it, is *ερωτος φυτον*, *the plant of love*; and Anacreon calls it *το ροδον των ερωτων*, *the rose of loves*: it was sacred to love; the graces are represented, one of them as having a rose, another a myrtle-branch; <sup>f216</sup> and a crown of roses was consecrated to the muses; <sup>f217</sup> all this because of the beauty and loveliness of the plant. And to it Christ may be compared,

**1.** Because of its red color; which may be expressive of the truth of his humanity, and signify that he is really and truly man. having ‘taken part of the same flesh and blood,’ that his people are partakers of; as also of his bloody sufferings in the same nature, on the account of which he is said to be ‘red in his apparel:’ likewise both these together, the red rose and the white lily, make up that character which is given him, chapter <sup><2150></sup>5:10 that he is ‘white and ruddy,’ a compleat beauty, like the charming lily and blushing rose, ‘fairer than the children of men.’

**2.** He may be compared to the rose for its sweet smell, as for the same reason he is in the former chapter to spikenard, myrrh, and camphire; his person, sacrifice, grace and righteousness, have a delightful odor in them; no rose smells so sweet, as Christ does to believers; this Sharon-rose refreshes them, quickens their spiritual senses, and ravishes and delights their souls.

**3.** The rose is of a cooling nature, <sup>f218</sup> and therefore useful in burning fevers, inflammations, etc. Christ, by the effusion of his blood, by the oblation of himself, and by his dying in the room and stead of sinners, has appeased and removed his Father’s fierce and burning wrath from them; and it is only an application of this Sharon-rose, the person, blood and righteousness of Christ, which can cool and comfort the conscience of a sinner set on fire, and terrified by the law of God; the discoveries of his love and grace can only remove those dreadful terrors, and fire of divine wrath, which is kindled by a ‘fiery law,’ and cure those inflammations raised thereby.

4. He is called ‘the Rose of Sharon,’ for the excellency of it; the roses which grew there perhaps were the best of any. Sharon is the name of a fruitful plain or country, where herds and flocks were kept, as appears from <sup><1379></sup>1 Chronicles 27:29, <sup><238D></sup>Isaiah 35:2, and <sup><236D></sup>65:10; this plain or country lay between Caesarea and Joppa, beginning at Lydda; hence they are joined together; <sup><4085></sup>Acts 9:35, and reaching to the Mediterranean sea: hence the Jews in their writings say <sup>f219</sup> from Lydda to the sea in the vale; and this was so very fruitful, that the Targumist on this place renders it, ‘the garden of Eden:’ and Sharon is described in the Jewish map <sup>f220</sup> as fat and fertile, having in it very desirable fields, fruitful vines, and abounding with flowers and roses. There are various sorts of roses in different places, some better than others; those of the first class with the Greeks <sup>f221</sup> were those of Olenum, and next those of Megara Nisea, and then those of Phaselis, and then of others; with the Romans, the best were those of Praeneste and Campania, and then others: <sup>f222</sup> but of the roses in Judea, the rose of Sharon seems to have been the best, and therefore to that the comparison is made; there was a garden of roses in Jerusalem <sup>f223</sup> but not to them, but to those in Sharon is the allusion. The word for a rose is only used in this place and in <sup><238E></sup>Isaiah 35:1 and is so called, either from the collection and compression of leaves in it, or from the shadow of it; for the word seems to be compounded of one that signifies to *hide* and *cover*, and another that signifies *a shadow*; so Gussetius <sup>f224</sup> and so may be rendered, ‘the covering shadow:’ but why a rose should be so called is not easy to say; unless it can be thought to have the figure of an umbrella, or that the rose of Sharon was so large as to be remarkable for its shadow, like that Montfaucon <sup>f225</sup> saw in a garden at Ravenna, under the shadow of the branches of which more than forty men could stand. Christ is sometimes compared to trees for their shadow, which is pleasant and reviving, as in verse 3. <sup><284D></sup>Hosea 14:7, but he here seems to be compared to the rose of Sharon on another account, even the excellency and fragrancy of it; for, Pliny says <sup>f226</sup> that the rose does not delight in fat soils, rich clays, or well-watered grounds, but thrives the best in poor lean ground; and that those are of the sweetest smell which grow in dry places, for *ruderatam agrum amat*, ‘it loves rubbish earth.’ Now such dry and rubbish earth was that which was about the city of Sharon; for we read of such a place as inhabited, <sup><4085></sup>Acts 9:35 as the Talmudic doctors assert; who also tell us <sup>f227</sup> that those who built a brick house in Sharon, had no benefit of the law, mentioned in <sup><611B></sup>Deuteronomy 20:3 because the earth thereabout was not fit to make bricks of, nor would houses made of them continue long.

Hence they also say <sup>f228</sup> that the high priest, on the day of atonement, prayed particularly for the Sharonites, that their houses might not become their graves. Now these being the best and sweetest roses which grew in this soil, and Christ being compared to one of them, denotes the excellency and preferableness of Christ to all others.

Some <sup>f229</sup> think that some other plant or flower is here intended; the Targum renders it, ‘the narcissus;’ of which some are white, having white leaves surrounding a yellow flower <sup>f230</sup> and some of a purple color <sup>f231</sup> and which Pliny <sup>f232</sup> calls purple lilies: he says <sup>f233</sup> there are two sorts of them, one that has a purple flower, and the other is of the grass kind; some, he says <sup>f234</sup> have a white flower and a purple cup. The heathens used to call the narcissus the ancient crown of their superior deities <sup>f235</sup> and it was reckoned a beautiful flower, and of a sweet smell <sup>f236</sup> and for beauty Christ may be compared unto it: its white color may denote the purity of Christ; and the purple, his royalty, or rather his purple blood and sufferings of death. The Septuagint translate the words thus, ‘I am the flower of the field;’ as do also the Vulgate Latin and Pagnine. Now Christ may be called so,

**1.** Κατ' ἐξοχην, by way of eminency, as being the chiefest and most excellent flower in the field; there is no such flower in the heavenly paradise as he is; among all the holy angels and glorified saints, there are none to be compared with him; and in his garden here below, no such flower grows as this; he is ‘the flower,’ the choicest, the best, and the most excellent in the whole field or garden.

**2.** The flower of the field is liable to be plucked up or trodden under feet by beasts; Christ was exposed to the rage and fury of his enemies, those ‘strong bulls of Bashan’ of which he complains, <sup><8213></sup>Psalm 22:13, 14. This sweet flower was laid hold on by ‘wicked hands,’ and cropped; and still his precious person, blood and righteousness, are slighted, contemned, and ‘trodden under foot’ by Christless and unconverted sinners.

**3.** This may be expressive of the meanness of Christ in the esteem of the world; a field-flower is little regarded; Christ is as ‘a root out of a dry ground,’ and therefore they say, ‘he hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him: hence he is despised and rejected of men,’ they not knowing the real worth and value of this precious flower; see <sup><2512></sup>Isaiah 53:2, 3.



**4.** The flower of the field is not of man's planting, nor is it raised by his care and industry: Christ was conceived in the womb of a virgin, and born of her without the help of man; as the flower of the field, he had no father but his Father in heaven, and no mother but the virgin on earth; and so was Melchisedek's antitype, 'without father as man, and without mother as God.'

**5.** The flower of the field is open to all; whoever will may come to Christ for life and salvation; there is liberty of access to all sorts of sinners, to come to him and partake of his sweetness and benefits; he is not a flower in an inclosed garden, that cannot be come at, but stands in the open field; every sinner that labors under a sense of sin, and is heavy laden with the weight and burden of it, may come to him, and not fear a rejection from him; he is not 'a fountain sealed, but opened to the house of David, and inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.'

**2dly,** Christ may be very well compared to 'the lily of the vallies,'

**1.** For its whiteness; the lily, as has been already observed, is exceeding white, which may intend the purity and holiness of Christ, who both in nature and life is 'holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; he is the lamb without blemish and without spot,' without the blemish of original or spot of actual sin; for he never knew it in his nature, nor did he ever commit it in his life, either in thought, word, or deed: or else the whiteness of the lily may signify his eternity; for so his head and his hairs are described by John, <sup><0114></sup>Revelation 1:14 to be 'white like wool, as white as snow;' which represents him as the ancient of days, and as existing from everlasting to everlasting.

**2.** For its tallness; the lily grows up very high, as has been taken notice of Christ, as mediator, is 'the rock that is higher than we are; from whence the waters of divine grace flow, to the refreshment of our souls, when overwhelmed 'he is higher than the kings of the earth; nay, he is higher than the heavens,' and all the angels there; for he is 'set far above all principality and power, and night, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come,' <sup><0121></sup>Ephesians 1:21.

**3.** For its fruitfulness; the lily is very fruitful, as has been before observed. Christ is 'filled with all the fruits of righteousness,' and is possessed of all the blessings of grace; he is like a tree richly laden with fruit, and therefore

is compared to an apple tree, in verse 3. all the church's fruit and fruitfulness come from him; he is the green fir-tree, from whom all her 'fruit is found.'

**4.** He may be compared to the lily for its excellency and glory; it being the next flower to the rose, and which is preferred by Christ to the glory of Solomon. Christ is the brightness of his father's glory; is now, in our nature, 'crowned with glory and honor;' and will shortly appear in his own glory, and in the glory of his Father, and of the holy angels.

**5.** He may be said to be the lily of the vallies, because of his wonderful humility and condescension, in assuming our nature, suffering in our stead, and in humbling himself unto the death of the cross for us; his whole life was one continued series of humility, as was his death an undeniable instance of it: Christ here on earth did not appear as the lofty cedar, but as the lowly lily, and that not of the mountains, but of the vallies; and it is with humble souls he delights to dwell; for though he is the high and lofty one, in his divine nature, yet he condescends to dwell with such who are of an humble and contrite spirit.

## VERSE 2.

*As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.*

THOUGH it may not be so evident whose are the former words, whether Christ's or the church's, yet these manifestly appear to be his: and if we take the preceding verse as the words of the church, then we may consider this as the words of Christ, either owning and confirming what she had said of herself in it; as that she was indeed the most beautiful of all the roses and lilies which grew in fields and vallies, and that all others were but like thorns and briars when compared to her; and also, at the same time that he owns and commends her beauty, puts her in mind of her present state and condition in this life, as being attended with afflictions, sorrows, and sufferings: or else the words may be regarded as the answer <sup>†237</sup> of Christ to her complaint in the former verse, where she says, that she was indeed the blushing rose and charming lily, but then she was as the rose and lily in the open fields and vallies, liable to be plucked up by every one that passed by, and to be devoured or trodden under feet by the beasts of the field; to this Christ replies here, by owning it all to be true, and promising that he will keep and preserve her safe in the midst of her enemies, 'as the lily among thorns;' nay, that her very enemies should be her protection, these thorns

should be as an hedge about her. But if we take the former verse: o be the words of Christ, which seems most agreeable, then we are to consider these as his also; who, having in the former verse set forth his own beauties and excellencies, which was proper to be done in the first place, does in this set forth his church's, in which may be observed,

**I.** What he compares her to; 'a lily among thorns.'

**II.** The title which he gives her, 'my love;' which discovers his regard unto her, and affection for her.

**III.** Her excellency and preferableness to all others in his esteem.

**I.** The church is here compared by Christ to 'a lily among thorns.' The Targum renders it, *the rose*; and so it is in Zohar; <sup>f238</sup> and that this is intended, some strenuously contend for, which, and not the lily, they say, grows among thorns: Ainsworth would have what we call the *woodbind* or *honey-suckle* here meant, which grows in hedges; and indeed this is sometimes called *lilium inter spinas*, 'the lily among thorns' <sup>f239</sup> to which the church may be compared, because of its sweet smell; the flower of it gives an exceeding sweet smell; and makes those fields where it grows in abundance very delightful: believers in their persons, grace, and conversation, are like the 'smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed;' being clothed with the sweet-smelling garments of Christ's righteousness, and anointed with the savory ointments of the Spirit's grace. Also the woodbind or honey-suckle cannot bear up itself, but has its depeadance on others; it does not grow up erect, but for its support wraps itself about the body, branches and twigs of other trees, *convolvens se adminiculis quibuscunque*, as Pliny <sup>f240</sup> observes; therefore we call it *woodbind*, from its *binding* about other trees; and for the same reason it is in Greek called *periclymenon*, which is also used by Latin writers: believers are weak, and cannot support themselves, and therefore by faith lean on Christ, who is their beloved; and are upheld by him with the right-hand of his righteousness; they cleave close unto him, and depend upon him for all grace here, and for glory hereafter. But the word will very well bear to be translated *a lily*, being the same that is so in the former verse; where it has been shewn in what sense the church may be compared to one; and therefore I shall only observe,

**1.** That Christ and the church bear the same names; Is he a lily? so is she; the church being married to Christ, and they too becoming one flesh, have one and the same name; hence the church is called *Christ*, <sup><6121></sup>1 Corinthians 12:12, so the same name, *Jehovah, our righteousness*, which Christ is called by, <sup><2276></sup>Jeremiah 23:6, is given to her in chapter <sup><2336></sup>33:16. Again, Christ is called *Israel*, <sup><2340></sup>Isaiah 49:3, which is the name of his church and people; for being espoused together, and having partook of each other's natures, they also bear each other's names.

**2.** That there is a very great likeness and near resemblance between Christ and his church; for when he says, she is 'as the lily,' he means, she is as himself, who is 'the lily of the vallies,' verse 1. and therefore, as one well observes <sup>f241</sup> he does not say she is the lily, but as or like the lily; for as he is; so are we, that is, believers, in this world. Christ and the church are both lilies in God's eye, and are loved by him with the same love: believers bear the image of Christ, wear his righteousness, have the same spirit, though in measure, and are exposed to the same hatred, malice, and persecution of the world, being wounded with those thorns even as he was: and they shall be much more like him in another world; for they shall then be like him, and see him as he is; they shall then have everlasting and transforming views of him, which will change them into the same image, from glory to glory; for as they will then have more communion with him, so they will have a greater conformity to him, who is 'the first-born among many brethren.'

**3.** That all the church's beauty and loveliness come from Christ: it is because he is the lily, that she looks like one; her beauty is not natural to her, but is derived from him, who is her head and husband; she is indeed a perfect beauty, but then it arises from that comeliness Which he has put upon her.

Moreover she is not only said to be as the lily, but 'as the lily among thorns.' By thorns may be meant,

**1.** Wicked and ungodly men, sons of Belial, which are 'as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands,' <sup><1276></sup>2 Samuel 23:6, these, like thorns and briars, are the curse of the earth; are worthless and unfruitful in themselves, and hurtful and grieving to the saints: David, Isaiah, and others have complained of them; righteous Lot was pricked with these thorns; his soul was vexed and grieved from day to day with their unlawful deeds: also like thorns, their end is to be burned, and that by

the fierceness and fury of God's wrath, who says, in <sup>2270b</sup>Isaiah 27:4 'Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together;' which he will do at the last day, when he will bind up those thorns in bundles, and cast them into 'the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone;' where 'the people shall be as the burnings of lime; as thorns cut up, shall they be burnt in the fire;' the terror of which sometimes surprises the sinners in Zion, who therefore say, 'who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?' <sup>233D</sup>Isaiah 33:12-14.

**2.** By thorns may be meant the reproaches, revilings, and persecutions of wicked men, whereby they afflict and disturb the saints; the Targum explains these thorns, of the wicked edicts and decrees of princes, by which the congregation of Israel was oppressed in captivity: the prophet Ezekiel is encouraged by the Lord faithfully to deliver his message to the people of Israel, the briars and thorns were with him, and though he had his dwelling among scorpions, that is, though he was reproached, reviled, and persecuted by them for it. Christ's lily in all ages has more or less been attended with, and has grown up, among such thorns as these; for every, one that will live godly in Christ Jesus. shall suffer persecution of one kind or another; and yet they abide like 'the lily among thorns,' in their faith, purity, and holiness; so that neither the frowns nor flatteries of the world can prevail upon them to desert the Redeemer's interest, forsake the gospel, nor turn aside from the true worship of God; to which agrees R. Sol. Jarchi's gloss on the text, which is this: 'As the lily among thorns, which prick it, yet stands continually in its beauty and redness; so is my love among the daughters, who intice her to follow after them, and go a whoring after other gods, but yet continues in her religion.'

**3.** By thorns may be meant heretics and heretical doctrines, which pierce, prick, and grieve the children of God: now these false teachers, these wolves in sheeps clothing, may be known by their fruits, which are none at all, that are good for any thing; for, 'do men gather grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles!' there is no fruit of faith, sound doctrine, or a gospel-conversation to be found upon them; but are like unfruitful thorns, whom God suffers to grow up in his churches, that those which are filled with the fruits of righteousness might be made manifest; and in all ages, more or less, Christ's lily, the church, has grown up among, and been pricked by, and pestered with such thorns as these.

4. The corruptions of our nature may be called so: these Canaanites remaining in the land, dwelling in our hearts, are pricks in our eyes, and thorns in our sides; these grieve and disturb us, and they make us groan with the anguish our souls are filled with by them. Perhaps the breaking forth of some corruption is intended by the thorn in the flesh, and messenger of Satan, that the apostle speaks of, <sup><4713></sup>2 Corinthians 12:7, though the temptations of Satan may also be called by these names, which often give the saints a great deal of uneasiness, and throw them into much heaviness; and it may be that both the corruption of nature, and the temptations of Satan, which the apostle might labor under, are intended; and the thorn in the flesh may be expressive of the breaking out of some corruption; and the messenger of Satan may intend his temptations, by which it was stirred up and encouraged: though I rather think that both phrases are only expressive of the corruption of nature, which was wont to be called by the Jews, *the messenger of hell*; a phrase much like this used by the apostle. So in Mi-rash Hanneelam <sup>f242</sup> we read that R. Hona, in his sermons, used to advise persons thus, ‘O ye children of men, take care of the messenger of hell: but who is this? The evil imagination, (by which the Jews always intend the vitiosity of nature) is the messenger of hell. Now this being a phrase that was well known, the apostle adds it by way of opposition to the thorn in the flesh, as explanative of it, Moreover, world]y cares are compared to thorns which choke the word; they are pernicious .to saints, and make them barren and unfruitful, as well as grieve and disturb them, <sup><0132></sup>Matthew 13:22, but tho’ Christ’s lilies here on earth grow up among, and are annoyed by those thorns of sin and corruption; yet when they are transplanted into Christ’s garden above, ‘there shall be no more a pricking briar, nor a grieving thorn,’ to give them the least disturbance.

II. Whilst Christ is comparing his church to a ‘lily among thorns,’ he gives her a loving and affectionate title, *my love*, which has been already explained in chapter <sup><2100></sup>1:9 and his mentioning it here shews, that even in her present state and condition she was a beauty in his eye; and that her being among thorns, was so far from detracting from it, that it rather served as a foil to set it off the more; as also, that she was still the object of his love, though in the midst of wicked and ungodly men, men of unclean lips and lives, haters of peace, religion, and godliness; though she was reviled, reproached, and persecuted. by them, yet she was loved, valued, and esteemed by him; nay, though she was attended with many infirmities, sins, and corruptions, that were grieving to her, and dishonoring to him,

yet neither these, nor any thing else, should ever separate her from his love: she was Christ's love and lily still, tho' among thorns. The lily is often made use of in this love-song, to set forth the beauty of the church and of the saints in the eye of Christ; and his great love. to them, and delight in them, and very justly <sup>f243.</sup>

**III.** He sets forth her excellency and preferableness to all the daughters. By whom we are to understand the nations and men of the world; for it is usual in the Hebrew tongue to call the inhabitants of countries the daughters thereof; thus we read of the daughters of Tyre, Edom, Babylon, etc. none of which are to be compared with the church; these are like thorns to Christ's lily: or else carnal, hypocritical, and formal professors may be intended, whom she calls in chapter <sup>2006-</sup>1:6 *mother's children*; who made an external profession of religions but wanted that real and internal beauty which she was possessed of, and differed only in name from the rest of the sons and daughters of fallen Adam; but she, being distinguished by divine grace from them all, was preferable to them,

- 1.** In beauty; these looked like thorns, she like a lily; they were black and uncomely, she the perfection of beauty, and the fairest among women.
- 2.** In harmlessness; though there are thorns about, yet none upon the lily: ungodly persons are not only uncomely in themselves, but like thorns, pricking and hurtful to others; but as for the saints, they are 'blameless and harmless, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,' like lilies among thorns.
- 3.** In fruitfulness: no fruit grows on thorns, but on Christ's lilies grow all sorts of precious fruit; they are laden with them.
- 4.** In their last end Christ's lilies will be gathered by himself and his angels, and be put in his garden above; but the wicked, which are Satan's tares and thorns, shall be bundled together, and cast into everlasting burnings; the one being highly valued and prized by Christ. the other hated and rejected by him; for as much as the lily exceeds the thorns which grow about it, so much does the church of Christ excel the men of the world among; whom it is here on earth; and as there is a difference now between them, though growing up together, so there will be one, and that far greater and more visible when separated; the one will be everlastingly glorified, the other everlastingly punished.

### VERSE 3.

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.

CHRIST having commended the church in the former verse, and declared that she was as preferable to all others, as the lily was to the thorns; she in this verse returns the commendation to him, and asserts that he as much excelled all the sons, as the fruitful apple-tree did the wild and barren trees of the wood; <sup>f244</sup> and at the same time gives an account of that sweet experience she had of his excellency, preciousness, and usefulness to her. Now in the words may be observed,

**I.** A comparison which she makes of him to an apple-tree; in which she sets forth his excellency and preferableness to all others.

**II.** She instances in two particular things; in which, by good experience, she found him to be so to her own soul.

**First,** The shadow of this apple-tree was delightful to her; ‘I sat down under his shadow with great delight.’

**Secondly,** The fruit thereof was exceeding sweet to her; ‘his fruit was sweet to my taste.’

**I.** She compares him to an apple-tree, and that no doubt of the best sort. The Targum renders it, a *pome-citron*, or *citron-apple, tree*: which,

**1.** Is a very large tree; <sup>f245</sup> and so may be fitly used to express the greatness and excellency of Christ, who is possessed of all divine perfections, and is ‘over all, God blessed for ever.’ He is a Savior, and a great One; who has, as an instance of his great love, condescension and power, wrought out a great salvation for great sinners. He is an high priest, and he is a great one, both in the glory of his person, and in the virtue and efficacy of his sacrifice and intercession. He is the king of saints, and as such is higher than the kings of the earth: He is equal with God, therefore greater than angels, and more excellent than all the sons of men.

**2.** It is a very fruitful tree; it is sometimes so full of fruit, that it is even pressed down with the weight thereof <sup>f246</sup> and is, as Pliny says <sup>f247</sup> *omnibus boris pomifera*, ‘always hearing fruit:’ it has at one and the same time



flowers, ripe and unripe fruit; whilst some are putting forth, others are dropping off; so Christ abounds with the fruits of divine grace; he is not the barren fig-tree, but the green fir-tree, from whom our fruit is found, and that at all times; for he is that '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,' <sup>f247</sup> Revelation 22:2. Here may believers come at all times, and pluck and eat; for here is not any deficiency of fruit, it is always growing, always plucking, and yet never lessened.

**3.** The fruit of this tree <sup>f248</sup> is of a bitter taste, but of an exceeding sweet smell, as are also the leaves; which being put among garments, not only give them a delightful odor, but also drive away noxious creatures from them; for the same reason is Christ compared to myrrh in chapter <sup>f249</sup> 1:13; for tho' his sacrifice, death and sufferings, are sweet and savory, both to his Father and to his people, yet they were bitter unto him, who not only tasted of, but drank up the whole cup of his Father's wrath: and though the blessings which spring from hence are of a sweet smell, exceeding grateful and delightful to believers, yet are they enjoyed in this life with a variety of crosses, afflictions, and: tribulations; this passover-lamb is eaten with bitter herbs.

**4.** It is an excellent remedy against poison. <sup>f249</sup> Sin is that poison of asps which has infected all human nature, and spread itself over all the powers and faculties of the souls of men, as well as over all the members of their bodies: now Christ is the sovereign antidote against it; this fruit of the citron-apple-tree is the most pro, per remedy for it; his righteousness justifies, his blood cleanses, and his grace will eternally clear his people from their sins.

**5.** It is very good for shortness of breath, and to remove a stinking one; <sup>f250</sup> hence the Parthian nobles used to boil the kernels of it in their food for that purpose: it is the presence of Christ, and communion with him, that only can cure our panting souls when we are wearied, and almost out of breath in seeking him; and it is the sweet incense of his mediation that perfumes our prayers, which are the breath of our souls, and which otherwise would be so far from being grateful to God, that it would be strange unto him. And thus may Christ be compared to a citron-apple-tree; though perhaps the common apple-tree is here intended, which the Talmud <sup>f251</sup> interprets of the Israelites, but R. Aben Ezra understands it of the shecinah, as do the Targum and R. Sol. Jarchi of the holy and blessed God, and Lord of the

world; as also does R. Chaya, in the book Zohar: <sup>f252</sup> who says, that the congregation of Israel set forth the praises of the holy and blessed God by an apple, because of its colors, smell and taste; so the Cabalistic doctors interpret it of *tiphereth*, or the bridegroom,, because of the same. <sup>f253</sup> Christ is this shecinah, the holy and blessed God, and Lord of the world, who may be compared to an apple-tree,

(1.) Because it is a very fruitful tree. There are various sorts of fruit which it bears; Christ is full of fruit; he is Joseph's antitype, who is called 'a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the mall:' all the fruits of righteousness grow on him, every grace is in him; he is that 'tree of life which bears twelve manner of fruits;' there are justifying and pardoning grace, sanctifying and adopting grace in him; all that a believer can want here, and all that can make him happy hereafter: and as fruitful boughs bend downwards, being laden with fruit, and may be easily reached, so Christ, being full of grace and truth, gives to sinners the utmost liberty of access to him for grace from him; for though as God, he is 'the high and lofty one,' yet as man and mediator, he is meek and lowly, and condescends to take notice of, and admits into familiarity, poor, mean, and abject creatures; he gives them a gracious allowance to approach near unto him; that apple-tree, whose fruitful boughs of divine grace hang so low, that the hand of faith may easily reach them, where the poor sinner is heartily welcome to pluck and eat at pleasure.

(2.) It is of a very beautiful aspect when laden with fruit, and especially as growing among the trees of the forest. Some have thought that the fruit of this tree is what was forbidden our first parents; which being so 'pleasant to the eyes,' was a temptation to the woman to eat thereof; therefore is in Latin called *malum, evil*, because sin entered into the world hereby: though others think it was another sort of fruit. The Jewish writers differ much about it; some say it was the fig-tree, so R. Sol. Jarchi, and some others in R. Aben Ezra on ~~<ORIS>~~ Genesis 3:6 which they gather from Adam and Eve's immediate sewing of fig-leaves together, as soon as they had sinned, to cover themselves with: others, that it was the pome-citron, or citron-apple tree, so Baal Hatturim in ~~<ORIS>~~ Genesis 1:29 but the same author on ~~<ORIS>~~ Numbers 5:3, seems to intimate as if it was the grape, the fruit of the vine; which is also the opinion of the Jews in Zohar <sup>f254</sup> who think that it is particularly the black grape: though others have thought it to be the apple, as the

author of the old Nizzachon <sup>f255</sup> which was either his own and the opinion of some other Jews, or else he took it from the common notion of Christians. But whether it was the apple-tree or no, which was so pleasant and desirable to the eyes of the woman, yet it is certain that this is very pleasant and delightful to the sight, when laden with fruit. Christ as mediator is a beautiful sight to believers, as he stands in all his endearing characters and relations; as he may be viewed undertaking their cause, assuming their nature, suffering, bleeding, and dying in their stead, rising again for their justification, ascending into heavens and entering there with their names and persons upon his hearts and there ever living to make intercession for them: Christ, as possessed of all the blessings of the everlasting covenant, being the surety, mediator, and messenger of it., is exceeding delightful to the eye of faith; 'his glory is as the glory of the only begotten of the Fathers' when he appears to souls full of grace and truth.

**(3.)** The fruit which grows upon the apple-tree, as it is of various sorts, and of a beautiful aspect to the eye, so it is of a cooling and comforting nature. Christ has cooled, turned away, and appeased the fierceness of his father's fiery wrath, by his death and blood; and does by his mighty grace sweetly cool and refresh the heart of a poor sinner, inflamed by a fiery law, and commands serenity and peace in its conscience, filled with wrath and terror; and when his people are ready to faint and sink, he comforts them with his apples, the sweet discoveries of his love and grace, of which the church having had some experience, and desiring some renewed instances thereof, says, in verse 5 'comfort me with apples;' where I shall more largely take notice of this, as well as of their pleasant and delightful smell.

**(4.)** The apple-tree has been accounted an hieroglyphic of love; <sup>f256</sup> under it lovers used to meet, with the fruit thereof they entertained each other, under its delightful shade they sat; to which perhaps an allusion is not only made in this verse, but also in chapter <sup>238F</sup>8:5. 'I raised thee up under the apple-tree.' Christ and his church are throughout this song introduced as lovers, and the subject of their whole conversation is love: He who if the apple-tree is the church's beloved, whom she loves and prefers before all others; it is his love her soul is ravished with; his fruit she feeds upon; his shade that she with so much content and pleasure sits under, where she is delighted with his love and grace, and sensibly feels her soul all enamored with him, Some

other things might have been taken notice of, particularly the fruit and shadow of this tree, which are both mentioned in the text; but these will be considered under another head.

Now Christ, whom the church here compares to an apple-tree, is by her preferred to all others; and she signifies, that as much as the apple-tree excels the wild and unfruitful trees of the wood, so much does Christ excel all the sons: by whom may be meant either the angels, so the Targum, who are by creation the sons of God; but not in so high and eminent a sense as Christ is: he has a more excellent name and nature than they; as God, he is their Lord and Creator, and the object of their highest worship and adoration; and as Mediator, they are obliged unto him, being upheld and secured by his grace in that state wherein they are; and though in his human nature he was made a little lower than they, yet now in the very same nature he is exalted above them; for ‘to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit at my right-hand.’ Or else by them may be meant the saints, who are the sons of God by adopting grace: Christ, the eternal son of God has the preeminence in, and over these; he is their Creator and Redeemer, their lord and king, their head and husband, their everlasting father and glorious mediator, to whom they are infinitely obliged for all the needful supplies of grace here, and for all the glory they expect hereafter. Or else by them may be meant the men of the world, the sons of Adam; and these Christ infinitely excels, as much as the apple-tree does the trees of the wood; for he is ‘fairer than the children of men;’ there is none like him in all the armies of heaven, nor any to be compared with him among all the inhabitants of the earth; if both worlds were to be searched with the utmost scrutiny, not one single individual person could be found comparable to him: and perhaps, particularly by these may be meant the great princes and monarchs of the world, who are sometimes in scripture compared to large and lofty trees; see <sup>צמח</sup>Ezekiel 31:3, 5, 6, 8, <sup>צמח</sup>Daniel 4:20-22. But Christ is far preferable to these in beauty, glory and majesty; he is ‘higher than the kings of the earth, they receive their crowns and kingdoms from him;’ they are at his command, and under his dominion; he sets them up, and puts them down at pleasure; these must all submit to his awful judgment, even as the poorest peasant; and will be equally as fearful of ‘the great day of his wrath,’ which when come, they will call to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the face of this omnipotent Judge. Moreover, with respect to the saints, the fruits of Christ’s grace are to them far preferable to the kingdoms, crowns, and sceptres of the greatest monarchs,

nay, reproach, for Christ's sake, is more highly esteemed of by them, and accounted greater riches than all the treasures of this world. Though it seems as well to be understood in general of all wicked, Christless, and unconverted sinners, who are like to the trees of the wood, wild, barren, and unfruitful; and what fruit they do bring forth, is sour, wild, and unprofitable; and though like the trees of the wood, they may run up a great height, yet they shall be cut down and thrown into everlasting burnings: for, 'the ax is laid to the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire,' <sup><1180></sup>Matthew 3:10. Thus the church, by this comparison, sets forth the excellency and preferableness of Christ to all others. But,

**II.** She instances in two excellent properties of this apple-tree, of which she had had some comfortable experience.

**First,** The shade of it was delightful to her; 'I sat down under his shadow with great delight.'

**Secondly,** The fruit of it was sweet unto her; 'his fruit was sweet to my taste.'

**First,** The shade of this apple-tree was very delightful to her; 'I sat down under his shadow with great delight:' in which may be inquired, 1st, What is meant by the shadow under which she sat. 2dly, What her sitting there intends or supposes. 3dly, What she desired to sit there for. 4thly, From whence that pleasure and delight arose, which she was filled with.

**1st,** It will be proper to inquire what is meant by the shadow of Christ, under which she sat. Some <sup>f257</sup> have thought that the ceremonial law, with its festivals, is here intended, which was a shadow of good things to come, of which Christ was the sum and substance; under this shadow the Old Testament saints sat during the legal dispensation:, where their souls were much delighted and sweetly refreshed by viewing Christ, represented in the types and sacrifices of that law. The Targum understands it of the shadow of God's shechinah, or divine majesty, under which the congregation of Israel desired to sit, when God gave the law on mount Sinai: but that dispensation was not so desirable; the law which was then given, was a fiery one; and the words which were then spoke were such, that they that heard them, intreated that they should not be spoken to them any more: therefore it may be better understood of the gospel and the ordinances of it, than either of the moral or ceremonial law; under this refreshing shadow

saints delight to sit; here they enjoy sweet communion and fellowship with Christ; the sound of the gospel is joyful to them; the truths and doctrines of it are nourishing; the ordinances of it are comfortable and delightful; these tabernacles are amiable and lovely; and all wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness; and therefore it is no wonder that souls desire to sit under this shadow, and when they do, it is with delight.

Moreover, some <sup>f258</sup> think that an allusion is here made to the nuptial ceremony of spreading the skirt; used by the Jews at the time of marriage; of which, see <sup><R00></sup>Ruth 3:9 and to which an allusion is made in <sup><3108></sup>Ezekiel 16:8 or to that veil; which being borne up with four rods or staves, was carried over the heads of the new-married couple, at the time that the bridegroom brought home the bride into his own house, where the whole solemnity was finished; this nuptial ceremony perhaps may give the best light to <sup><0135></sup>Luke 1:35 'the Holy' Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee;' so that this phrase of sitting under Christ's shadow, may be expressive of the church's being married to Christ, and of that delightful communion which she enjoys with him as her husband, when brought home to his own house; of which we have an account an the next verse, where she is entertained after a noble manner; and has as much of his love manifested to her, as she is capable of bearing, nay so much, that she is overcome with it. But! rather think that the metaphor is continued from the former part of the verse; and that the allusion is made to the shadow of an apple-tree, such an one as Christ was; whose shadow arises from his person, blood and righteousness; which shadow is,

**1.** A protecting one from heat; such as Jonah's gourd was to him, or as the pillar of cloud was to the Israelites in the wilderness, or as a great rock to a weary traveler in a hot country. Christ and his righteousness are a shadow, which protect souls from the heat of his Father's wrath; he, by making atonement for sin, and satisfaction to divine justice, hath delivered his own people from the wrath to come, and will eternally screen them from it; for though showers of divine. wrath will fall on Christless sinners, yet those that are under this shadow of Christ's righteousness, shall not have one drop of it fall on them; for being justified by his blood, they shall be saved from wrath through him; also it is this, laid hold on by faith, which screens from the curses of a fiery law, and from the heat of that wrath which it sometimes works in the conscience; which is only rightly removed by the sprinklings of that blood which speaks peace and pardon, and by the

application of that righteousness which justifies from all sin, and produces a peace which passeth all understanding: likewise Christ is the shadow which protects and shelters from the fiery darts of Satan; he is as a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones, those fiends of hell, is as a storm against the wall; his blood and righteousness keep off Satan's fiery darts, preserve from his suggestions, and protect from the violence of his temptations; and the soul is still more secured by the prevalent mediation, and intercession of Christ in heaven, which is founded upon his blood and righteousness; so that what faith makes use of on earth to oppose to Satan's temptations, Christ does in heaven to secure his people from his false charges and accusations: to this might also be added, that he is the shadow which protects from the heat of persecution, under which he causes his flock to rest at noon; when this sun smites them with the greatest violence, he is then their shade on their right hand, so that the sun shall not smite them by day; and this is their comfort and support under all their fiery trials, that they have such a shadow to have recourse to.

**2.** It is also a refreshing one; for if it is a shadow from the heat of God's wrath, the terrors of the law, the temptations of Satan, and the persecutions of the world, it must needs be so; what can be more refreshing to a weary traveler, that is almost scorched, and ready to faint with heat, than a cooling and delightful shade? So refreshing is Christ to poor sinners, who is as 'the shadow of a great rock in a weary land;' nay, is a large spreading apple-tree, that at once furnishes them with an agreeable shelter and suitable provisions.

**3.** It is a fructifying one; the shadows of some trees, as Pliny <sup>f259</sup> informs us, are very hurtful and noxious to some plants that grow under them, and others are very nourishing and fructifying: Christ's shadow is such an one; for 'they that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine; the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon,' <sup><2848></sup>Hosea 14:8 and indeed all the fruitfulness of those who are the Lord's planting comes from Christ; for, unless they abide in and under him, they can bring forth no fruit. The shadows of some trees are injurious to men that lie under them; <sup>f260</sup> not so Christ's shadow; but there are others <sup>f261</sup> very delightful and wholesome, to which he may be compared.

**2dly,** It may also be inquired what her sitting under this shadow is expressive of, or does suppose. And,

1. It shews the sense she had of herself, and present condition, and the need she stood in of Christ as a shadow; she was not only scorched with the sun of persecution, with afflictions, temptations, etc. but she was likewise sensible thereof, and therefore betook herself to a proper shade.
  2. It manifestly appears from her sitting under this shadow, that she looked upon Christ to be a suitable one for her in such cases; and that as the idolaters in <sup><3013></sup>Hosea 4:13. sacrificed on mountains, and burnt incense under oaks, poplars and elms, 'because the shadow thereof was good;' so the church here sat under this shadow of Christ's, because she looked upon it to be a good one, and preferable to all others.
  3. It is expressive of her faith and confidence in Christ: the vain confidence of the Israelites in an arm of flesh, is called their 'trust in the shadow of Egypt,' <sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 30:2, 3. and the holy confidence and faith of God's children in him, is frequently called a 'trusting in the shadow of his wings;' see Psalm. 36:7 and 57:1 which seems to be the same with sitting under it here: the church did not sit idle under Christ, but her faith was in exercise upon him; and she was rejoicing alone in him, having 'no confidence in the flesh.'
  4. It seems to intimate that security, peace, quietness, and satisfaction of soul, she enjoyed; here she sat as under her own vine and fig-tree, and none to make her afraid; where, being safe and secure from all her enemies, she solaced herself under this delightful shade, enjoying much peace of conscience, and satisfaction of mind; for she did not sit here with any manner of uneasiness, but with the utmost delight and pleasure.
  5. It denotes her continuance here; faith takes up its dwelling in Christ; it will not move from hence, and is desirous of always enjoying sensible communion with him; 'he that dwelleth in the secret of the most high, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty,' <sup><1901></sup>Psalm 91:1. But,
- 3dly,** What was it she desired to sit here for? For thus may the words be rendered, 'I desired, and I sat down'; <sup>f262</sup> that is, I desired to sit down, and I did sit down, I had what I wished for; and what was that? no doubt, protection from heat, rest and refreshment for her weary and fainting soul; that she might be comforted with those apples which grew on this tree, and be revived by tasting of and feeding upon the sweet fruit thereof, as well as be comforted with its delightful shade.



**4thly**, She sat here with delight; and indeed it could not be otherwise when its shade was so agreeable, and the fruit so sweet: this pleasure and delight of hers arose from the enjoyment of Christ's presence, 'in whose presence is fullness of joy, and at whose right-hand are pleasures for evermore;' from the discoveries of his love to her soul, which is better than life, and all the comforts of it; and were had in the exercise of faith upon him, in the actings of which grace the soul is filled with 'joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

**Secondly**, The fruit of this apple-tree was sweet unto her taste: by this fruit are either meant the fruit of his doings, what his hands have wrought out, and his blood has procured for sinners, even all the blessings of grace, such as peace and reconciliation, justification, sanctification, pardon of sin, adoption, nearness of access to God, etc. or else, the fruit of his lips; such as his word and gospel, preached by himself, which is sweet to a believer's taste, and is preferred to his necessary food; his promises, which are exceeding great and precious, and are highly valued by believers, for his mouth is most sweet, from whence they proceed; and his ordinances and sacraments, in which they enjoy sweet communion with him, and have the discoveries of his love to their souls; and therefore 'are more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than the honey or the honey-comb.'

These are called his fruits; they are his in a covenant-way; all the blessings of grace, which make up the everlasting covenant, are in Christ's hands, and at his dispose, being placed there for that purpose by God the Father; and they are also his, being procured by him; for though they are all the gifts of free grace, yet are they all obtained by Christ, and come to us through his blood: likewise they may be said to be his, because in his possession; every grace in its fullness is in him, he is full of grace and truth, and is communicated to us from him, for from him all our fruit is found; remission of sin, justifying righteousness, adopting grace, etc. come to us through and by him; and we are indulged with the gospel-promises and ordinances, as instances of his grace to us.

Now these are all sweet to the taste of a believer, though not to a natural man who hath a vitiated taste, and calls evil good, and good evil; puts bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; he savors the things of the flesh; sin is his food, from whence he receives an imaginary pleasure; and therefore disrelishes all spiritual things, looks upon them as poor and insipid, and

finds no more taste in them than in the white of an egg; which arises from the predominancy of sin, that hinders from tasting any sweetness in divine things, and will do so whilst their taste remains in them; and their scent is not changed: but as for a spiritual man he savors the things of the Spirit, and disrelishes others; sin is rendered odious, bitter, and unpleasant to him; it is in some measure expelled, so that he can taste that the Lord is gracious; and therefore every thing he says or does is sweet unto him; for as his taste can discern perverse things, so it can relish spiritual ones; such as the fruit before-mentioned is, which grows upon and drops from the apple-tree, Christ Jesus: this delightful shade and excellent fruit, which believers find in Christ, render him very acceptable to them, and preferable to all others. Now when souls at any time have some experience of Christ's love and grace, in such a way and manner, it is very proper to speak of it, for the glory of Christ, and the encouragement of other souls, as the church does here; which she also continues to do in the following verse, where she meets with a larger display of it.

#### VERSE 4.

*He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love.*

THE church here goes on to give an account of some larger experiences of Christ's love, which she had met with from him; for she is not only indulged with his shadow, and refreshed with his fruit, as in the former verse, but is also brought into his banqueting-house, where she is entertained by him, of which she gives an account in this: where may be observed,

- I. What is meant by the banqueting-house.
- II. What by being brought into it.
- III. The manner in which she was brought; 'his banner over me was love.'

I. I shall inquire what is meant by the 'banqueting-house, into which the church was brought; it is in the Hebrew text, a house of wine; <sup>f263</sup> by which may be meant, either the wine-cellar, <sup>f264</sup> the place where wine is kept under ground; or else the place <sup>f265</sup> where wine is poured out, and where it is drank, according to R. Aben Ezra; and so may very well be rendered a banqueting-house. Thus we read of a banquet of wine, which Esther

invited king Ahasuerus and Haman to; and wine being much used at feasts, may be put synechdochically, for all the other accommodations thereof; by which we may understand either,

**1st**, The covenant of grace; this is built for a banqueting house for souls; it is a superstructure of grace and mercy, whose foundation is the person of Christ; it is well stored with all needful provisions for a nobler entertainment; it is 'ordered in all things, and sure;' it is full of Christ, his love and grace; it is well stored with spiritual blessings, and precious promises, which will serve as an everlasting banquet for those who are interested in it. Or else,

**2dly**, The Sacred Scripture, which is a true banqueting house; here is a variety of food, and plenty of it; here is milk for babes, and meat for strong men; which is exceeding pleasant and delicious, sweeter to the taste than the honey or the honey-comb; revives and refreshes those who participate thereof, and is also exceeding wholesome to the souls of men: though there are vast numbers daily feasted here, yet there is no want; it abounds with the bread of gospel-truths, with the wine of gospel-promises, and is full of Christ, the hidden manna, who is also the bread of life; he is the alpha and omega of the Scriptures, the sum and substance of them, on whom faith lives, and by whom, from time to time, it is sweetly refreshed. Or else,

**3dly**, The church is this banqueting house. The Targum refers it to the house of the school, where the Israelites learnt; the law at mount Sinai from the mouth of Moses; R. Alshech understands by it Sinai itself, and so it is interpreted in Yalkut; R. Sol. Jarchi thinks the tabernacle of the congregation is intended where the senses and explanations of the law were given: but it may much better be understood of the church of Christ, which is a house built by wisdom, and furnished with all the necessary provisions of grace; here is 'a feast of fat things prepared of wines on the lees well refined.' Christ is the master and provider of the feast, and he himself is the chief entertainment; his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed; to all which he gives his people an hearty welcome; meets them himself at his well furnished table, and feasts with them; gives them spiritual appetites, and blesses all the provisions of his grace to them: hence those are the blessed persons who have admittance into, and a dwelling-place in this house, for these shall be continually 'satisfied with the goodness and fatness thereof;' hence it is that souls are so desirous of being here, and are so well pleased with their habitation, because it is a banqueting-house unto

them; and no wonder then is it, that those who are ‘planted in the house of the Lord, flourish in the courts of our God.’

**II.** What it is to be ‘brought into <sup>f266</sup> this banqueting-house;’ which may be considered according to the several senses before given. And,

**1st,** Seeing by the banqueting-house may be meant the covenant of grace, it may be proper to inquire, What it is to be brought into that, and by what means? And now here observe, that water-baptism, and a submission to it under the New-Testament, give a person no right unto, nor interest him in the covenant of grace, even as circumcision did not, nor could under the Old; instances of both might be given of persons, where there is no reason to believe they have any share or lot in this matter: neither does church-fellowship bring a person into it, nor a mere submission to any or all the ordinances of the gospel, for ‘they are not all Israel which are of Israel:’ nor are they all instances of covenant-grace, who are church-members; for there are tares as well as wheat grow in Christ’s field below; and goats as well as sheep are folded in his fold on earth, the church; there are foolish as well as wise virgins, and there are ‘sinners in Zion,’ as well as the ‘living in Jerusalem” neither are faith and repentance terms and conditions of a man’s entering into this covenant; for they are some of the blessings of grace contained in it; they do not bring a person into it, but are evidences of his being there before; but what brings a person into it, is an act of sovereign and unchangeable grace before all time; all, interested in the everlasting covenant, before the world began, did by electing grace ‘pass under the rod of him that telleth them;’ for when God made a covenant of grace with his Son on the account of these chosen ones, he brought them all into the bond of it, and put all grace and blessings into the hands of his Son for them. Now the Spirit of God in time does in conversion take and apply this covenant grace to those persons, for the quickening, pardoning, justifying and sanctifying them; he shews them the covenant, and their interest in it, and enables them to lay hold upon it; and every time he does do so, he may be said to bring a soul into the covenant, as an effect and fruit of that original, ancient act, made before the world began; which is what the church might experience here, to wit, a fresh manifestation of her covenant-interest; for ‘the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant:’ Christ led her into his banqueting-house, and there feasted her with his royal dainties; for to bring, is to lead one to an entertainment. <sup>f267</sup>

**2dly,** If we understand the scripture by the banqueting-house; then to be brought into it, is to have the Understanding opened, so as to behold wondrous things out of it; the heart affected with the glorious truths thereof, so as to taste the sweetness of the ‘sincere milk of the word;’ and distinguish the doctrines of the gospel from those which are not so, and be capable of appropriating the promises of it to the comfort and satisfaction of our souls; and when we are enabled thus to do: we shall find the scripture to be a delightful banqueting-house indeed! Now all this Christ does by his Spirit; who is the Spirit of truth, who guides and leads his people into all truth. But,

**3dly,** If by the banqueting-house we understand the church of Christ; then to be brought Unto it, is to be made a partaker of all the privileges of it, as those who are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God. Christ first calls men by his grace, then by his ministers invites them to come in, that this house may be filled; and by his Spirit powerfully works upon their souls; sweetly inclining them not only to give up themselves to him, but likewise to one another by the will of God; he, as an instance of his distinguishing grace, takes one of a city, and two of a family, and brings them to Zion, where he invests them with all the privileges and immunities thereof; here he grants them his gracious presence, sheds abroad his love in their hearts, and often entertains them with a delightful banquet. Now Christ’s thus bringing his church into his banqueting-house, shews,

**1.** Inability on her part; we cannot bring ourselves into the covenant of grace, nor can we take Views of our interest in it at pleasure; but he who of his own grace placed us there, must shew it us: nor can we of ourselves know the depths and mysteries of the sacred writings; they will remain a sealed book to us, unless the Spirit of Christ open the book, and our understandings to look into it: nor will his church, with all the ordinances of it, be a banqueting-house unto us, unless he himself be present with us.

**2.** Wonderful grace and condescension on his side; that he, Who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords, should take one thus mean into his own apartments, and there entertain her with the best his house could afford. But this will still appear more manifestly, if we consider,

**III.** The manner in which she was brought; ‘his banner over me was love.’ It was in a very stately and majestic manner, as well as a loving one, that

she was brought; and for the illustration of this, it will be proper to consider the use of banners, and how they may be applied here. And,

**1st**, The use of banners, standards, or ensigns, is to gather and keep persons together: thus Christ himself was lift up on the cross, and is now lift up in the gospel, as an ensign to gather souls unto him; and so his love, being displayed in the preaching of the gospel, has a power and efficacy in it to draw souls after him; for, as a fruit and effect of everlasting love, 'with loving kindness' he draws them: and in the same way and manner Christ here drew the church unto himself, and held her fast; and constrained her to keep close to him, and follow hard after him; see ~~4754~~ 2 Corinthians 5:14.

**2dly**, A banner displayed, or a standard set up, is an indication of war; it is to prepare for it, and to animate to it <sup>f268</sup> see ~~2512~~ Jeremiah 51:12, 27. This may serve to inform us, that the church of Christ here on earth is militant, and therefore in chapter ~~2784~~ 6:4 is represented as formidable and terrible as an army with banners: she has many enemies to engage with, as sin, Satan, and the world, and yet has the greatest encouragement to fight, for she is bannered under the Lord of hosts; Christ is commander in chief; he is given to be a leader and commander of the people, and is every way fit for it; he has courage enough to appear at the head of his armies, and conduct enough to lead them on, and bring them off at pleasure: those that are under him are well provided for; their bread is given them in due season, and their water is sure; they are furnished with the πανοπλια, or whole armor of God; they may be assured of a crown and kingdom as soon as the battle is over, and even of victory beforehand, for they are more than conquerors through him that hath loved them; likewise the motto, which is written upon the banner, under which they are, is *love*: and if all this will not encourage them to fight, what will?

**3dly**, A banner displayed is also a sign of victory; sometimes when a town, city, or castle, is taken, the flag is hung out as an indication of it; see ~~3002~~ Jeremiah 1:2. Christ has got the victory over all his and our enemies; he has conquered sin, Satan, and the world; and given his church and people a share in all his conquests; and, as an evidence of it, has set up his banner over them. Or this may principally intend the conquest, which he, by love, had got over her heart; she surrendered herself into the victor's hands; and now, as an instance of his mighty grace, he introduces her into his own house, under the banner of love, by which she was conquered.

**4thly**, A banner is for protection and defense; hence Moses built an altar, and called it *Jehovah nissi*, that is, *the Lord is my banner*; because the Lord had been on the side of him and the people of Israel, and defended them from the Amalekites. The church was now enjoying sweet communion with Christ in his banqueting-house; and that she might be safe and secure from her enemies, and abide there during his pleasure, without any molestation or disturbance, he sets up his banner over her: thus, ‘when the enemy comes in like a flood,’ to disturb our peace, joy and comfort, ‘the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him,’ <sup><289></sup>Isaiah 59:19.

**5thly**, It is to direct soldiers where to stand, when to march, and whom to follow; see <sup><005></sup>Numbers 1:52 and <sup><010></sup>Numbers 2:2 which may teach us, who are enlisted in Christ’s service, not to fly from our colors, but adhere closely to Christ and his gospel, his cause and interest, his church and people, and to follow him, the standard-bearer, wherever he goes; and nothing can more strongly engage us to do so than love’, which is the motto of his banner; this first drew us to him, this animates us in his service? and keeps us close to his person and interest.

**6thly**, It is to distinguish one band from another; see <sup><010></sup>Numbers 2:2. As one band has one motto upon its banner or ensign, by which it is distinguished from another; so the motto on Christ’s banner is *love*, by which his band or core-pany is distinguished from all others: it is this which has made them to differ from others; has distinguished them in electing, redeeming, and calling grace; and will keep them a distinct and peculiar people to all eternity: it is not any works which they have done, but Christ’s boundless love and grace alone, that make the difference between them and others. The allusion may be to the names of generals being inscribed on the banners of their armies; so Vespasian’s name was inscribed on the banners throughout his armies. <sup>f269</sup>

## VERSE 5.

*Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love.*

THE church being brought into Christ’s banqueting-house, or house of wine, and having there such large discoveries of his love, she falls into a deliquium or fainting fit, not being able to bear up under the present enjoyment; and therefore calls to her friends and acquaintance that were about her, to give her their assistance in her present circumstances. In these words may be considered,

**I.** The church's case and condition in which she was; 'sick of love.'

**II.** What relief she asks for.

**1st,** To be 'stayed with slagons,'

**2dly,** To be 'comforted with apples.'

**III.** Who the persons are to whom she makes application.

**I.** We have in these words the present case and condition in which the church was; she was *sick of love*: this was a sickness of the sou!, and not of the body; though the one has oftentimes an influence upon the other; for as there are various bodily sicknesses and diseases, so there are various spiritual ones.

**1.** There is the sickness of sin, which, if mighty grace prevent not, is a sickness unto death; it is in its own nature mortal, and can only be cured by Christ, the great physician, who heals diseases by forgiving iniquity: this is what is natural and hereditary to us; we bring it into the world with us; for we are all 'shapen in iniquity, and in sin did our mothers conceive us: it is an epidemical distemper, which has infected all human nature; all are diseased with *it*, though all are not sensible of it; and it has overspread all the powers and faculties of the souls of men, as well as all the members of the body; so that there is no part nor place exempted from it; for the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint: but this is not the sickness intended here.

**2.** There is a sickness which souls are incident to, that arises from a sense of sin, want of the fresh manifestations of pardoning grace, absence of Christ Jesus, and a longing after the enjoyment of his person, and the discoveries of his love; which though it is not a ,sickness unto death, yet it is very painful and afflicting, and can only be cured by the enjoyment of the object loved: this discovers itself by a violent panting after Christ; a carefulness and activity in the use of means, to enjoy his presence and company; a resolution to go through all difficulties for the sake of him, and an uneasiness until i receives some instances of favor from him: with such souls, Christ is the subject of all their discourse; they love to hear his name mentioned, especially with commendation, their thoughts are continually upon him, and their minds are not easy till they enjoy him; this is the



sickness which the church was attended with in chapter ~~2188~~ 5:8. where see more of it.

**3.** There is a sickness which springs from views of Christ's person, discoveries of his love, and manifestations of his grace; which sometimes over-power the soul, and throw it into the utmost amazement, at the consideration of the greatness of Christ's person and grace, and its unworthiness to be interested in it; so that it becomes like the queen of Sheba; who, when she saw the riches, glory, and wisdom of Solomon, it is said of her, that 'there was no more spirit in her.' And this I take to be the case of the church here: it did not arise from the want of Christ's presence, or discoveries of his love, but from the enjoyment of them both; he had introduced her in a most stately manner into his banqueting-house, and gave her a noble entertainment; yea, he had plentifully shed abroad his love in her heart, which occasioned her to speak after this manner: his person appeared glorious and lovely, the entertainment was so large and sumptuous, the motto of love upon the banner so bright and glittering, and what she felt in her own soul so powerful and inconceivable, that she was quite overcome therewith; she was sick through love;' or, as the Septuagint <sup>f270</sup> renders it, she was 'wounded with love:' not that this arises from the nature of love itself, which is not painful and grievous, but is owing to our weakness and imperfection, who cannot bear large views, nor support up under the mighty power of boundless love; we are but poor narrow earthen vessels, that can receive and retain but little of it: this was that pressure under which she now labored, and for which she seeks relief; which brings me,

**II.** To consider what it is she calls for to relieve her at this time.

**1st,** She desires to be 'stayed with flagons.'

**2.** To be 'comforted with apples.'

*Ist,* Her request is, that some person or other would stay her with flagons. The word translated *flagons* is differently rendered by interpreters; some render it flowers, as Jerom and the Vulgate Latin; and so she may be considered as having reference to sweet flowers bound up in nosegays, the odor of which is very refreshing and reviving; or, 'make me to lie down in flowers,' so Symmachus; according to Plato <sup>f271</sup> love delights to be in odoriferous places; where there are sweet-smelling flowers, there is its habitation, and there it abides. Now the church being in love, says, stay me,

revive, or support me with flowers; perhaps chiefly regarding Christ, who is the only strength and support of believers, who only can keep them both from failing and fainting; for having heard him speak of himself under the names of those delightful flowers, the rose and lily, in verse 1. she is desirous that she might be stayed by, and supported with them': the Septuagint render the words thus, 'strengthen me with ointments;' <sup>f272</sup> by which may be meant the graces of Christ, which are called so in chapter ~~200B~~ 1:3 ointments were used at feasts, and are of a chearing, reviving, and strengthening nature; and may very well express the grace of Christ, by which souls are cheared, revived, established, strengthened and settled: our translators have rendered it flagons, and that very well; for according to the best Jewish writers <sup>f273</sup> it signifies vessels in which either wine or fine flower are put; and perhaps may be comprehensive of all the entertainments of a banquet, which are proper to satisfy, delight, and exhilarate; and wine being a principal one, may chiefly intend flagons of that; see ~~136B~~ 1 Chronicles 16:3, ~~200B~~ Hosea 3:10; flagons are, by a metonymy, put for wine contained in them, as the cup is, ~~220B~~ Luke 22:20, for the church was desirous of those that were full and not empty; such as were full of the wine of Christ's love, which is as reviving, chearing, and refreshing as the best wine; and which greatly strengthens and supports the animal spirits. <sup>f274</sup> In what sense Christ's love may be compared to wine, and is preferable to it, has been shewn on chapter ~~200B~~ 1:2, and by flagons of it may be meant the doctrines of grace, in which Christ's love is displayed; or the ordinances of the gospel, by which it is communicated to the saints; and may also intimate, that though the love and grace of Christ are given forth in measure to them, yet that they are large measures, which believers are desirous of receiving; those who have most grace, would have still more; and those who have the greatest sense of Christ's love, would have a larger experience of it, and are not content without it; they are like 'the two daughters of the horse-leech, crying, give, give:' and it may be also, that the church may have in view the glories and joys of another world; where she should have her fill of love, drink freely and plentifully of this wine new with Christ in his Father's kingdom, and continue in the uninterrupted enjoyment of his presence. Now it ought to be observed, that she is desirous of more of that which had brought her into this condition: Christ's love had wounded her, and that only could heal her; what had brought her into this sick and fainting condition, could only bring her out of it; this wounds and heals, kills and makes alive, and is the only reviving cordial.

**2dly**, She desires that she might be ‘comforted with apples;’ as in the former request, she had a regard to the banqueting-house, where she now was; so in this to the apple-tree, whose delicious fruit she had lately tasted, Apples are of a cooling and comforting nature, <sup>f275</sup> and are good against a syncope and palpitation of the heart, and the smell of them is very reviving: Solinus <sup>f276</sup> tells us of a certain people who eat no food, but *odore vivunt pomorum sylvestrium*, live by the smell of apples that grow in woods; and that when they go long journies, carry them with them, *ut olfactu alantur*, that by the smell of them they may be nourished and sustained. The words may be rendered, ‘strew me with apples;’ <sup>f277</sup> strew them about me, and strew them under me: the apple was an emblem of love, as before observed; to send or throw an apple to another, was a sign of love <sup>f278</sup> and must be still more so, to strew them about in quantities. By these apples may be meant, either the blessings of grace procured by the blood of Christ, which remove the fierceness of divine wrath, and being powerfully applied by the Spirit of God, do abundantly comfort and refresh the soul: or else the doctrines of the gospel, when fitly spoken, and fitly applied, are like ‘apples of gold in pictures of silver;’ how comfortable and reviving are the doctrines of justification, pardon, perseverance! etc. the church had found them so by good experience, and therefore desires them. The Targum, by flagons, understands the words of the law; and by apples, the interpretations of them; which, it says, are sweet to the taste as the apples of the garden of Eden: but it is much better to understand them, as we have done, of the doctrines of the gospel, which have often been experienced to have relieved persons in a fainting condition, such as the church was now in; and who knowing the virtue and efficacy thereof, calls for them. And,

**III.** The persons she makes application to, the word being in the plural number, are either the chorus of virgins, or daughters of Jerusalem, her dear friends and acquaintance, to whom she often told her case, especially when in distress, and desired their assistance, who seem to be near to her, by that solemn adjuration given unto them in verse 7, or else, any other Christian friends that might be standing by her; for they that fear the Lord, speak often one to another, converse together, and comfort each other: or rather the ministers of the gospel, who, by preaching the glorious doctrines of it, are instrumental in the hand of the Spirit for comforting the distressed, and reviving the fainting souls of God’s children; the’ perhaps she principally intended Christ, who we find immediately came to her relief, as appears from the following verse,

## VERSE 6.

*His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.*

THESE are still the words of the church, declaring what experience she had of Christ's grace and presence; who immediately upon the notice she gave of her distress, came to her assistance, and with both hands supported her in her fainting fit, and brought her out of it. And it may be observed, that she called to others for relief in the former verse, but it was Christ only that could help her: the flagons and apples of a gospel-ministry and gospel-ordinances will not be effectual to comfort and sustain the saints in such circumstances, unless Christ himself appears in them, and gives a blessing to them; which is what the church comfortably experienced here, and therefore speaks of it. And,

**I.** I shall consider what these words are expressive of.

**II.** In what manner they are delivered by her.

**III.** To whom they are directed, and for what reasons.

**I.** It may be proper to consider what Christ's left hand being under her head, and his right hand being said to embrace her, are expressive of. And,

*Ist*, They are expressive of Christ's tender love unto, care of, and regard for his church and people; he acts the part of a loving husband, who, seeing his bride and spouse ready to, sink and faint, hastens to her relief, embraces her in his arms, lays her in his bosom, and discovers the strongest and most endeared affection to her: Christ had a love for his church from all eternity; his heart was then ravished with her, and he took the utmost delight in her, viewing her in all the glory his Father meant to bring her to; and therefore requested of his Father that she might be his spouse and bride, which was, accordingly granted to him; who has ever since remained faithful and loving husband, and has given her the fullest and most incontestible proofs of it; he has assumed her nature, died in her room and stead, paid all her debts, procured every needful blessing for her, has given her right unto, and wilt put her into the possession of all that he has; he has raised her from the dunghill, the depths of sin and misery, taken oily her filthy garments, clothed her in rich attire and royal apparel, and set her at his own right hand, in gold of Ophir.

This love of his remains the same as ever it was, and will do so for ever, notwithstanding all her failings and infirmities, her revoltings from him, and unkindness to him; for he is Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever:’ though it is true, he does not always manifest his love to his people, but sometimes hides his face from them, and kindly chides them for their good, and his own glory; yet he cannot always withhold his love in the manifestations of it to their souls; for though he seems to treat them severely for a while, yet his heart is full of love, pity, and concern; his bowels yearn., and, Joseph-like, cannot refrain himself, but must make himself known unto his brethren. Christ now has various ways of shewing his love to his people, which he does the most suitably and seasonably; when tempted, he succours them; when disconsolate, he comforts them; and when afflicted, he sympathizes with them; when hungry, he feeds them; when naked, he clothes them; when sick, he, as the great physician, heals them; when weak, he supports and upholds them with the right hand of his righteousness; and when fainting, he cheers and revives them; ‘he giveth power to the faint, and to them who have no might, he increases strength;’ and this he does by patting his left hand under their head, and by embracing them with his right hand; the doing of which is an amazing and surprising instance of his grace.

**2dly,** These phrases are expressive of that near fellowship and communion the church has with Christ; which is variously expressed in scripture, as by supping, and walking with him, and leaning on his bosom, and here by lying in his arms; which is an indication of very near and intimate communion indeed: to be admitted into Christ’s banqueting-house, and there sit with him at his table, or into his privy chambers, and there have converse and communion with him, argue great nearness to him, and intimacy with him; but to lie in his arms, and have a place in his bosom, what can be nearer? This is the effect of that near and indissoluble union souls have with Christ; and what, by divine grace, they are called to the enjoyment of; are frequently indulged with in their attendance on ordinances; and is that one thing they are desirous of, and uneasy without; but which, when obtained, gives them the greatest pleasure and highest satisfaction.

**3dly,** They are expressive of the enjoyment of blessings from Christ, in whose right hand is length of days, and in whose left hand are riches and honor. Temporal mercies are Christ’s left hand blessings; <sup>f279</sup> and such a measure of them Christ hands forth to his people in a covenant way, as will

be needful for them to support them whilst in, and comfortably carry them through this wilderness; but Christ's right hand blessings are of a spiritual nature, such as a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, peace and reconciliation by his blood, and adoption; all which being, by Christ's hand, applied unto his saints, cheer, revive, and comfort, when ready to faint; and which sustain, uphold, and strengthen them, when ready to sink and die away.

**4thly**, They are expressive of the safety and security of the church: they must needs be safe from all enemies, and secure from falling, who are incircled in the arms of almighty grace, sustained by Christ's left hand, and embraced by his right hand, for out of his hands none can pluck them: such are, and will be preserved in Christ Jesus, until they are safely brought to glory. The Targum and R. Sol. Jarchi expound these words of the divine care and protection which the Israelites enjoyed in the wilderness; whereby they were not only provided with every thing that was useful and necessary, but also defended from every thing that was noxious and hurtful.

**II.** We may now consider the manner in which these words Were delivered; and that they may be considered, either,

- 1.** As a prayer, and be read thus, 'O that his left hand was under my head, and that his right hand would embrace me!' <sup>f280</sup> and suppose her still in the same case in which she was in the former verse; and seem to intimate, that she had a sense of her present state and condition, and a desire to be out of it; also, that she was without Christ's presence and communion with him, though she had a value for it, and an earnest desire after it, and did firmly believe that the enjoyment of it would relieve her. Or,
- 2.** They may be considered as spoken in the strength of faith, that it would be so; and then the words may be read thus, 'his left hand will be under my head, and his right hand will embrace me;' <sup>f281</sup> and the sense of them is, as if she should say, It is true I am now in a very weak, feeble, and fainting condition; yet I know I shall not totally sink, fail and perish; for he will hold me up and support me, so that I shall not be moved: the words seem then to be spoke much in the same manner, and to argue the same strength of faith, as those spoke by the church in Micah 8:7, 8. Or else,
- 3.** As expressing her present experience that it was so; and then the words may be read as they are rendered by our translators, 'his left hand is under

my head,' etc. which experience of hers she mentions with thankfulness, as she ought to do, to the glory of his love and grace, who had so kindly and graciously appeared for her in a time of distress; and this she does also in an exulting manner, and with a kind of boasting; for though we are not allowed to glory in ourselves, nor have any reason to boast of any thing which we have done, yet we may glory in Christ, and boast of what he is unto us, and has done for us,

**III.** The persons to whom she speaks, are either the ministers of the gospel, whose assistance she had desired; and having enjoyed the comforting and supporting presence of Christ, in the ordinances, and under the ministry of the word, she lets them know of it, to encourage them in their work, and that they, with her, might bless the Lord for it: or else, the daughters of Jerusalem, whom she adjures in the following verse; who are persons newly converted, to whom she directs her discourse, and gives them this account of her experience, that she might allure them to the ordinances, and encourage them to walk in the ways of Christ, as well as engage them to join with her in giving thanks to him for the reception of so great a mercy; which is very agreeable to David's practice, in <sup>1584</sup>Psalm 34:2, 3. 'My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.'

## VERSE 7.

I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.

THERE is some difficulty in these words concerning the person speaking, who it is, whether Christ or the church: interpreters are divided about it; and there are reasons, not to be despised, given on both sides.

Some think that they are the words of the church, charging the daughters of Jerusalem to give no disturbance to Christ, her love, and cause him to depart from her, with whom she now was, enjoying sweet communion with him; which seems to be the sense of our translators: and this sense of the words bids fair, if we consider,

**1.** The persons to whom these words are spoken, 'the daughters of Jerusalem;' who were the friends of the church, 'the virgins, her

companions;’ who attended and waited upon her: Christ is represented in this Song as having his friends with him; and the church, as having hers with her, and that in allusion to a nuptial entertainment; and therefore it seems most reasonable that she should speak to her friends, and not his.

2. In all other places, where these words are used, they seem to be the words of the church, and not of Christ; see chapter ~~2185~~3:5 and ~~2184~~8:4.
3. The manner of the speech shews it, which is not by way of command, which is proper to Christ; but by way of adjuration, or giving a charge with an oath, which is usual with the church to these persons; for which, beside the places before-mentioned, see chap, ~~2185~~5:8.
4. If we also consider the matter, it suits well with the church’s language; the character, ‘my love,’ is very applicable to Christ, he being the person whom her soul loved; the charge that this love should not be stirred up, but at pleasure, agrees with Christ, who is endued with sovereignty, and ought to be at his own liberty to stay with, or remove from his people when he pleases.
5. It suits with the context and scope of the place: the church was now in Christ’s arms, where she lay with a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction; and being willing to have communion with Christ continued, and not interrupted by these persons, she solemnly adjures them after this manner; which carefulness and solicitude of hers seems also to be the scope and design of those other places: chapter ~~2185~~3:5 and ~~2184~~8:4.

But there are others who think that they are the words of Christ, and not without some reason; for,

1. It was the church, Who having solace and ease in Christ’s arms, was fallen asleep there, and not he in hers; and therefore, that she might have no disturbance, he charges the daughters of Jerusalem by no means to awake her, till she herself thought meet.
2. The church in this Song, when she gives Christ a character, which is expressive of her love, does not use this word **hbha** *ahabah*, *love*, which is of the feminine gender; but another, **ydwd** *dodi*, *my beloved*, or *well-beloved*, which is of the masculine; but Christ makes use of this same word in giving a loving title to his church, as in chapter ~~2186~~7:6, and therefore they seem to be the words of Christ, speaking concerning and in behalf of his church.



**3.** Both the word *j bha* *ahabah*, *love*, and *xpht* *techphatz*, which is in construction with it, and is rendered *he please*, are both of the feminine gender, and so best agree with her <sup>f282</sup> and may be rendered, ‘that ye stir not up nor awake my love till she please.’

**4.** The following words seem to confirm this sense, ‘the voice of my beloved!’ What voice was this she heard? Why, the charge he gave to the daughters of Jerusalem not to disturb her; which discovered so much love and goodness in him, and her heart was so much affected with it, that she breaks out into this pathetic exclamation, ‘the voice of my beloved!’

And now though the former sense is not to be despised, yet I must confess I chiefly incline to the latter, and having thus considered whose words they are, I shall now consider the words themselves; in which may be observed,

**I.** The charge given; not to ‘stir up nor awake *the* love till he or she please.’

**II.** The persons to whom this charge is given; ‘the daughters of Jerusalem.’

**III.** The manner in which it is delivered; ‘I charge you by the roes and by the hinds of the field.’

**I.** Here is a solemn charge given not to ‘stir up nor awake the love,’ or ‘this love,’ the well-known love, <sup>f283</sup> ‘till he, or she please;’ which I have observed may be understood, either as the church’s charge to these persons not to disturb Christ, in whose company she now was; or else, as Christ’s charge to them, not to awake the church, who was now sleeping in his arms; and both these senses being pressed with such reasons as have been before observed, I shall consider the words both ways: and then if we consider them as the church’s charge, not to disturb Christ her love, they will lead us to observe,

**1.** That Christ is the object of the church’s love, and of all true believers; there is none in heaven or on earth, that has so great a share in their love as he has; they love him with all their hearts and souls, and above all things else whatever; and that so sincerely and unfeignedly, that they can appeal, with Peter, to the searcher of hearts, and say, ‘Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee;’ which arises from the discoveries of Christ’s love to them, and the views which they have of his loveliness; and

is still more and more increased, by having nearer communion, and more intimacy and acquaintance with him.

**2.** That Christ sleeps and takes his rest among his church and people; this is manifest from her carefulness not to have him stirred up and awaked; the Lord is sometimes said to sleep, and not to awake, when he does not arise to deliver his people from danger, or out of the hands of their enemies; see <sup><13822></sup>Psalm 35:22, 23, and <sup><13942></sup>44:22, 23 and sometimes when he grants his presence to them and communion with them, as here: the church is Christ's resting-place, where he 'rests in his love' towards his people, grants his presence to them, converses with them, and 'lies all night betwixt their breasts.'

**3.** That Christ may be disturbed, and raised up from hence by the sins of his people; their vexatious contentions one with another, their unfriendly and ungrateful carriage to him, often provoke him to remove from them; they grieve his spirit, and cause him to hide his face, which is no ways for their honor or comfort.

**4.** That believers should be very careful that they do not provoke Christ to depart from them; and therefore should watch against the very first motions of sin, and 'abstain from all appearance of it;' for sinful thoughts, as well as sinful actions, are an abomination to him, and lead on to the commission of them; and it is the desire of believers, under the influences and by the assistance of the Spirit of grace, so to do; which shews that communion with Christ is highly valued by them, and what they would not have by any means interrupted.

**5.** That communion which souls have with Christ, is entirely at his pleasure; they cannot have it, when and as long as they please, but when and as long as he pleases; for 'when he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? so when he hideth his face, who then can behold him?' as Elihu says, <sup><13849></sup>Job 34:29. The discoveries of Christ's love and grace to his people; the grants of his presence to them, and communion with them, as much depend upon his sovereign will and pleasure, as the first actings of his grace towards and upon sinners do: he may withdraw from his people without any provocation, as he sometimes does; for he is a God that 'hideth his face from the house of Jacob;' and is not obliged to give any reason for it, but his own sovereign will; though he always designs their good, and his own glory by it; yet he is oftener caused to arise, and remove from them, through their carnality, lukewarmness, ingratitude and unbelief.

But if we consider the words as the charge of Christ to the daughters of Jerusalem, not to disturb the church, then we may observe,

**1.** That the church is Christ's love; she is frequently called so by him in this Song, as in chapters [2100](#)1:9, 15 and [2100](#)2:10 and in other places: she has the greatest share in his affections, as he has in hers, and has given the fullest proofs of his love to her; which put it beyond all dispute, that she is the object of it, and will always continue so, notwithstanding all her failings and infirmities.

**2.** That the church sleeps and takes her rest in Christ's arms; there is a sleepiness or drowsiness which attends God's children, that is a sinful one; when they fold their own arms together, and do not lie in Christ's; in this frame was the church, chapters [2100](#)3:1 and [2100](#)5:2, but this here is a rest which Christ gives, a sleep which he brings his into, when he puts under his everlasting arms, and embraces them in his bosom; for 'so he giveth his beloved sleep,' [800](#)Psalm 127:2.

**3.** That Christ values the company and conversation of his children: these are 'the excellent in the earth, in whom is all his delight;' he loves to see their persons, and hear their voice; the actings of their grace upon him are exceeding delightful to him, and therefore would not have them be disturbed, hence it can never be a work well-pleasing to Christ, for any to sadden the hearts, lessen the joys, and weaken the faith of God's children.

**4.** That Christ would not have his church's peace disturbed; though it oftentimes is by 'quarrelsome and contentious persons,' who are always uneasy themselves, and endeavor to make others so; by 'carnal professors, whose lives and conversations are wounding and grieving to pious souls;' by 'errors and heresies,' which, 'springing up' in churches, trouble some, and defile others; and often by 'inward corruptions,' those domestic enemies, which are of all the worst and most afflicting; as well as by Satan, that unwearied enemy, who, though he cannot devour, yea will disturb; but whether this be done one way or other, it is no ways pleasing and grateful to Christ.

**5.** Though believers, when under the gracious influences of the blessed Spirit, are desirous of communion with Christ; and if they might have it as long as they please, they would have it always, and say, as the disciples did, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here;' yet when they begin to be sleepy and

drowsy, they grow careless and indifferent about it; which justly provokes Christ to deprive them of it. So much for the charge itself.

**II.** The persons to whom this charge is given, are the ‘daughters of Jerusalem;’ by whom we are to understand young converts, as has been observed in chapter ~~2005~~ 1:5. Now these are very apt to disturb Christ by their impatience; who, like new born babes, are unwilling to wait till their food is prepared for them; till Christ’s own time is come, when he will more fully reveal himself unto them, and give them large discoveries of his love: and also by their frowardness who, when their food is prepared for them, grow sullen and will not eat it; and, like Rachel of old, ‘refuse to be comforted;’ or else, through ‘the weakness of their faith, and living upon their frames,’ which young converts are very apt to do; for no longer than they have the discoveries of Christ’s love, and sensible communion with him, can they believe their interest in him; and therefore, like froward and impatient children, or poor weaklings, give him a great deal of disturbance: and so taking them as the words of the church, she seems here to act the part of a mother; and charges these her children to be still and quiet, and give her loving husband no disturbance, whilst she enjoyed his delightful company.

Moreover, these daughters of Jerusalem, or young converts, are very apt to give the church disturbance; and therefore Christ may be represented as charging them not to do it: this they sometimes do through weakness, not being able to bear the doctrines of the gospel; such some of the Corinthians were, who were ‘babes in Christ,’ and therefore the apostle fed them with milk, and not with meat, for they ‘were not able to bear it;’ by reason of which, many contentions, divisions and disturbances, were raised in that church: as also, sometimes through ‘ignorance of gospel-order,’ not being so well versed in, and acquainted with the rules, laws and ordinances of Christ’s house; so that oftentimes, for want of knowledge in gospel-discipline, as well as in gospel-doctrine, they give disturbance to the church of Christ; all which; Christ knowing full well, gives them this solemn charge.

**III.** The manner in which this charge is given, which is very’ solemn and awful; it is with an oath, ‘I adjure you, or I cause you to swear by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye give no disturbance to my love; creatures which ran in fields, forests and woods, and were their native places. <sup>f284</sup> The meaning is, not as if either Christ or his church swore by

those creatures; for swearing by heaven or earth, or by any creature in them, is condemned by Christ, <sup><4154></sup>Matthew 5:34-37, an oath ought not to be taken in trifling cases, nor in any other name than in the name of God; which perhaps is the reason why the Targum thus paraphrases the words here: 'I adjure you, O ye congregation of Israel, by the Lord of hosts,' or Tzebaoth, which same word is used for *roes* here, and by the strengths or fortresses of the land of Israel, etc. And either,

**1.** The words may be paraphrased thus, I charge you, who are among the toes and hinds of the fields, you daughters of Jerusalem, who are shepherdesses, and keep your flocks where toes and hinds skip and play; or who love to hunt them, and delight in such exercises; <sup>f285</sup> I charge you, that you give my love no disturbance. Or else,

**2.** Thus, I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that ye remain or abide with the roes and hinds of the field, so Junius; mind your own business, keep your flocks, stand without whilst I and my love enjoy each others delightful conversation, without any interruption or molestation from you. Or,

**3.** Those creatures, the roes and hinds, it may be, are called in as witnesses to this solemn charge, and to be produced against them, if ever they should break it; as to which sometimes heaven and earth, animate and inanimate creatures, are called in scripture; see <sup><1519></sup>Deuteronomy 30:19, <sup><1527></sup>Joshua 24:27. Or,

**4.** This adjuration or charge is made by all that is dear, the toes and hinds being pleasant and lovely creatures, as in <sup><1159></sup>Proverbs 5:19 as if he or she should say, I charge you, O ye lovely daughters of Jerusalem, by the hinds and roes, which for beauty and loveliness are like to you, as R. Aben Ezra observes; if, O ye lovely ones, ye have any love for me, I beg, I earnestly intreat of you, that you will cause neither me nor my love any interruption. Or,

**5.** It may be considered as a severe threatening to those persons, if they should be unmindful of the charge given; and it is as if he should say, I swear, that if you stir up, or awake my love, that you shall be food as common to all, as the toes and hinds are; to which purpose as R. Sol. Jarchi's gloss: and these creatures being very swift ones; may note the suddenness and swiftness of those judgments which should come upon them in case of disobedience. Or,

6. The sense may be this: that as ye would, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, be cautious how you start those timorous creatures, <sup>f286</sup> the roes and hinds; so would I have you be as cautious how you stir up and awake my love, which is as easily and as quickly done. Or,

7. and lastly, I charge you, for the sake of these toes and hinds, the Gentiles and nations of the world, that ye do not disturb the peace of my church, by fomenting and increasing divisions in it; and so cause my name to be dishonored, my ways to be spoken evil of, and me to depart from you; but rather keep peace within, and ‘walk in wisdom towards them that are without;’ and by so doing, you will gratify me, and allure these Gentiles to your society and fellowship; who otherwise, like timorous roes and hinds, will be frightened and scared from it.

## VERSE 8.

*The voice of my beloved! behold!  
he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.*

THOUGH there was some difficulty in understanding the former words, whose they were, whether Christ’s or the church’s; yet it is certain that these are spoken by the church, who hearing Christ, her beloved, give such a solemn charge to the daughters of Jerusalem, not to awake her, is so affected with his love to her, and care of her, that she could not forbear breaking out into this pathetic exclamation upon it; and not only takes notice of this, but also of some other instances of his love and regard unto her; or else it may be supposed, that the sweet and comfortable communion which she had before enjoyed with Christ, mentioned in the preceding verses, had been for some time interrupted, he having withdrawn himself and she being fallen into a spiritual drowsiness; but he returning again to her, and calling her out of this state, as in ver. 10. she awakes, and takes notice of the several steps and procedures of his grace, and records several instances of his love unto her; two of which are mentioned in these words.

- I. He calls unto her, and she hears and knows his voice and says, It is ‘the voice of my beloved.’
- II. He not only calls, but comes, and she spies him coming; the manner of which she describes to be, ‘leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.’

**I.** The first thing she remarks is his voice, with which she seems to be wonderfully affected ‘the voice of my beloved!’ Some Jewish writers <sup>f287</sup> interpret this of the voice of the Messiah; by which may be meant, the gospel of Christ in which he speaks both to saints and sinners; and which has a virtue and efficacy in it to quicken dead sinners, and comfort living saints; for though it is powerful, yet alluring; though full of majesty, yet soft and charming, and makes delightful music in the ears of believers; concerning which may be observed,

**1st,** That the voice of Christ is known and distinguished by believers from the voice of others: the church was capable of doing this, and therefore says, ‘the voice of my beloved!’ she could know it to be his voice, and distinguish it from another’s even though but just raised out of her sleep; flay, she could do this when she was as it were between sleeping and waking; when indulging herself in drowsiness and security, as in Chapter ~~2182~~ 5:2 and thus Christ says, ~~6104~~ John 10:4, 5 of all his sheep, that they not only heard his voice, but knew it, and therefore followed him and not strangers; for, says he, ‘the voice of strangers they know not.’ Now if any should ask how Christ’s voice can be known and distinguished from others; I answer,

**1.** By the majesty of it; by this we know the scriptures to be the word of God, there appearing such a shine of majesty in them, as does not in any other writings; and hereby we know the gospel to be the voice of Christ, and can distinguish it from that which is not so: Christ speaks in the gospel, ‘as one having authority, and not as the scribes;’ there is a vast difference between ‘the words which man’s wisdom teacheth,’ and those ‘which the Holy Ghost teacheth;’ the one are low, mean, dead, and lifeless; the other not only come with evidence, and ‘the demonstration of the spirit and of power’ to believers, but even fasten convictions of the original and authority of them upon the minds of wicked men; see ~~4142~~ 1 Corinthians 14:24, 25.

**2.** By the power and efficacy of it: the gospel which is Christ’s voice comes ‘not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost;’ and so not only reaches the ear, but also the heart; it opens blind eyes, unstops deaf ears, quickens dead sinners, awakes sleepy, and comforts distressed saints, and is in fine, ‘the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believes.’

**3.** By the spiritual food and divine refreshment it affords to believers; who find Christ's word and eat it, and it becomes 'the joy and rejoicing' of their hearts; that which is not Christ's word and gospel, is like the chaff to this wheat; and that which is opposite to those 'wholesome words of our Lord Jesus;' instead of nourishing and refreshing, as these do, 'eat as doth a canker.'

**4.** Believers know this voice of Christ, and can distinguish it from others, by its bringing them to him, and not sending them from him; that voice which sends me to my own righteousness, and not to Christ's, for acceptance with God and justification before him; which sends me to my tears of repentance, and not to Christ's blood, for pardon and cleansing, can never be the voice of Christ; that voice which bids me keep off from Christ, till I have prepared and qualified myself for him, by my own acts of humiliation and obedience, is contrary to that voice of Christ which bids me come to him as a poor, vile, filthy, and perishing sinner in myself, without him; and venture on him for life and salvation; and therefore that cannot be the voice of Christ: thus may it be known from the voice of a stranger.

**5.** Believers have the spirit of Christ, who is 'the spirit of truth,' whose work and office it is to 'guide them into all truth,' and enable them to distinguish truth from error; and this he accordingly does, for he 'searches the deep things of God,' and reveals them to the saints, and abides in them as a 'spirit of wisdom and revelation; in the knowledge of Christ.'

**6.** They know it by the scriptures of truth, which they dill-gently search, and by which they examine every doctrine; and whatsoever sound or language is disagreeable thereunto, they reject, as not being the voice of Christ; 'to the law and to the testimony' they appeal, and whosoever does not 'speak according to this word,' they judge 'it is because there is no light in them,' ~~2880~~ Isaiah 8:20.

**2dly,** It may be observed that this voice of Christ, as it may be known and distinguished by believers from the voice of others, so it is exceeding pleasant and delightful to them. The church seems to speak of it as being so to her; and no wonder at was, for it is,

**1.** A voice of love, grace, and mercy to poor sinners; it is not like the law, a voice of terror, wrath, and fury; no, it speaks peace and pardon to rebellious creatures, and publishes life and salvation to lost sinners. Christ



came leaping and skipping like a roe or a young hart; or, as it is said of Naphtali, like ‘a hind let loose, who giveth goodly words;’ and no wonder then that his voice was so delightful.

**2.** It was also the voice of her beloved one, who dearly loved her, and had given incontestible proofs of it, and whom she loved with all her heart and soul; and therefore his voice, as well as his countenance and person, was sweet unto her; it was the voice of the bridegroom, and therefore need not be thought strange that the bride, as well as her friends should rejoice at it.

**3dly,** We may learn from hence, that Christ’s voice may be heard before he is seen: the church first heard his voice, and then she saw him come leaping and skipping over the mountains and hills; and this indeed is one way by which souls are brought to a sight of Christ, viz. by the preaching of the gospel; nay, believers, even when they are without sights of Christ, and sensible communion with him; yet, in hearing the word, can distinguish Christ’s voice, and can set to their seals that it is his, though perhaps they cannot immediately take in the comfort of it.

**4thly,** Believers would have others know Christ’s voice as well as they: the church knew this to be the voice of Christ; but she is not content with the knowledge of it herself, and therefore speaks of it for the information of the daughters of Jerusalem. But,

**II.** She not only heard his voice, but also spied him coming to her, though at some distance; and perhaps as soon as ever she had heard his voice, or the noise of his feet, as R. Aben Ezra explains it, she lift up her eyes, or turned herself, and saw him upon the march towards her. Here must be considered,

**1st,** What is meant by his coming.

**2dly,** The manner of it, ‘leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills.’

**3dly,** Why she prefixes an *ecce*, or a *behold* unto it ‘behold he cometh,’ etc.

**1st,** It will be proper to consider what is here meant by Christ’s coming; which must be understood, either of his com-tug in the flesh, which the church had then a distant sight of and is since accomplished: this coming of Christ from heaven, and out of his Father’s bosom, into this sinful world,

was not by a change of place, but by assumption of nature; whose great end in it was to save sinners, which is intirely answered: now, as this had been long promised, frequently prophesied of, and nothing was more earnestly expected, and passionately wished and prayed for, so nothing was more delightful to the Old-Testament saints, than the near approach of it, nor more welcome than when it was accomplished. Or else by his coming here, may be meant his spiritual coming; for though he withdraws and absents himself from his people for a time, yet he will not leave them altogether, and always comfortless, but will come unto them: and the church's spying him as coming, supposes that he was at some distance from her, with respect to sensible communion or enjoyment of his presence, though not with respect, either to union or affection; for in this sense she is always near unto him: and also, that he was upon the return to her, whom faith spied, though at a distance, which is agreeable enough to the nature of it; this filled her soul with joy and pleasure; for even distant sights of Christ are pleasant, though his nearer approaches give a greater satisfaction: his presence is always welcome to a believer, and there is a great deal of reason for it; for he always brings something along with him, and never comes empty handed; yea, never visits without leaving something behind him.

**2dly**, The manner of his coming is expressed by 'leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills:' the allusion is to the leaping of a roe or a young hart, as in the next verse, remarkable for leaping, even one just yeaned; <sup>f288</sup> so a young hart is described as leaping to its dam; <sup>f289</sup> the leap of one of these creatures is very extraordinary; <sup>f290</sup> which, if understood of Christ's coming in the flesh, shews,

**1.** That there were many difficulties in the way, and such that were comparable to hills and mountains: the greatness of his person was no inconsiderable one; nay, such an one, that it could never have been thought that it should have been got over, had not God himself declared it should be; and we have undeniable evidence that it has been; for God to become man, the Creator a creature, and the Word to be made flesh, and dwell among us, is such an amazing stoop of deity, and surprising instance of divine condescension, that it is even the wonder of men and angels: also the greatness of the work he was to do, when come, was no small difficulty; here was a broken law to fulfill, angry justice to satisfy, sin to atone for, the wrath of God to bear, many enemies to grapple with, and a cursed death to undergo; and all this for the vilest of miscreants, the worst

of creatures, whose characters are sinners, ungodly persons, and such who were enemies to him in their minds by wicked works. Yet,

**2.** These difficulties which seem insuperable to us, were easily surmounted by him; he leaped and skipped over those mountains and hills, which all became a plain before our great Zerubbabel; what appear mountains to us, were mole-hills to him: therefore he readily engaged, and voluntarily undertook before time to assume human nature, which in time he did with the utmost cheerfulness; and shewed his eager desires after it. long before his incarnation, in often appearing in art human form; and when he was actually become incarnate, how eager was he for the accomplishment of the work he came about! how easily did he break through all difficulties, discouragements, and impediments, that lay in his way! and no-thing could stop him till he could say the work was finished which he undertook; and thus, with the utmost swiftness and celerity, he came 'leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills.' If we understand it of his spiritual coming, it shews,

**1.** That there are impediments in the way of Christ's visiting his people; such as their unbelief carnality and lukewarmness, their want of faith in him, and affection to him, their backslidings from him, and ingratitude towards him; yet. all these mountains and hills he leaps and skips over, resolving that nothing shall separate him and them.

**2.** That Christ's coming to his people in a way of grace, is very conspicuous to them; the eye of faith spies him at a distance, as it were, upon the mountains: and also, that it is very glorious and beautiful; for if 'beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings,' much more beautiful must the feet of Christ, or Christ himself be, when he comes and grants his gracious presence to his people.

**3.** It denotes the speediness, swiftness, and readiness of Christ, to help his people; he makes haste and delays not, and therefore is said to leap and skip; his heart is set upon it; and nothing shall prevent him, though mountains and hills are between them.

**3dly,** She prefixes an *ecce*, a *behold*, to this coming of Christ unto her; which, if applied to his coming in the flesh, may be considered, either,

**1.** As a note of admiration; as in <sup>23714</sup>Isaiah 7:14. 'Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son:' the incarnation of Christ, though it was

confirmed to the church by promises, types and prophecies, yet was so strange and stupendous a thing, that nothing but faith could receive it, and that with the most profound admiration.

**2.** As a note of attention or asseveration; and so is used by her to stir up the daughters of Jerusalem to an observation of his near approach, and to encourage them in their faith and expectation of it, as well as that they might participate of her joy in the views thereof; see <sup><300></sup>Zechariah 9:9.

Again, if we understand it of Christ's spiritual coming; this is,

**(1.)** Matter of admiration, and therefore may well have an *ecce*, a *behold*, prefixed to it; we have all, who know any thing of this, reason to say with Judas, not Iscariot, in <sup><442></sup>John 14:22 'Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?'

**(2.)** It is also worthy of observation. Christ's special grace and favor in this regard ought not to be carelessly overlooked; but we should take notice of it with thankfulness, and wonder at it ourselves, and remark it to others, that they may join with us in magnifying the Lord on such an occasion, as the Psalmist did, in <sup><130></sup>Psalm 34:1-3 who, as the church here, was so affected with the loving-kindness of the Lord, in this instance of it, that he tells it to others for this purpose.

## VERSE 9.

My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart: behold he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the window, shewing himself through the lattice.

THE church continues her discourse concerning Christ, and takes notice of the several steps he took in manifesting himself unto her.

**I.** She compares him to 'a roe or a young hart.'

**II.** Declares the several gradual discoveries of himself unto her.

**I.** She compares him to 'a roe, or a young hart;' which seems to be occasioned by his swift and speedy approach unto her, mentioned in the former verse; for these are creatures remarkable for their swiftness; <sup>f291</sup> see <sup><1028></sup>2 Samuel 2:18. and may have reference to Christ's celerity in his coming in the flesh who, as soon as ever 'the fullness of time' was come,

made no delay, but immediately clothed himself with human nature, in order to dispatch, with the utmost speed, the work which he had agreed to do; and with no less speed does he haste to the assistance of his people, when under trials, desertions, temptations and afflictions, and shews himself to be ‘a very present help in trouble:’ likewise his second coming to raise the dead, judge the world, reward his saints and punish his enemies, will be equally as swift and sudden; for which reason it is compared, <sup><184></sup>Matthew 24:29, to ‘the lightning which cometh out of the east,’ and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, ‘shineth even unto the west:’ but besides the swiftness of these creatures, Christ may be compared to them, or be said to be like to them on some other accounts; as,

**1.** For their pleasantness and lovingness; they are pleasant and loving creatures, as appears from <sup><185></sup>Proverbs 5:19. Christ is pleasant and desirable in his person to his people, being ‘white and ruddy, and the chiefest among ten thousand; he is loving in his carriage and deportment to them, and has given the most undeniable proofs of the reality, sincerity, strength and immutability of his love, in shedding his blood, and by giving his life for them.

**2.** For their choiceness and excellency, as R. Sol. Jarchi observes; young roes and harts being the most choice and excellent: Christ is so in his nature, person, office, people, and ordinances; he is so in the esteem of his Father, and in the esteem of men and angels; for though he is disallowed by some, yet he is highly valued by others.

**3.** For the antipathy there is between these creatures and serpents: historians <sup>f292</sup> report of them, that they search out the lurking-places of serpents, and not being able to come at them in their holes, do: by the very breath of their nostrils, draw them out from thence <sup>f293</sup> and then trample upon them, tear them in pieces, and eat them: this may in some measure represent that enmity there is between that old serpent Satan, and Christ Jesus, the seed of the woman, who was manifested in human nature, to break his head, and destroy his works, which he has accordingly done. It is also farther reported of the hart, <sup>f294</sup> that after eating serpents, it grows prodigious thirsty, which occasions dreadful cries and lamentations, and violent pantings after the water-brooks; to which an allusion is made in <sup><186></sup>Psalms 42:1, and yet knowing, by an instinct in nature, that it is dangerous to drink until it has digested them, forbears a while: Thus Christ when he destroyed that old serpent the Devil, sustained the weight of his

Father's wrath, which occasioned a bloody sweat in the garden, piteous moans upon the cross, a violent consumption of the radical moisture; so that his 'strength was dried up like a potsherd,' and his 'tongue cleaved to his jaws,' with the violent thirst that was upon him; such an one he had, as is manifest from those words of his, when suffering upon the cross, *I thirst*. Moreover, it is reported in Lybia, <sup>f295</sup> where there is a great number of serpents, that when they see a hart lying alone, will, in great numbers at once, attack him; some wrapping themselves about his feet, others about his horns, his neck and belly, and bite him dreadfully; upon which he gets up and runs about, here and there, in great distress, but at length throws himself upon his back; some he rubs to death, and others he devours, and then hastens to the water-brooks to cleanse and refresh himself: thus Christ was beset by all the infernal powers, yet spoiled them all, got an entire victory over them, and now enjoys the glories of it. These were creatures fit for food, and were allowed to be so by the Levitical law; naturalists say <sup>f296</sup> that by their being hunted, their flesh becomes softer: Christ is 'the bread of life,' and the 'hidden manna;' he is very agreeable food for souls; his flesh is meat indeed,' and his 'blood is drink indeed;' and by reason of the sufferings which he underwent in our nature, is become very suitable food for faith.

**4.** These creatures are long-lived ones: it is reported <sup>f297</sup> that Alexander the Great, having taken some of them, put golden chains about them, with which they were found, covered with fat, a hundred years afterwards, and scarce any appearance of old age in them. Christ lives, and will live for ever; he died once for the sins of men, but will never die more; 'I am he,' says he, 'that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore,' ~~f298~~ Revelation 1:18 for such reasons as these, and perhaps some others, Christ may be said to be 'like a roe or a young hart.' The Septuagint here adds, 'upon the mountains of Bethel,' which is not in the Hebrew text.

**II.** She declares the several gradual discoveries of himself unto her. In the former verse, she tells us, that she first heard his voice, and then saw him come 'leaping upon the mountains,' and 'skipping upon the hills;' and here she observes some nearer approaches of him to her. 1st, She says, that he stood behind their *wall*. 2dly, Looked forth at the *windows*. 3dly, Shewed himself through the *lattice*.

**1st,** She says, that he stood behind their wall; by which is meant, either,

1. The incarnation of Christ, whose glorious Deity was covered and hid under the wall of our humanity; <sup>f298</sup> which is called our wall, because he was made partaker of the same flesh and blood with us. Or,
  2. The walls of our hearts, of which we read, ~~2049~~ Jeremiah 4:19. 'I am pained at my very heart;' in the Hebrew, it is, 'I am pained at the walls of my heart;' such are our sins and transgressions, <sup>f299</sup> which are as so many as walls of separation between Christ and us, particularly unbelief, lukewarmness, carnal reasonings, etc. behind which Christ stands; and which, by the mighty power of his grace and spirit, he batters down and demands an entrance. Or else,
  3. The ceremonial law, which the apostle call, ~~4124~~ Ephesians 2:14, 'the middle wall of partition:' this separated between Jew and Gentile, and was made up of many hard and difficult precepts; behind this wall Christ stood under the Old Testament dispensation, and shewed himself to his people in types and figures, though but darkly and obscurely in comparison of the gospel revelation. Or else,
  4. By it may be meant the church's defence and protection: the church is a city, and a walled one; God himself is a wall of fire round about it; and has also appointed salvation for wails and bulwarks; his ministring servants, he has not only set upon Zion's walls, but has made them as walls of brass unto them; he has set them both for the defense of the church and of the gospel: now Christ's standing behind her wall, may shew that he is ready to protect his people, redress their grievances, and revenge himself upon their enemies. Or rather,
  5. In general it shews, that Christ was nearer unto her than he had been before; she then saw him, but at some distance, upon the hills and mountains afar off; but now he was come nearer, even to her very home, and stands behind her wall, being desirous to enter in; but still there was some distance of communion, a wall between them, and a wall of her own building: it was owing to her own infidelity, carnality, and sleep; . hess, that Christ stood at a distance, and drew no nearer than he was; and yet notwithstanding this, he stands waiting as it were for invitation to enter in.
- 2dly,** She takes notice of a farther discovery of himself: he comes from behind her wall and looks in at the windows, to see in what posture his church was, and how things were managed in his house. The allusion is to the quicksighted roe or young hart; which, as it is remarkable for its

swiftness, as in verse 8, so for the sharpness of its sight; Pliny says <sup>f300</sup> it is never dim sighted; it has its name *dorcas* in Greek, from its sharp sight. <sup>f301</sup> By *windows*, we are not to understand the windows of the heavens, through which the Lord looks down upon his people, and beholds them under all their afflictions, and in their several cases and circumstances, as some of the Jewish writers <sup>f302</sup> do; but rather, the ordinances of the gospel, which are that to the church, as windows are to a house, they let in light to souls; which windows, for the glory and excellency of them, are said, <sup><3542></sup>Isaiah 54:12 to be as agates. Christ looks forth at these; and shews himself in his glory and beamy to his saints; even as kings and great men look forth at the windows to be seen in their majesty and splendor by their people: also in at these windows Christ looks, and takes notice how his children behave themselves under the ordinances; with what reverence and attention, faith and affection, they hear the word; and in what becoming manner they carry themselves at the table of the Lord; and there is not the least motion of the heart that escapes his notice.

**3dly**, She takes notice of his shewing himself through the lattices; which seems to intend a more clear and glorious discovery of himself in the means and ordinances of the gospel; though indeed, our clearest sights of Christ here, are but as through a glass darkly, through windows and lattices, and not face to face, as they will be in another world: and it may be observed from hence, that unless Christ shews himself unto us, we can get no sight of him; for ‘when he hideth his face, who then can behold him?’ as also, that Christ usually discovers himself in the use of means through the ordinances; and therefore these are to be observed carefully, and attended on constantly. Moreover, a behold is prefixed to all these gradual manifestations of himself; which shews us, that Christ’s discoveries of himself to his people are exceeding wonderful and ravishing; a glimpse of him behind the wall, is a surprising instance of his grace, much more his looking forth at the windows; and his shewing or flourishing <sup>f303</sup> himself. in all his beauty and glory, through the lattices, as the word signifies; this is enough to throw us into the greatest raptures and extasies of mind, and fill us with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.



## VERSE 10.

*My beloved spake, and said unto me,  
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.*

CHRIST having made so near an approach to his church, as to come to her very wall, nay, to look in at the windows, and shew himself to her through the lattices, calls aloud to her to arise from her sleep, and come away with him; which she distinctly heard and understood, and therefore relates the very words he said to her, which she might be capable of; for if she could say it was the voice of her beloved, when he was a great way off, at a distance from her, upon the hills and mountains; she must needs know and understand distinctly what he said now, when he was so near her. These then are the words of the church, giving an account of what her beloved said to her, when he made her this kind and indulgent visit; in which may be considered,

**I.** The preface to the following discourse; ‘my beloved spake, and said unto me.’

**II.** The exhortation which he presses a compliance to; rise up, and come way.’

**III.** Some affectionate titles which he gives her: ‘my love, my fair one.’

**I.** The preface which she makes to this discourse of Christ to her, of which she gives an account in this and the following verses, is, ‘my beloved spake, and said unto me:’ in which may be considered,

**1.** The person speaking, ‘my beloved;’ which title has been frequently met with and explained, particularly in chapter ~~20113~~1:13.

**2.** The mode of expression in this preface, which in the Hebrew text is thus, ‘my beloved answered, and said unto me;’ <sup>f304</sup> which mode of speaking is frequently made use of by Christ in the New Testament; and perhaps is an hebraism in all those places where it is there used; but here it seems to be expressive of an answer to a secret petition of hers. There is undoubtedly such a thing as mental, as well as vocal prayer, in which the desires of the soul are put up to God; and that under the influences of the Spirit, who maketh intercession for the saints, With groanings which cannot be uttered: and such mental petitions and desires are heard, regarded, and answered by

Christ Jesus, who is privy to the secret motions of our souls Godward, and understands full well the language of a sigh and groan; which shews him to be the omniscient God; gives a manifest proof of his deity; as well as evidences his tender regard to his people, and his readiness to help them under all their distresses.

**3.** The notice which she takes of it. As Christ is not always much, but opens his mouth, and returns suitable answer, gives proper directions and instructions, and speaks peace and consolation to his people; so they are not always deaf, but have ears to hear, they listen to what he says; and as they can distinguish his voice from another's, so they regard it above all others: what he speaks unto them, is received with much pleasure and delight; his words are not harsh and austere, but full of love, grace, pity, and compassion. Now it may be observed from hence, that there is such a thing, as souls being satisfied when Christ speaks to them, and that it is not a delusion: the church knew that it was her beloved that spake, and not another; and that he spake to her in particular, 'my beloved spake, and said unto me:' and so every believer may, in some measure, know when Christ speaks unto him, and that it is not a delusion; as when it makes us love Christ more, and quickens us to our duty; or when it discovers Christ's love to us, and our interest in him; when it excites our faith, our hope, and joy, has a tendency to promote holiness of heart and life, puts us upon glorifying Christ, and makes us more active and vigorous in his service; all which seem to be the effect of Christ's speaking to the church here. But,

**II.** What Christ says unto her is by way of exhortation which consists of two parts,

**1st,** To rise up.

**2dly,** To come away.

**1st,** He exhorts her to rise up, and that in the most tender and affectionate manner, as will be observed hereafter; which supposes, either, that she was asleep upon a bed of carnal security, indulging herself in ease and sloth; or else, that she was cast down in her soul under a sense of sin, and for want of his presence, sitting in darkness, without the light of his countenance, bemoaning her sorrowful and disconsolate condition: as also, that walking in the path of faith, and running in the ways of Christ's commandments, better became her, than sitting still and being indolent; and likewise, that to lift up the head, and to be of a chearful spirit, better suited with the spouse

of Christ, than a sad and dejected countenance; who had no need to sit in the dust, and clothe herself with sackcloth and ashes, when she is the king's daughter, nay, the queen herself, whose clothing is the gold of Ophir: so that neither an indolent and unactive, nor a sorrowful and dejected spirit, become the people of God and spouse of Christ.

**2dly**, He exhorts her also to come away; from whence? why, from off her sluggish bed, or from out of her prison of darkness and unbelief, or from the company and conversation of wicked and ungodly men; and, in short, from every thing that might bring a dishonor to him, or be prejudicial to herself; which shews the great regard that Christ had for her. But whether would he have her come? why, to himself, where she might have peace and comfort, enjoy sweet communion with him, be out of the reach of enemies, and free from danger by them; he would have her quit her former companions, her former ease and pleasures, and go with him, where she should enjoy ease, pleasure and conversation, superior to these; he would have her be up and about her duty, following him, the lamb, whithersoever he went: in giving which advice, he sought her own good and comfort, as well as his own glory. The Jewish writers <sup>f305</sup> understand it as God's call to the people of Israel to come out of Egypt.

**III.** The loving and affectionate titles which he gives her, are,

1. 'My love,' which has been already explained in chapter ~~2006~~ 1:9.
2. 'My fair one;' in what sense the church is fair and comely, has been shewn in chapter ~~2006~~ 1:5, the church is Christ's fair one; not upon the account of her works of righteousness, as the Targum explains it; but upon the account of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, the pardon of her sins thro' his blood, and the sanctification of his Spirit. The Septuagint add a third character, 'my dove;' but this is not in the Hebrew text. Now he uses these titles,

- (1.) To shew her his ardent love and tender affections to her; that though she was in a carnal and secure frame, and negligent in her duty, yet she was his love and fair one still.
- (2.) To remove all discouragements from her that might arise from the consideration of her present state and condition.
- (3.) To prevail upon her arise and go with him; and indeed an exhortation, expressed in such moving language, delivered in such an

affectionate manner, one would think, could not fail of succeeding, especially when pressed with a claim of interest in her, my love, and my fair one; as also when designed for her own good, for so the words may be read, ‘rise up for thyself, and come away for thyself;’ <sup>f306</sup> it will turn to thy advantage, if thou dost do so; if not, it will be detrimental to thee. What other arguments he makes use of to enforce this upon her, will be seen in the following verses.

## VERSE 11.

*For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.*

CHRIST here presses upon and encourages his church to rise up from her present state of sleep and sloth, and come away with him, where she might enjoy peace and pleasure! and this he does by informing her, that it was now spring-time; that the winter was past, and the spring was come, in which every thing looked gay, pleasant, and delightful; the rain was over and gone, which made journies difficult, and rivers unpassable, and in the room of it, fair and sunshine weather; that that time of the year was over which was bad to travel in, as Christ says, ‘pray ye that your flight be not in the winter;’ and therefore she might without fear, and with the utmost safety as well as pleasure, venture abroad with him. Winter and rain are very properly put together, since rain is frequent in the winter-season; and hence it has the name of *imbrifer* <sup>f307</sup> from it. Now by this winter, which is said to be past, and the rain that is said to be over and gone, may be meant, either,

**First,** The state and condition both of the Jews and Gentiles, before the coming of Christ in the flesh, when it was a winter, a rainy and stormy dispensation with both of them. Winter is used by some writers, not for the season of the year, but for a storm and tempest; <sup>f308</sup> and figuratively, for some calamity, as war, etc. <sup>f309</sup> And,

**1st,** It may be expressive of the state of the Jews before Christ’s coming <sup>f310</sup> It is true, they were a people peculiarly chosen by God, and were indulged by him with special favors above the Gentiles; they had the knowledge of the true God, and were instructed in his mind and will; for he gave them his law to direct them, and sent his prophets time after time to inform, teach, rebuke, warn and admonish them; whilst the Gentiles lived without the law, and had only the dim light of nature to guide them: and yet the dispensation which the Jews were under, before Christ’s coming,

when compared with the gospel-dispensation, may be said to be a winter, a rainy and stormy one; which began when the law was given on mount Sinai, which was attended with blackness, darkness, and tempest. These people were all along treated by God, as if they had been under a covenant of works; for whilst they lived in obedience to the divine will, they enjoyed without disturbance their civil and religious privileges; but when they broke and transgressed the divine laws, the clouds of God's wrath gathered thick and black about them, and stormy judgments descended on them, which begat in them a spirit of bondage; so that their services which they performed to God, were not attended with that spirit of liberty and ingenuity, with that faith and cheerfulness, as now appear in the saints in this spring-time of the gospel: it was a time of coldness and barrenness, the sun of righteousness not having as yet arisen in their horizon, with his warming and fructifying influences as he has done since: it was a time of much darkness and obscurity; for though there were some discoveries of Christ and his grace to believers then, yet these were made through dark shadows, cloudy and smoaky sacrifices: a little before Christ's coming in the flesh, and appearing in his public ministry, there was a violent rain, nay, a flood of error, infidelity and profaneness, came pouring in among them; the law of God was corrupted with false glosses, his institutions and ordinances changed and altered, and his temple profaned; one sort set up the traditions of the elders, against the positive commands of God; another denied the resurrection of the dead, and a future judgment; and both obstinately persisted in their infidelity concerning the Messiah, when he appeared among them. This was the face of things when Christ was manifested in the flesh; who, by his ministry, checked the infidelity and profaneness of the age; and, by his death, put a period to the Mosaic dispensation: so that now those cloudy and shadowish ceremonies are gone; the night of Jewish darkness is ended, and the old covenant is waxen old, and vanished away.

**2dly,** It may also point out the state and condition of the Gentiles before Christ's coming. The times before the gospel came among them, were times of ignorance; they were strangers to the knowledge of the true God, to his mind, will, and worship; darkness covered them, yea, gross darkness was all, around them; storms of divine wrath hang over their heads; they were under the manifest tokens of God's displeasure, being given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart, and were shut up in sin and unbelief; their hearts were frozen up; and seemed scarce capable of having

any impressions made upon them; the Gentile world looked like an heath, a desert, or a wilderness, all barren and unfruitful, like the earth in winter time; an impetuous rain and flood of profaneness, error and seduction, overflowed it: God suffered them to walk in their own ways, and to follow the imaginations of their own hearts; they were left to worship birds, four-footed beasts, and creeping things; to fall down to stocks and stones, and graven images, and pray to a god that could not save: but when the gospel was sent among them by Christ, the face of the Gentile world was quite altered, and appeared like the earth after a winter season, upon the returning spring; gospel light diffused itself through all the parts thereof, and dispelled the shades of darkness, blindness, ignorance, profaneness, and infidelity; gospel grace, with its warming influences, thawed their frozen hearts, and left some deep and lasting impressions on them; that which looked like a wilderness, is become a fruitful field; and that which was as a desert, now appears as the garden of the Lord: such a mighty change has the spring-time of the gospel made in the Gentile world! Or else,

**Secondly,** This winter and rain, which Christ says were past and gone, may be understood of the spiritual state of souls; mad that either before or after conversion. The state of believers before conversion, may be represented by it, which is a time of darkness, deadness, coldness, barrenness, and unfruitfulness, and is only removed by the powerful and efficacious grace of Christ; and often after conversion, is a winter season with them; they are frequently annoyed with the blustering winds and rains of Satan's temptations, which beat upon them like a storm against a wall: this enemy of their souls often comes in like a flood upon them: and would bear them away, were it not for the power and grace of the Spirit of God, which are opposed unto it; they are often under the fearful apprehensions of storms of impending wrath, for their sins and transgressions against God; they are seldom free from sharp crosses and afflictions, and are often under the nipping blasts of persecution; which may be compared to the winter season for its sharpness and severity, though exceeding wholesome.

Moreover they are sometimes in a great deal of darkness of soul; the clouds interpose between Christ and them, so as they cannot behold him, and their interest in him; their hearts are often hard and frozen up, so as no impressions are made either by the preaching of the word, or by the providences of God; a great deal of coldness frequently attends them; there is a chill upon their love to God, to Christ, to his people, ordinances,

cause and interest, which is occasioned by the prevailings of sin and corruption in them: sometimes they look like trees in winter, barren and unfruitful, with no appearance of the fruit of grace, nor leaves of profession, but as if they were intirely dead and lifeless; and when this is their case, it may be said to be a winter-season with them: but though this is sometimes their case, it is not always; they have their returning seasons of peace, joy and comfort, when it may be said, ‘the winter is past, and the rain is over and gone;’ then light breaks in upon their souls, and their hearts are melted with a sense of divine love; they become lively in their frames, and in the exercise of their grace, and fruitful in every good word and work; calmness and serenity of mind, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, are the delightful blessings which the soul now enjoys: all these, and much more, does the sun of righteousness bring along with him, and produce in us, when he arises with healing in his wings, and turns a cold and nipping winter into a pleasant and delightful spring. But when it is a winter-season with believers, they have little or no communion with Christ, which was the church’s case here the rains that fall, and the floods occasioned thereby, interrupt their fellowship; and the clouds of darkness and doubts and fears, which hang over their heads, hinder them from beholding; Christ, and their interest in him: now this must needs be a very melancholy and uncomfortable time unto them; and therefore to hear that the winter is past, and the spring is come, that the rain is over and gone, that the clouds are dispersed, and the air is clear, bright and serene, must needs be good news and glad tidings to them. Moreover, souls, whilst in such a state, are usually indolent and inactive; they have neither hearts nor hands to work, but both are sealed up; they are neither diligent in the way of their duty, nor active in the exercise of grace, as the church appears to be here: also they are ready to think that the winter is not over when it is, but fear that there are more storms behind; not only of crosses, afflictions, persecutions and temptations; but which are worse than all the rest, that there are storms of divine wrath and anger behind, which will fall upon them; though these have been all borne by Christ, and are effectually and eternally removed by him; and believers may be assured of this, whatever their fears are, that not a drop of wrath shall fall upon them; for Christ has satisfied law and justice, and so hath delivered them from the wrath which is to come; and he that has done this, says, the winter is past, and the rain is over and gone: this is the voice of the gospel, and a joyful sound it is. The Jewish writers <sup>f311</sup> interpret this of the bondage of the people of Israel in Egypt, and their deliverance out of it; as do stone Christian interpreters <sup>f312</sup>

of the Babylonish captivity, and the Jews deliverance from thence; it being a Chaldee word <sup>f313</sup> that is here used to express the season of the year by: but the senses before given, seem to be much preferable to either of them; though it is true, that the two former deliverances did produce a spring-time of joy and rejoicing after a cold and nipping winter of trouble and sorrow; and were indeed wrought in the spring of the year, as was also our redemption by Christ Jesus, they were typical of.

## VERSE 12.

*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.*

THE church goes on to give an account of the pressing instances that Christ made unto her, to arise and come away; which he had done in the former verse, by assuring her that the winter was past, and therefore she need not be afraid of nipping blasts and blustering storms, nor of heavy rains, which would make travelling difficult, as well as unpleasant; and here he encourages her to arise and come with him, from the pleasantness of the spring, of which he gives the following account, in this and the next verse, enough to tempt her to a compliance; and which is very pleasant and inviting to lovers. <sup>f314</sup> In this verse he says,

**I.** That ‘the flowers appear on the earth;’

**II.** That ‘the time of the singing of birds was come.’

**III.** That ‘the voice of the turtle was heard in their land.’ All which are so many evident demonstrations of the springtime of the year; which of all others is the most pleasant.

**I.** The first sign of the spring, and which he mentions to prevail upon her to quit her present place and posture, and go with him, is, that ‘the flowers appear on the earth:’ <sup>f315</sup> in the winter-season the earth appears barren and unfruitful, being nipped with cold winds, frost and rain; but when the sun returns with its warming influences, it quickens those herbs and plants which before lay hid, and causes them to spring forth and flourish; so that the fields and meadows, as well as gardens, are covered with a variety of herbs, plants and beautiful flowers, which are very pleasant to the eye, and cause walking in the fields to be very delightful. Some Jewish writers, as Jarchi and Alshech, interpret them of the two messiahs, the Jews dream of,



and vainly expect; it is much better to interpret them of the one and only true Messiah, who appeared on earth in the spring of the acceptable year of the Lord; and who is compared to various flowers in this book, particularly to the rose and lily, verse 1. which are both spring-flowers: <sup>f316</sup> but rather, by these flowers may be meant, either 'the graces of the spirit' in the saints, which, when it is a winter-season with them, lie dormant, and are as it were dead and lifeless, and are scarcely discernible either to themselves or others; but upon the return of 'the sun of righteousness,' they revive and shew themselves in all their glory, send forth a grateful odor, and give a delightful prospect to all beholders; such are those Flowers of faith, hope, love, humility, self-denial, patience, long-suffering, forbearance with and forgiveness of each other: or else, by 'these flowers may be meant the saints themselves. The Targum interprets them of Moses and Aaron; but R. Aben Ezra thinks that all the righteous men of Israel are intended; and it is best to understand them of all the saints, especially when in a flourishing condition, and in the exercise of grace; who may be compared to the flowers of the field,

**1.** For the production of them: the covering of the earth with grass, herbs, plants, and beautiful flowers, in the spring-season, is a great instance of God's mighty power; it is no other than a kind of a recreation; this strange, though common change that is made in the earth by the returning spring, is elegantly described, as well as intirely referred to the divine Spirit by the royal Psalmist, thus, <sup>(1946)</sup> Psalm 104:30. 'Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth:' saints are flowers, not of man's, but of God's raising; they are not born of the will of man, nor of the 'will of the flesh, but of God;' their grace, and all the flourishings of it, are not owing to their own care, diligence and industry, but to the power and spirit of God, who 'worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure; for this work of grace upon their souls, is a work of Almighty power, and is no less than a new creation; and whether we consider it in its first beginning, or in its after-growth and increase, it must be referred to a power superior to ours.

**2.** For their fragrancy: the persons of believers are of a sweet-smelling savor, being perfumed with Christ's mediation, and covered with the sweet-smelling garments of Christ's righteousness; and so are their services, their prayers and praises, put up and performed in the faith of Jesus.

**3.** For their beauty and ornament: how beautiful and glorious must those fields look, where roses are, and lilies grow; which in glory are equal with, nay, superior to the greatest of princes; for ‘Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these;’ such as Sharon’s field, and the roses and lilies there, which are here alluded to: saints are exceeding beautiful and glorious in Christ, and ornamental to him, being sanctified by his Spirit, and clothed with his righteousness.

**4.** Saints may be compared to flowers which appear on the earth in the spring-season with an air of gait and cheerfulness, on the account of that joy and consolation which their souls are possessed of when their grace is revived and in exercise; particularly when faith is, and when Christ returns to them, and they enjoy his presence; thus the blossoming and flourishing estate of the church is joined with joy and rejoicing, in <sup>2380</sup>Isaiah 35:1, 2. Now all this fragrantcy, beauty, and flourishing condition of the saints, are owing to the arising of the sun of righteousness upon them, to the dews of divine grace, showers of boundless love, frequent waterings Of heaven, and to their being planted and growing in a fruitful soil, Christ Jesus: and perhaps it may not be amiss to interpret this of that large production and conversion of souls to Christ, and of that appearance of many beautiful flowers in the church of Christ in the first ages of Christianity; when saints appeared ‘in the beauties of holiness,’ and Christ had ‘the clew of his youth;’ and which time was a delightful spring-season, after a long winter of Jewish and Gentile darkness.

**II.** Another indication of the spring’s being come, and which Christ makes use of as an argument to induce the church to arise and come away, is, that ‘the time of the singing of birds was come;’ the spring, when birds begin to chirp and sing, to couple and build their nests; hence the spring is called *vernificum*. <sup>f317</sup> Some <sup>f318</sup> understand this of the time of cutting and pruning vines, or lopping trees; and to this purpose the Septuagint read the words thus, *the time of cutting is come;* <sup>f319</sup> which agrees well enough with the first times of the gospel, when Christ’s Father acted the part of an husband.. man, and lopped off the unfruitful branches the Jews, engrafted the Gentiles, caused them to bring forth fruit, and pruned them, that they might bring forth more; which seems well enough to agree with the season of the year, <sup>f320</sup> the spring, at which time, especially at the beginning of it, vines were usually cut and pruned; some object to this as unseasonable: by the Targum, it is referred to the ‘time of cutting, or gathering in the first fruits; as it is also by some <sup>f321</sup> to the gathering of flowers, making of

garlands, etc. as well as applied by others <sup>f322</sup> to the time of making incisures in the Balsam or Cyprus-trees in the vineyards of Engedi: but nothing is more agreeable than our version, and which is the sense that is gluten of the word by several Jewish writers <sup>f323</sup> and exactly suits with the gospel-dispensation, in which, ‘from the uttermost parts of the earth, songs are heard,’ sung in warbling notes and tuneful lays. by souls called by divine grace; whose usual themes are, the grace and mercy of God the Father, the redeeming love of God the Son, the spiritual blessings in him; the glory of his righteousness to justify them, and the fullness of his grace and power to keep and preserve them: like little birds, they sit and chirp and sing the praises of the Lord, ‘in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual song; making melody in their hearts unto him;’ and this they do as well as they can in this imperfect life, though their hearts are often out of tune, and they sing with faint and feeble notes; but the time is coming, when they shall be clothed in white, have harps in their hands, hallelujahs in their mouths, and be employed in this delightful service for evermore. But however, this present gospel-dispensation may well be called a ‘time of the singing of birds,’ a time of joy and rejoicing, in comparison of the legal one, in which was heard, not the chirping and singing of birds, but ‘the sound of a trumpet,’ and ‘the voice of words,’ which were awful and terrible. This may not be unfitly applied to the singing of the angelic host those heavenly choiristers, at the birth of Christ, <sup><4023></sup>Luke 2:13, 14.

**III.** As a farther evidence of the spring’s being come, and the more to allure her to arise and go with him <sup>f324</sup> he says, that ‘the voice of the turtle was heard in their land;’ which is a kind of dove, that, as naturalists <sup>f325</sup> tell us, lies hid in the winter-time, and appears in the sprang; its voice is never heard in winter, unless on a fine clay. <sup>f326</sup> By which may be meant, either the church, which is compared to a turtle-dove, <sup><4024></sup>Psalm 124:19. whose voice is heard in prayer to Christ; and who, in the preaching of the gospel, speaks of him, and in the public profession of his cause and interest, speaks for him; which voice, in verse 14. is *very* pleasant to him: or else, the voice of the Holy Ghost, according to the Targum, who once appeared in the form of a dove, and whose voice in the hearts of believers is very comfortable; for he speaks peace and pardon through Christ’s blood, bears witness to our sonship, and is the pledge of our future inheritance: or the voice of God the Father, declaring his well-pleaseness in Christ, which was heard in Judea, both at his baptism and at his transfiguration upon the mount: or the voice of John the Baptist, <sup>f327</sup> who was the forerunner of

Christ, and declared him to be at hand; and so R. Alshech interprets it, of Elijah, that was to come before the Messiah, and cites the passage in <sup><4015></sup>Malachi 4:5 and others <sup>f328</sup> understand it of the Messiah himself: or else, the voice of Christ himself, preaching the everlasting gospel; <sup>f329</sup> R. Simeon Ben Jochai <sup>f330</sup> understands it of the voice of the law in the days of the Messiah: but rather the gospel itself, that joyful sound of peace, pardon, righteousness, life and salvation by Christ, is meant; which was heard for a while only in Judea, which perhaps is the land here intended, called, by way of eminency and speciality, ‘our land;’ though afterwards this voice was heard throughout the Gentile world: for Christ gave his disciples a commission to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; who accordingly did, and their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world: and a joyful season it was, and still is to the poor Gentiles, where this voice is heard; and blessed be God, it is heard in our land.

### VERSE 13.

The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

To the three former evidences of the spring, here are added two more.

**I.** ‘The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs.’

**II.** ‘The vines with the tender grape give a good smell.’ As also,

**III.** The former call is repeated, ‘Arise my love, my fair one, and come away.’

**I.** As a fourth evidence of the winter being over, and the spring being come, Christ tells his church, that the fig tree was putting forth her green figs; which is a full confirmation of its being come, nay, of its being pretty well advanced; for Christ, in <sup><4015></sup>Matthew 24:32. makes it a sign of the summer’s being at hand, when the fig-tree shoots out its tender branches, and puts forth its leaves: Theopompus <sup>f331</sup> speaks of figs in the middle of the spring; and Plutarch, of the vernal leaves of the fig-tree <sup>f332</sup> R. Aben Ezra thinks, that the word translated, ‘putteth forth,’ signifies the sweetening of the figs, and so points out the time when the green or unripe figs begin to grow sweet and eatable: so that as the flowery fields would be

delightful to her eye, and the chirping birds affect her ear; there were also figs ripening apace to please her taste; as the vines with the tender grape in the following instance, would give a refreshing odor to her smell; all which would be very entertaining to her, and one would think enough to invite her to arise and go with him. By the fig-tree, both the Targum and R. Aben Ezra understand the congregation of Israel; who they say, is here compared unto it; as indeed Israel is to the first ripe fruit of this tree, <sup><3910></sup>Hosea 9:10 and the godly among the captive Jews are, in <sup><3911></sup>Jeremiah 24:2-5. and therefore by. it may be meant the saints, putting forth their grace in exercise on Christ; who may be compared to fig-trees for the following reasons.

- 1.** The fig-tree is a tree full of large leaves, so large, that our first parents, after their fall, by sewing them together, made themselves aprons to cover their nakedness; which may be an emblem of a profession of religion, and of a conversation agreeable to it; which, though they ought to be found in us, yet are not sufficient to cover us; for we must also have Christ's righteousness put upon us, and his grace wrought in us, otherwise we shall be like the fig-tree, to which Christ came, <sup><4219></sup>Matthew 21:19 'and found nothing thereon but leaves only,' And therefore, as the saints are like fig-trees that have the large ever-green and flourishing leaves of a Christian profession and gospel-conversation upon them; so,
- 2.** They may be compared to them for their fruitfulness: the fig-tree is a tree that bears fruit as well as leaves, and that which is very wholesome, pleasant, and delightful; and if the Egyptian fig-tree is meant, that is said <sup>f333</sup> to bear fruit seven times a year, and as soon as you gather one fig, immediately there is another: it is true, there are barren fig-trees, that have no fruit upon them; such an one is mentioned in <sup><2116></sup>Luke 13:6, 7, as there are also barren professors; but such are not the saints, who are filled and laden with the fruits of righteousness, and graces of the spirit, which they receive from Christ Jesus, from whom all their fruit is found: now as this is to be found from none but him, so neither is it found in any but in them; for, 'do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' it is impossible; this fruit appears upon no other tree but the fig-tree, and therefore by their fruits ye may know them.
- 3.** It is a tree that puts forth its fruit before its leaves <sup>f334</sup> which shews us, that though we ought to have the leaves of profession upon us yet the fruit of grace ought to precede it; and therefore when persons take upon them a

profession of religion, and submit to the ordinances of Christ, care should be taken that they, as John says, <sup><4087></sup>Matthew 3:7, both have and bring forth fruits meet for repentance: there must be faith in the heart, as well as a confession of it in the mouth; and the one ought to go before the other; and both these make souls to appear honorable believers and professors; and such Christ's fig-trees are.

**4.** It may not be amiss to observe, that the Egyptian fig-tree, which is no other than the sycamore, into which Zaccheus climbed to see Christ, <sup><2914></sup>Luke 19:4 may be here intended, seeing that there was great plenty of them in Judea, as is manifest from <sup><1107></sup>1 Kings 10:27 though it is true, another word is used here, than what is there. Now of this tree, Pliny says <sup>f335</sup> that when it is cut down and cast into the water, it sinks, being dry; but when it is thorough wet, it will swim: so saints, when they first enter the waters of affliction, like Peter, they sink; but when they have been more used to them, they lift up their heads above the waters of tribulation; and as good soldiers, with courage and magnanimity of mind, endure hardness; and do not sink in their spirits under the weight of reproaches, persecutions, and afflictions, laid upon them, being supported and borne up by Christ and his grace,

**5.** The same author <sup>f336</sup> says, that this kind of fig-tree will not ripen any other way than by scratching it with iron hooks: men do not begin to grow in grace, or become fruitful in good works, until their hearts are pricked with the goads and nails of God's word, or till the fallow ground of their hearts is thrown up by the Spirit of God; nor will they grow afterwards to any purpose, unless Christ's Father, who is the husbandman, takes his pruning-knife in his hand, and uses it: and indeed some saints never grow better than when they are attended with tribulations and afflictions, like the people of Israel, in Egypt, or like Christ's lilies among thorns.

Moreover the green figs, which the fig-tree is said to put forth may intend,

**(1.)** The beginnings of grace in the soul, which are like the young, green and unripe figs: that the fig, tree first puts forth; such as stirrings of affection to Christ, desires after a saving knowledge of him, and interest in him, pantings and breathings after the ordinances of Christ, and love to his people: all which appear very soon in the soul, and discover the work of grace begun, though as yet it is but very imperfect. For,

(2.) These green and unripe figs shew the imperfection of grace in the saints; grace in the best is very imperfect in this state of life, much more must it be when it is first put forth; the work of grace in us, though it will be performed, yet at present is but a begun one, and not a finished one: saints are not arrived to the perfection they shall; they are but like green figs, and especially young converts.

(3.) These beginnings of grace in the soul, being compared to green figs, shew, that grace is liable to be lost, and would be so, was it not for the almighty power which preserves it and increases it; for of all fruit, none is more easily shaken off by the wind and lost, than green and unripe figs are; see <sup><34B></sup>Nahum 3:12. it is no less than a miracle of grace, that those first impressions are not wholly erased by the impetuous force of corruptions within; or that these precious blossoms are not intirely blown off by the blustering winds of Satan's temptations; or that our naughty hearts do not of themselves, as the fig-tree, cast off this unripe fruit: this is all owing to mighty, powerful, and efficacious grace.

(4.) It may also be observed, that grace, though imperfect, is taken notice of by Christ; yea, in the very infancy of it, as soon as ever it begins to appear, even when in its bud and blossom: so far is he from despising the day of small things; where there is but little grace and little strength, as in the church of Philadelphia, he observes it, and does not crush it, but increases it; for 'a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoaking flax shall he not quench,' <sup><24B></sup>Isaiah 42:3.

(5.) It may be remarked from hence, that grace being in exercise in others, though weak, should be an argument and motive to excite and stir up ours; and indeed it is disgraceful and dishonorable to old professors, for young converts to be more active and lively in the exercise of grace than they. Christ seems to press this argument here upon the church.

Again, the putting forth these green figs, signifies the exercise of grace on Christ, which saints put forth unto him, not by virtue of a power of their own, hut by virtue of his grace, which enables them to do it; for the putting forth of these green figs, is owing to the warming and quickening influences of the Sun of righteousness: the beginning, increase, and perfection of grace, are all from Christ; the implantation of it in the soul, and the exercise of it, depend upon him. But,

**II.** As a fifth and last evidence of the spring's being come and which puts it beyond all doubt, is, the flourishing of the vines, 'the vines, with the tender grape, give a good smell.' Fig-trees and vines are frequently mentioned together in scripture, as in <sup><9453></sup>Psalm 105:33. <sup><3304></sup>Micah 4:4 and in many other places; and one reason is, because they grew together; for fig-trees were planted in vineyards, as is manifest from <sup><4336></sup>Luke 13:6. nay, it is judged by naturalists, <sup>f337</sup> to be very proper they should grow together: one sort of figs, the black fig, is called the sister of the vine. <sup>f338</sup>

By *vines* may be meant, the several distinct congregated churches of Christ, or else particular believers, see <sup><9804></sup>Psalm 80:14, 15. <sup><2377></sup>Isaiah 5:7 and 27:3 who may be called so,

- 1.** Because of their fruitfulness: the vine is a fruit-bearing tree, it produces very fine and excellent fruit; especially the vines in the land of Canaan did, of which there is a famous instance in <sup><4123></sup>Numbers 13:23 saints being ingrafted in Christ Jesus, the true vine, and receiving life and nourishment from him, do, by abiding in him, bring forth much fruit, and such as is not to be found in others; not wild and sour grapes, such as Christ's Father takes no delight in, but such as he is pleased with, and glorified by.
- 2.** Because of their dependence on Christ: the vine-tree does not grow up erect of itself; for if it is not fixed to a wall with nails <sup>f339</sup> or supported by something else which it lays hold on, it creeps along the ground: saints do not grow up erect of themselves, but lean upon Christ, are supported by him, and so grow up in him.
- 3.** For their tallness in Christ: vines being propped, will run up a great height; saints being ingrafted in, and upheld by Christ, who is himself higher than the heavens, grow up from shrubs to taller trees; from babes in Christ, to 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;' and, by virtue of grace and strength, received from him, arise from a low and mean state and condition unto a much higher one, until at length they arrive unto the full possession of the 'prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'
- 4.** For their weakness and unusefulness in themselves; the vine is a weak tree, and, as has been observed, cannot bear up itself: saints, they are weak in themselves, though strong in Christ; they can do nothing of themselves; neither perform duties, subdue corruptions, nor withstand temptations; but they' can do all things through Christ strengthening them.' The wood of the vine is of very little worth or use, as appears from <sup><2676></sup>Ezekiel 15:2, 3



and is obvious enough to every one's observation: saints are but poor, worthless, and unprofitable creatures of themselves; their best works and most excellent performances, are neither profitable to God, nor can they procure salvation to themselves; but are all as an unclean thing, and as filthy rags; they are unworthy of the least mercy they enjoy, and therefore it is a wonder of grace that God should in any respect be mindful of them.

**5.** For their durableness: though the wood of the vine is but weak and worthless, yet it is said to be very lasting and durable; Pliny ascribes eternity to it, and says of it <sup>f339a</sup> *nec est ligno ulli aternior natura, no wood is of a more eternal or durable nature than this is*: saints, however weak and worthless in themselves, yet shall continue and abide for ever in Christ; they are born of an incorruptible seed; they are built upon a rock, and secured by almighty power, so as they shall never perish, but shall for ever enjoy the incorruptible inheritance that is reserved for them.

Also these vines are said to have the tender grape upon them. The word translated *the tender grape*, is only used in this song, and that but in two other places besides this, viz. verse 15. of this chapter, and chapter <sup><2172></sup>7:12 but is used both in the Targum <sup>f340</sup> and Misnah <sup>f341</sup> in the same sense. Most of the Jewish writers <sup>f342</sup> think, that by it is meant the small and tender grape, which appears as soon as ever the flower is fallen off, when the vines begin to knot, and one grape can be known, and may be distinguished from another; which sense our version expresses. But I am rather inclined to think that it means the flower itself; for in the Targum on <sup><2185></sup>Isaiah 18:5 this word **rdms** *smadar*, is used to express the Hebrew word **hxn** *nitzab*, which signifies a flower; and not only Pliny <sup>f343</sup> and others, but the scriptures also testify, that vines do blossom and flower, as in the aforementioned place, <sup><2185></sup>Isaiah 18:5 and in <sup><1410></sup>Genesis 40:10 and the good smell which these vines are said to give, seems best to be understood of their time of flowering, than of any other time; for it is reported of some vines <sup>f344</sup> and perhaps may be true of the vines which grew in Judea, seeing that the wine of Lebanon is commended for its agreeable odor, <sup><2147></sup>Hosea 14:7. I say, It is reported of some vines, that in the time of their flowering they send forth so sweet a smell, that not only the vineyards themselves, but the country round about is refreshed with the sweet savor thereof; so that walking or sitting among them is both wholesome and delightful; nay, that the smell of them is so great, that serpents and other venomous creatures are driven away by it. So then the words may be rendered thus, 'the vines, being in flower, give a good smell.' <sup>f345</sup> How by these tender

grapes, flowers, or blossoms of the vines, may be meant, either the graces of the Spirit in their first appearance, as before; or else, young converts, to which I rather incline, who are the fruit of Christ's vine, the church; and though very weak and tender, yet are very dear unto, and are much regarded by Christ; and when there is a large appearance, of them, it is a great encouragement to the church, and promises a glorious vintage: so the Targum interprets it of young men and babes praising the Lord at the Red Sea, for their deliverance out of the hands of the Egyptians: and R. Sol. Jarchi says, it is explained of repenting sinners, in an ancient book of theirs, called *Pesikta*; and so I find it is also in another book of theirs, called *Raya Mehimna*.<sup>f346</sup>

Moreover, these vines having their tender grapes upon them, or being in flower, are said to give a good smell; which must be understood of the fragrantcy of the persons of believers, being clothed with the sweet-smelling garments of Christ's righteousness, and the delightful odor, of their graces being exercised on his person; as well as of their sweet savor, Which their pious and godly conversations send forth to all that know them, or are about them.

**III.** Christ having given such full demonstrations of the spring being come, renews his call to the church, and says again, 'Arise, my love; my fair one, and come away;' which repetition shews,

- 1.** Our backwardness and sluggishness: we need one call after another, one exhortation upon another, and all will not do, unless the power of divine grace is exerted; for alter repeated calls, we shall sleep on and take no notice, as the disciples did, being overborne with a body of sin and death.
- 2.** It manifests the exceeding greatness of his love to us, and care of us; that though we have backslidden from him, yet he calls us back again; and though backward to his calls, yet he persists in them, and all along uses the most endearing and tender language to work upon us: he gives no other words but such as these, 'my love, and my fair one.'
- 3.** It is a plain indication that he is unwilling that we should be without him, or he without us; and therefore having taken the most winning methods, and used the most prevailing arguments, he repeats the call.
- 4.** It shews his importunity, and that he will have no denial; <sup>f347</sup> and indeed one would think there could be none given, when both our pleasure and

profit are so much concerned in it; and what he calls us to, tends so much to advance both; and there will be none, and can be none, when he exerts the mighty power of his grace.

### VERSE 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, thy countenance is comely.

THESE are the words of Christ to his church; and may be considered either as coming immediately out of his own mouth; or else, as recorded and related by her, as the former were: in which may be considered;

**I.** The title or character which Christ gives to his church; ‘my dove.’

**II.** Her then present place of residence; ‘in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs.’

**III.** A request which he makes, which consists of two parts.

**1st,** That he might see her countenance.

**2dly,** Hear her voice.

**IV.** The motives or arguments that he makes use of to prevail with her; which are also of two sorts, suited to both parts of the request,

**1st,** Because her voice was sweet.

**2dly,** Her countenance was comely.

**I.** Here we meet with a new title or character given by Christ to his church, ‘my dove;’ an epithet sometimes used by lovers: <sup>f348</sup> he had called her his love and his fair one before, but not his dove, till now; though it is true, he had compared her eyes to doves eyes, in chapter ~~2015~~1:15. Now the church may be compared to the dove, for the following reasons:

**1.** The dove is a very beautiful creature; so is the church, as she is washed in Christ’s blood, justified by his righteousness, and sanctified by his grace; for though, while in a state of nature, she lay among the pots, and so looked black and uncomely; yet now being called by, and made a partaker

of divine grace, she looks like ‘the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.’

**2.** It is a very cleanly creature; <sup>f349</sup> it loves cleanliness; it keeps its own body clean, and teaches its young to carry their dung out of their nests; it feeds only upon pure grain, and delights in clean water: the church, or believers in Christ, are not only clean through the word which Christ has spoken, but also have their hearts ‘purified by faith in his blood, and delight in purity of life and conversation.

**3.** It is a very innocent and harmless creature; and therefore Christ says to his disciples, <sup><4016></sup> Matthew 10:16. ‘Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves:’ believers are, or at least should be, ‘blameless, harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation;’ they should live not only inoffensive to the world, but also peaceably and quietly among themselves; not biting and devouring one another; not acting the part of wolves and tygers; but behaving themselves as Christ’s innocent sheep and harmless doves.

**4.** It is an exceeding loving and chaste creature to its mate; <sup>f350</sup> it inviolably keeps its conjugal faith; adultery is rarely known among these creatures, and, whenever committed, is punished with death; for males will tear a male to pieces, and a female a female that is found guilty of it: it is also reported of the turtle-dove <sup>f351</sup> that upon the loss of its mate, it remains inconsolable; does not couple again, but continues a widow, and lives a mournful and sorrowful life, avoiding every thing that might tend to remove it, and create pleasure; and that whereas before it delighted in pure and clean water, it now will not drink until it has first bemuddied it; nor will it sit upon green and flourishing, but upon dry and withered branches of trees — all which is a lively emblem of the church, who is presented as a chaste virgin to Christ, Who bears an exceeding great love and affection to him, and whose absence is what she cannot bear,

**5.** It is a very fruitful creature; tho’ it has not many young ones, at a time <sup>f352</sup> yet has them very often; *Aelianus* says <sup>f353</sup> that it has young ones ten times in a year; nay, in Egypt, twelve times: the church, who is married to Christ, is not only fruitful in grace and good works, but also brings forth many souls unto him, which has been and will be still more eminently seen in the Gentile church; see <sup><2841></sup> Isaiah 54:1.

**6.** It is a sociable creature; doves flock together as birds of a feather usually do: so saints delight to be in each other's company; they join in fellowship one with another, and carry on a social worship together; and do not forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some too often is.

**7.** It is a weak and impotent creature, and is often oppressed by birds of prey: the church is often distressed and persecuted by the men of the world, and forced to fly into holes and corners, as the dove does.

**8.** It is a very fearful and timorous creature; hence Ephraim is compared to the trembling dove <sup>f354</sup> in ~~28111~~ Hosea 11:11 saints are often in trembling fits, at the word of God, and in the exercise of their faith on Christ; under a sense of their own vileness, and in the apprehension of their weakness and want of power to keep and preserve themselves.

**9.** It has a mournful voice: saints are like doves of the vallies, mourning every one for their iniquities; and often for the loss of Christ's presence, which they are frequently deprived of, through their unbecoming carriage to him.

**10.** It feeds only upon pure grain: the church feeds only on Christ, and on the wholesome words or comfortable doctrines of the everlasting gospel; she cannot live upon husks that swine eat, nor will she be fed with the chaff of man's invention.

**11.** It is also very swift in flying; and therefore David wished for the wings of a dove, that he might flee away, and be at rest: souls, in their fleeing to Christ for life and salvation, move as swift as the manslayer did from the avenger of blood to the city of refuge; and afterwards, under all their trials and afflictions, he is the strong tower, whither they run and are safe: and then more especially, may they be said to be as doves, when they are upon the wing of faith, and mount up as eagles do, run and are not weary, and walk and faint not.

*Lastly, It is reported of the dove* <sup>f355</sup> *that it will allure wild doves by its familiar converses into the dove-house with it: those who are called by grace, will use all proper ways and methods to allure and gain others to Christ, and to a compliance with his ways and ordinances, as the church does the daughters of Jerusalem in this Song; she being a great lover of the society of saints, and of the glory of Christ therein; as the dove is of its*

own country, particularly of its own dove-house, and especially when near the habitations of men.

Now Christ's calling the church by this name, 'my dove,' not only shews his interest in her, but also his affection to her and perhaps the principal thing he had in view, was to assure her of it, and to encourage her in her present condition; though she was in the cleft of the rock, in a poor, desolate, and forlorn condition, yet she was his dove still; which is the next thing to be considered. For,

**II.** She is said to be 'in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs;' which may be understood, either in allusion to the usual place where the dove makes her nest, which is in the rock <sup>f356</sup> and 'in the sides of the hole's mouth,' see ~~2488~~ Jeremiah 48:28 and Adrichomius <sup>f357</sup> tells us, that there was a stone tower near Jerusalem, southward of the mount of Olives, called *Petra Columbarum*, 'the rock of the doves,' where often five thousand doves were kept at one time; and perhaps here maybe an allusion to it: or else, it may be understood of the place where doves are forced to fly, when pursued by the hawk, even into a hollow rock, as described by Homer: <sup>f358</sup> and so may be expressive of the state of the church under persecution, when saints are forced to flee into holes and corners, and cannot openly and publicly, worship God, as they used to do, according to his mind and will; but even then God has his hiding-places for them, where he protects and preserves them until the heat of the persecution is over; for at such a time God will have a church, it shall never be entirely rooted out; neither shall hi people be without his presence, and some visible manifestations of himself unto them; for he has as great a love for them as ever: the church is his dove then, and her countenance is as comely, and her voice as sweet as ever; nor would he have her be disconsolate and disheartened in her present condition. Most of the Jewish writers <sup>f359</sup> refer the words to the condition that the people of Israel were in, when they were pursued by Pharaoh at the Red Sea; which seems, in some measure, to agree with the former sense which has been given. Or else, by the clefts of the rock, may be meant, either,

**1.** The eternal decree of election, in which, as in an immoveable and inaccessible rock, the church dwelt from all eternity, and will do so unto all eternity; which is the sense that Junius. gives of these words; God's eternal decree of election is as immoveable as a rock; it is a foundation that stands sure, being laid, not upon the conditions of faith and holiness in the

creature, but upon the sovereign will and pleasure of that God, who, 'will have mercy on whom he will have mercy,' and 'will be gracious to whom he will be gracious; whose purposes cannot be disannulled, nor his counsel made void, nor he ever be frustrated of his end, for the thoughts of his heart shall stand to all generations; and as the decree of election is immoveable, irrevocable, and cannot be altered, so the doctrine of it will stand, maugre all opposition, and will prove a burdensome stone to all those that set themselves against it. Now in the clefts of this rock, the people of God dwell as in a hidden and secret place before conversion; it being neither known to themselves nor others, that they are the objects of it, until called by divine grace; and here they dwell secure, and are safely preserved, notwithstanding the fall of Adam, and their own actual sins and transgressions, until the grace that is laid up for them is actually bestowed upon them; for every one that dwells here, shall be called and sanctified, and at last eternally glorified; not one shall be lost, nor any one link in the golden chain of salvation ever be broken; of which we have an account in ~~f483~~Romans 8:30. 'Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified: them he also glorified:' moreover, these persons are and ever were the objects of Christ's love, and so they ever shall be; his love was set upon them, and his delights were with them before the world began; these are his doves, and this the place of their habitation. Or else,

**2.** By this rock may be meant Christ, who frequently bears this character in scripture, and particularly is said, ~~f408~~1 Corinthians 10:4. to be that spiritual rock, of which the Jews drank in the wilderness: and by the clefts thereof, may be meant the wounds of Christ, <sup>f360</sup> which were opened for the salvation of sinners, and in which believers dwell by faith; and perhaps to this the allusion is made in ~~f232~~Exodus 33:22 where it is said, that God put Moses into the cleft of the rock, and made his glory to pass before him; for the glory of all the divine perfections is no where so manifestly seen as in a crucified Christ. Now saints are the inhabitants of this rock; here Christ's church dwells, and that safely, being built upon a rock, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail; this is her fortress and strong-hold, where she need not be afraid of any enemy whatever, for her place of defense is the munition of rocks; and therefore, whenever under any apprehension of danger, she betakes herself to her stronghold, to Christ, the rock that is higher than she. Moreover, the church being said to dwell here, not only shews the safety of her state, but also her majesty and greatness, and her

exaltation above others; see <sup><2416></sup>Jeremiah 49:16 for dwelling in a rock, she dwells on high; she is not now in the miry clay, but her feet are set upon a rock and her goings are established; she is not now upon the dunghill, but upon the throne; not in a mean cottage, but in a well-built, strong, and fortified castle. Indeed the other phrase, the secret of the stairs, seems to denote abasement and humiliation; though it may be better understood of Christ; as the former expression seems robe; for Christ is the stairs or ladder which Jacob saw in a vision, which reached from earth to heaven; he being God and man in one person, has, by his, mediation, blood and sacrifice, made peace between God and sinful, man, reconciled those two contending parties, brought heaven and earth as it were together, and filled up that vast distance that there was between them; he is the ladder or those stairs also, on which the angels of God ascended and descended; see <sup><1032></sup>Genesis 28:12 compared with <sup><415></sup>John 1:51 he is likewise our way of access to God, by whom, as by steps, we ascend to him, have admittance into his presence, and are indulged with communion with him: now in the secret of these stairs or steps, did the church lie, as the dove is said to do in some hidden place during the winter season; which was the case of Christ's dove here, (see verse 11) for Christ is the 'hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest;' and if any thing is particularly intended by the secret of the stairs, Christ's; justifying righteousness seems not unlikely; which is secret and hidden to the men of the world, and is only revealed in the gospel from faith to faith: hither souls betake themselves in times of distress and, by it they are screened and sheltered from sin, law, hell and death; and dwelling here, they are in safety; for 'he that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.' The Ethiopic version renders it, in the shadow of the rock to which Christ is compared, <sup><2312></sup>Isaiah 32:2 and so the Septuagint version, in the covering of the rock; <sup>f361</sup> which is the shade of it: which seems to be a better sense than what some Jewish writers <sup>f362</sup> give of the words, who interpret them of the sanctuary or temple, and of the holy of holies, which was in it. But,

**III.** I shall now consider the request which he makes unto her, which consists of two parts,

**1st,** That he might 'see her countenance,'

**2dly,** 'Hear her voice.'



**1st,** He desires that she would shew him her countenance; which supposes that she had either covered her face, as mourners do, and was bemoaning her present state and condition, bewailing her inward corruptions, as well as her outward afflictions: or else, that she was filled with shame, under a sense of sin, and blushed, as Ezra did, and could not lift up her head and eyes to Christ; but smiting upon her breast, like the poor publican, discovered the inward confusion of her mind: or else, that she was attended with fear, and that not so much with a fear of her enemies, as of his displeasure; being conscious to herself that she had acted an unbecoming part towards him: or rather, that she was filled with shamefacedness and bashfulness, and could not, with an holy boldness and an allowed freedom, approach his presence: unless we understand it of the state of the church under the Old Testament, in opposition to this under the New; when the face of the church was veiled, and she only saw Christ through dark shadows and typical ordinances; whereas we now, ‘with open face, behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord;’ And now, what Christ would have her do in opposition to all this, is, to lift up her head with joy, exercise faith upon him; use freedom with him, come with boldness to him, and look him full in the face, and keep always looking to him for every fresh supply of grace, and whatever she might stand in need-of; he would not have her be shy and bashful, fearful and faithless; but free and familiar with him, with whom he would assure her she, might. Unless we would rather understand it of his desire, that she would appear more publicly in his worship, and not lurk in holes and corners, in the clefts of rocks, and under dusty stairs; but shew ‘herself in his house, and in the courts of it, and ‘present herself a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which was but ‘her reasonable service;’ and especially seeing there was now no danger, for the storms were over, ‘the winter was past, and the rain was over and gone.’

**2dly,** He desires that he might hear her voice. Believers should not be dumb when Christ would have them speak: there is a dumbness or silence which is laudable, and that is, either when they are under the afflicting hand of God, or are vilified and reproached for the sake of Christ and his gospel; but then there is a dumbness which is not so: for as there is a time to keep silence, so there is ‘a time to speak.’

**1.** Believers should speak of Christ; of what he is in himself, of the glory of his person, the excellency of his righteousness the efficacy of his blood, and the sufficiency of his, grace; they should also speak of what he is unto them, being of God made unto them, ‘wisdom, righteousness,

sanctification and redemption;’ of what characters he bears, and of what relations he stands in to them, as well as of what he has done for them, in redeeming them, and calling them by a his grace.

**2.** They should speak for Christ, as well as of him; and as he is a person that is much spoken against by the men of the world, therefore believers should speak for him, in vindication of his person, cause and interest; boldly assert the truths of his gospel; bravely bear a testimony against all errors, both in doctrine and worship; and not be afraid of men or their revilings.

**3.** They should speak to Christ; and this perhaps is the voice which Christ more especially desired to hear; they should speak to him in prayer, in praises and thanksgivings, and ascribe all the glory of their salvation to him; which is but just and reasonable in itself, becoming them, and makes for the advancement Of Christ’s glory.

**IV.** The motives or arguments he makes use of to prevail upon her, to grant him what he desired of her, are these two;

**1st,** The sweetness of her voice.

**2dly;** The comeliness of her countenance: which he mentions, not only to shew what induced him to make the request; but also to encourage her to grant it.

**1st,** He says, that her ‘voice was sweet;’ that is, grateful, acceptable, and exceeding well-pleasing; and therefore he desired to hear it; which she had no reason to be ashamed of. Herodotus <sup>f363</sup> makes mention of a dove that spoke with an human voice; such a voice Christ’s dove speaks with, and is very grateful to him; the voice as well as the countenance of lovers, is very pleasing; <sup>f364</sup> and such was the voice of the church,

**1.** In speaking of Christ, of what he is in himself and what he is to her, and has done for her, is sweet unto him; he loves to hear his people speak of these things; we are told, <sup><30E6></sup>Malachi 3:16, that ‘they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another;’ and what did they speak of? no doubt of the excellency of Christ of what he had done for, shewn unto, and wrought in them: now what acceptance did this meet with from him? why, ‘he hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him’ of all they spake of one to another,

**2.** Her voice in speaking for him, confessing his name, and bearing a testimony to his truths, is sweet unto him; for he says, <sup><4002></sup>Matthew 10:32 that ‘whosoever shall confess him before men, him will he confess before his father which is in heaven;’ but as for those who are ‘ashamed of him and of his words’ here on earth, he highly resents, and will be ashamed of them another day, and in another world.

**3.** Her voice in speaking to Christ is sweet; whether it be in prayer or in praise; her voice in prayer is so; and thus the Targum. paraphrases the words, ‘let me hear thy voice, for thy voice is sweet in prayer in the house of the little sanctuary.’ The prayer of a poor believer makes sweet music in Christ’s ears; nothing is so delightful to him; so little reason have souls to be discouraged, or fear a kind reception of their petitions with him: and so her voice in praise and thanksgiving is sweet unto him; praise is not only pleasant in itself, and comely in us, but is also exceeding delightful to him; this ‘pleases the Lord better than an ox or bullock that has horns and hoofs,’ <sup><990></sup>Psalms 69:30, 31.

**2dly,** He tells her, that her ‘countenance was comely;’ that is, beautiful, and much to be desired; and this Christ says, not only in opposition to what she was in the esteem of the world, who counted her as the offscouring of it, but also to what he was in her esteem, who looked upon herself as black and uncomely, and therefore was ashamed to lift up her head, or to have her countenance seen by him; therefore, in order to remove her unbelief, bashfulness, and misgivings of hearty he declares what she was in his esteem, whose judgment is preferable to her own, and to all others beside; for in his opinion, she was ‘the fairest among women,’ of a beautiful aspect and comely countenance, being made perfectly comely through that comeliness which he had put upon her: he saw no iniquity in her, nor any spot upon her, as clothed with his righteousness; she was in his eye a ‘perfection of beauty;’ having the most just symmetry and proportion of parts, the most agreeable shape, and the most lovely features in her face; her cheeks, being ‘comely with rows of jewels, and her neck with chains of gold,’ as in chapter <sup><2010></sup>1:10. Faith is most properly the believer’s face or countenance, by which he looks on Christ, and views a fullness and suitableness in him, and expects all needful supplies from him; which look of faith on Christ, for life and salvation, is exceeding pleasant, nay, ravishing to him; and therefore he would have his church behold him again and again; for saints never appear more comely in Christ’s eye, than when they take a full view of him.

## VERSE 15.

*Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines:  
for our vines have tender grapes.*

WHETHER these words are the words of Christ or of the church, is not so manifest. Some think that they are the words of the church, to whom the care of the vineyard was committed; which, though she had in some measure neglected, as appears from chapter ~~2006~~ 1:6, yet now is heartily concerned for the flourishing of it; and therefore calls upon her attendants and companions to assist in destroying those noxious creatures the foxes, which did so much mischief to the vines that grew in it; though they rather seem to be. the words of Christ, who is the owner of the vineyard, and has an authoritative power over the officers of the church, and ministers of the gospel, to stir them up to be sedulous and careful in the. discharge of their work; for the words seem to be directed, not to angels, nor to his bride, the church, nor to the civil magistrate, but to ministers, who are more particularly employed in the care of Christ's vineyard: and if we take them to be the words of Christ, it not only shews the power and authority of Christ over those he speaks to, and lays his commands on in so strict a manner; but also his love to, and care of his vines, the several churches, which his own right hand has planted: though perhaps they may be the words of them both jointly together; for the church, with Christ, and under him, has a right to stir up her officers to perform their work, and fulfill their ministry, which they have received of the Lord Jesus; the doing of which will redound to his glory, and her good; they both having an interest in the vines here mentioned; also the foxes, which they are ordered to take, were common enemies; both to Christ and his church; and therefore it is not said, 'take for me or thee, but take for us the foxes.' In these words may be observed,

**I.** A command that is laid upon the ministers of the gospel, to 'take the foxes, even the little foxes.'

**II.** Some arguments or motives proposed to stir them up to an observance of it.

**I.** The thing enjoined them is, to 'take the foxes.' By foxes we are to understand, either,

**1st,** The sins and corruptions of our nature, which may be compared unto them for the following reasons:

- 1.** As foxes have their lurking-holes in the earth, so have these in the hearts of men, where they lie a long time undiscovered; and that not only in the hearts of wicked men, but also in the hearts of God's own people; and therefore, says David, <sup><1919D></sup>Psalm 19:12. 'Who can under, stand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults;' now it is only the Spirit of God, who 'searcheth the deep things of God,' that can search the inmost recesses of our hearts, discover our vile corruptions, bring them out of their lurking-holes, and slay them by the mighty power of his grace.
- 2.** The sins and corruptions of our nature may be compared to foxes for their deceitfulness, therefore are they called 'deceitful lusts;' and wed they may, for we are often imposed upon by them, and deceived with them, and that under the notion either of pleasure, profit, or honor, which they promise to us, but leave us intirely short of: there is a deceitfulness in sin, which makes our hearts so deceitful, and desperately wicked as they be.
- 3.** For the crooked ways which they take: the fox <sup>f365</sup> does not walk straight forward, but with several windings and turnings; the ways of sin are all crooked ways; they are so many distortions from the ways of God and godliness which are straight and even; and are so many aberrations from the divine law, which is the rule of our obedience unto God.
- 4.** For making places barren and desert <sup>f366</sup> wherever they come: sin makes persons barren and. unfruitful, both in the knowledge of Christ, and in the performance of duty; so that they look like 'the heath in the desart,' and like 'parched places in the wilderness.'
- 5.** For their friendship with serpents: <sup>f367</sup> there is a secret correspondence held between Satan, that old serpent, and the corruptions of our nature; by virtue of which he often compasses his end, and gains his purpose, which he could not do on Christ, there being no such matter for him to work upon; he had none of his old friends there to let him in, as he has in our hearts.

Now the ministers of the gospel may be said to take these foxes, when they lift up their voices like a trumpet, and exclaim against them, expose the Wickedness and deceitfulness of them and shew souls the danger they are in by them; when they are made useful to bring persons under a conviction

of them, and, as it were, to ferret them out of their lurking-holes: moreover,' by the power of the Spirit of God attending the ministry, the 'strong-holds of sin' are pulled down, and the vain imaginations, of mens hearts subdued, and every vile thought brought 'into captivity, to the obedience of Christ,' and a revenge taken upon all disobedience. Not but that private Christians, as well as ministers, should watch and pray against them; fight in order to take them, and, when taken, should bring them to Christ, as his and their enemies, to be slain by the mighty power of his grace; and not only gross sins, but even 'little foxes,' the very first motions of sin, are to be watched against and struck at; we should abstain from all appearance of it,' knowing that lesser sins will bring us into the commission of greater, and insensibly grow upon us; so R. Alshech interprets these little foxes of little sins. Or else,

**2dly,** By these foxes may be meant false teachers or heretics; so the false prophets in Ezekiel's time were called by him, <sup>f338</sup>Ezekiel 13:3, 4. 'O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the desarts;' and so may false apostles and false teachers now, and that for the following reasons;

**1.** For their craftiness, and subtilty. The fox is remarkable for its cunning and craftiness, of which some writers give us many instances: sometimes he feigns himself dead, lies upon his back, with his mouth open, and his tongue out, so that he looks every way as a dead carcase; by which means he invites the fowls of the air to feed upon him, but when come, devours them with open mouth; <sup>f368</sup> for the same purpose, at other times, he rolls himself in the red earth, that he might appear as bloody, and then, as before, lays himself down upon the ground as dead, and thereby lays a bait for the unwary birds: so when he is taken in a snare, and finds that there is no escaping, he prostrates himself upon the ground, holds his breath, and in all appearance seems dead, which the snare-setter supposing to be real, looses the snare, without any suspicion of his escaping; but finding himself free, gets upon his legs, and away he hans: also when hunted, he will run among a flock of sheep or goats, and leap upon the back of some one of them, which puts the whole flock into a fright, and causes them to run one after another, and, for fear of damage, the huntsman is obliged to call in his dogs: these, with many other instances of his subtilty, as his artful method of catching crabs and lobsters with his tail: destroying of wasps, clearing himself of fleas, tricking the hedge-hog, revenging himself upon the badger, and catching of hares, are recorded by several writers. <sup>f369</sup> Hence false teachers may be very fitly compared unto them, who act in disguise, lie in

wait to deceive, walk in craftiness, and handle the word of God deceitfully, speak lies in hypocrisy, use good words and fair speeches, and thereby deceive the hearts of the simple.

**2.** For their malignity: foxes are cruel as well as cunning, they are very noxious and hurtful creatures; and so are false teachers, they are wolves though in sheeps Clothing; their heresies are damnable, their doctrines are pernicious, and their words eat as doth a canker; they subvert the faith of some, and bring ruin and destruction upon themselves and others,

**3.** For their hunger and voraciousness: all the cunning and cruelty that the fox uses, is to satisfy his greedy appetite; and so the principal end of false teachers, is not to serve Christ, but their own bellies; to devour widows' houses, and making merchandise of others, to enrich themselves, and indulge their own pride and vanity.

**4.** For their feigning themselves to be domestics: it is reported of the fox <sup>f370</sup> that when it draws nigh to a farm-house, it will mimic the barking of a dog, which the hens and geese being used to, walk about with less guards and with more confidence approach to him, and so are surprised and devoured by him; so false teachers put on sheeps clothing, transform themselves into angels of light, as their master before them has done; mimic the voice of Christ's ministers; use some phrases and expressions which they do, which serve as a blind to the people; and so craftily do they put their words together, that it is not an easy thing to discover them.

**5.** As foxes are filthy, abominable, and stinking creatures, so are these, not only to God, but to his people; and therefore are also compared to wolves and dogs; and are not so much as to be received into the houses of good people, nor to be hid God-speed by them.

Now the ministers of the gospel are to take these foxes; they being overseers of the flock, and keepers of Christ's vineyard; are to watch against them, and make a discovery of them, they are to oppose and refute their erroneous doctrines; and being detected, and convicted of heresies, they are with the church after proper admonitions given, to reject and cut them off from the church, and communion with it: it is true, they are not to take away their lives, but they are to exclude them, from fellowship with them, and not suffer them to continue with them, either as members or officers; nay; even the little foxes are to be taken. Heresy is compared to leaven; the erroneous doctrines of the Scribes and Pharisees are called so,

and ‘a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.’ Heresies and heretics are to be nipped in the bud,, otherwise they will increase to more ungodliness; great things have rose from small beginnings: these things should be taken in time; for errors, seemingly small at first, have grown larger, have spread themselves, and have been very fatal to the churches of Christ; therefore no error or heresy should be connived at, under a notion of its being a small or a harmless one; for even little foxes are to be taken. Some <sup>f371</sup> connect the word little with the vines next mentioned; and so it strengthens the reason, why care should be taken to preserve them from the foxes, since they are small and tender.

**3dly,** Here are motives and arguments proposed to induce a compliance to this command of Christ’s.

**1.** The mischief Which these foxes do to the vines, is made use of as one, which spoil the vines: it has been observed by many <sup>f372</sup> that these kind of creatures do hurt to the vines; and that by destroying the fences, knowing the branches, biting the bark, making bare the roots of the vines, devouring the ripe grapes thereof, and infecting all with their noxious teeth and vicious breath: so heretics and false teachers break down the church’s fence, by making schisms and divisions, make bare her roots, sap the very foundation of religion, by corrupting the word of God, and denying the great doctrines of the gospel; and hurt her fruit, by disturbing the peace of her members, unsettling some, and subverting others.

**2.** Another argument that is made use of to stir them up to diligence in taking the foxes, is, because the vines have tender grapes; by vines are meant the several distinct congregated churches of Christ; by the tender grapes or flowers thereof, we are to understand young converts, whom Christ is very tender of, and has a particular regard unto; see <sup><2401></sup> Isaiah 40:11 and 42:3 and these having but a small degree of faith, knowledge, and experience, like children, are more easily tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness of these foxes, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: now generally they make their onset upon these, as being more easily wrought upon, and by whom they can with more facility compass their end; and this being then the case, the ministers of Christ ought to be more sedulous and diligent in the discovering of those foxes, from whom so much mischief may be expected, and more bold, vigorous, and courageous in opposing and rejecting them; seeing the churches of Christ are like to sustain so



considerable a loss by them, and in danger of having a promising vintage spoiled. It is true, the foxes love the ripe grapes and devour them, and not when they are, blossoming and knotting; which shews Christ's care of his vines, to be the greater, that he would have little foxes taken .while the vines were blowing; for by such time, as the grapes were ripe, these little foxes would be great ones, and would be capable of doing more damage, and not so easy to be taken neither; so that the consideration also of there being less difficulty now, than there would be hereafter, might animate them to set about the work immediately.

**3.** Christ seems to intimate as if they had some interest in these vines; for which reason they ought to be the more heartily and vigorously concerned for the welfare of them; therefore they are called our vines: it is true, Christ has a sole right unto, and property in the vineyard; the vines are all of his planting, and the fruit of them belongs to him; yet those to whom the vineyard is let out, who are intrusted with the care of the vines, and who must give an account of them to the chief and principal owner, have also an interest therein; for though our great Solomon must have a thousand, whose the vineyard is; yet 'those that keep the fruit thereof must have two hundred,' <sup><ZANI></sup>Song of Solomon 8:11, 12, so that if they should be negligent in their work, and suffer the foxes to overrun the vineyard, and spoil the vines, they would not only incur the displeasure of the owner of them, but sustain a loss themselves, by coming short of the fruit which otherwise would be distributed to them. Now such arguments as these, which have interest and profit contained in them, usually have the greatest influence upon persons; Christ: knew this, and therefore uses such an one here.

## VERSE 16.

*My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.*

CHRIST having given such evidences of his love, and instances of his care and kindness to the church in the preceding verses; she, in this, declares her faith in him, and signifies the obligations which she lay under to observe his commands. 'My beloved is mine;' he hath given himself to me, his heart is set upon me, and is always careful of me, and concerned for me; of which he has given the fullest proofs I could wish for: 'and I am his;' I give up myself to him, and am at his dispose, and think myself obliged to observe whatever he enjoins me; and to follow him whethersoever he calls me; especially seeing it is for my good; it makes both for my pleasure and

profit, as well as for his glory; for ‘he feedeth among the lilies.’ I need not fear his leading me into danger, or any desolate places, but where lilies grow, where is all delight and pleasure; he will lead me into green pastures; where I may have food, and fullness of it. And,

**First**, These words are expressive of the mutual interest and property which Christ and the church have in each other; ‘my beloved is mine, and I am his;’ he has interest in me, and I have the same in him.

**1st**, She says, ‘my beloved is mine.’ She first asserts her interest in Christ and then his interest in her; for Christ is first ours, and then we are his, because he is ours; he loves us before we love him; he first gives himself to us, and then we give ourselves to him. But how comes Christ to be ours? I answer,

**1.** By the Father’s gift; he gave him for us, and he gave him to us; therefore Christ is called, ~~<FOH>~~ John 4:10, ‘the gift of God.’ and that by way of eminence; he being the first: and best gift, the most comprehensive one, that includes all others in it; and brings them with it; for he that gives the greater gift, will give the lesser; if he gives his own son, ‘he will give all things with him;’ him he has given to be an husband to his church, and a head over her; he has given him to be a priest to offer up sacrifice, and to make intercession for her; to be a prophet to teach, and a king to rule her; and Surely such a gift as this deserves the utmost thanks; so that there is reason to say with the apostle; ~~<FOH>~~ 2 Corinthians 9:15, ‘thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift; and thus Christ becomes ours.

**2.** By his own gift; he has given himself to us; as well as for us; he gave himself a sacrifice for us, and that as an instance of his love to us, as well as a fruit of his having given himself in covenant to us before.

**3.** By marriage! Christ has not only espoused our cause, but has also espoused our persons; and betrothed us to himself ‘in righteousness and in judgment., and in loving-kindness, and in mercies, and in faithfulness,’ and that for ever; so that, O astonishing grace! he that is our Maker is become our husband.

**4.** By possession: we have him and all things pertaining to life and salvation with him; we have him in us as the hope of glory, dwelling in our hearts by faith, living there as in his own house and temple, and reigning there by his grace and spirit, as in his own palace; and those souls who can experience

this, may say with the Church, my beloved is mine; I have an interest in him; for I am in possession of him. Thus Christ is the church's. But,

**2dly**, She says also, that she was his; I am his; and that because he is mine; Now how come souls to be Christ's? I answer,

- 1.** By the Father's gift: he that gives Christ to us, gives us also to Christ; and this he did in the everlasting covenant, to be his bride and wife, to be his portion and inheritance, and to be kept and preserved by him safe to glory. Christ having pitched his love upon us, chose us for his own, and asked us of his Father, who granted his request; 'thine they were,' says Christ, <sup>4876</sup>John 17:6, 'and thou gavest them me.'
- 2.** By purchase: he has bought us with a price, and that not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with his own most precious blood; so that he does, as he justly may, claim an interest in us upon this account.
- 3.** By the conquest of his grace upon our hearts: he pulls down the strong-holds of our hearts; enters in with his glorious train and retinue of grace, dispossesses Satan, dethrones sin, sets up a throne for himself, and places his own spirit in the midst of us, which is the grand evidence of our being his; 'for if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his;' from whence it may be inferred, that he that has the spirit of Christ, is one of his.
- 4.** By a voluntary surrender of ourselves unto him; which cannot be better expressed than it is in Isaiah 44.
- 5.** 'One shall say, I am the Lord's;' which is the language of the church here: 'another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; 'which is the name of Christ's church' 'and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel;' and this in New-Testament-language, is called a giving themselves to the Lord, and to the church by the will of God; so that as Christ is ours by his own consent, we are Christ's by our consent, being made a willing people in the day of his power.

Now from Christ's being ours, it follows,

- 1.** That all he has is ours; all his perfections are ours; not that they are communicated to us, for that would be to deify us; but they are all engaged for our eternal good and welfare; we have the comfort of them: Is he the Almighty? then he is able to save us from law, sin, hell and death, and to

keep and preserve us safe to his kingdom and glory: Is he omnipresent? hence saints enjoy his gracious presence, in all places, in all his ordinances; he can be with them, when and where he pleases: Is he omniscient? he knows their persons, their wants; their enemies, etc. and is both able and willing to help them: Is he immutable? Is he Jesus? the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever?' they need not then fear any variation of his mind, any alteration in his love, nor change in their state; and thus all other of his divine perfections serve to advance their comfort and happiness.

**2.** That all he has is theirs; his person is theirs, to render them acceptable to God; his blood theirs, to cleanse and pardon them; his righteousness theirs, to justify and acquit them before God; his fullness theirs, to supply their wants; and all covenant-blessings and promises which he has in his hands, are theirs. Therefore,

**3.** It follows, that they can want no good thing; for as he has ability to help them, he has a heart to do it, and will not withhold any thing that may be needful and proper for them, especially seeing they have an indisputable right to and interest in them.

Moreover, from our being Christ's, it follows, that we are not our own; our persons, our time and talents, our gifts and graces, are not our own, but his; and therefore we should give up all unto him, and glorify him with all: nor are we any others; we are not Satan's, for Christ has delivered us as lawful captives out of his hands: nor sin's, for Christ has redeemed us from it; nor the world's, for Christ has both chosen and called us out of it; and therefore we should serve none but him, who has an incontestible right to us, and a sovereign power over us.

**Secondly,** These words are expressive of a near union, that there is between Christ and his church; these two are one in a conjugal relation, as husband and wife are one; my beloved is my husband, and I am his wife, and we are both one flesh. Which union is,

**1.** Personal: it is an union of persons, that is to say, the whole person of Christ, as God-man, is united to a believer; and the whole person of a believer, body and soul, is united to Christ; and by virtue of this union, as the souls of the saints shall be receives into everlasting habitations till the resurrection-morn, so the bodies of the saints shall be raised from their dusty beds, and shall then live with Christ for evermore.

**2.** It as a spiritual union; ‘he that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit:’ Christ and his church being one, they have one and the same spirit; Christ has it without measure, and the church in measure; and this she has as the fruit of her union to Christ, and also as the evidence of it.

**3.** It is a vital union; such an one as is between the vine and branches: where the spirit of Christ is given, a principle of life is implanted; when souls are ingrafted into Christ, they receive life from Christ; nay, he lives in them, and maintains this spiritual life by fresh communications of life from himself, who is the fountain of it; and because he lives, they shall live also; as long as there is life in the head, there shall be life in the members; and because there is life in the root, the branches shall not wither.

**4.** It is very mysterious: the union of the three persons in one divine essence, and that of two natures in Christ’s person, are very mysterious; these, without controversy, are the great mysteries of godliness: and next to them is this union of souls to Christ, which the apostle having spoken of, thus says, <sup><B7E></sup>Ephesians 5:32. ‘This is a great mystery, but I speak of Christ and the church;’ that is, of the union there is between Christ and the church; that it; is an ineffable and unconceivable one, appears from its being; compared to the union of the divine persons in the Godhead, <sup><B7I></sup>John 17:11-23.

**5.** It is an indissoluble one: Christ and the church can never be separated; the union-bond can never be broken; and what is that? The generality of divines say, that it is the spirit on Christ’s side, and faith on ours; but neither the spirit nor faith are the bond of union, but the fruits and effects of it: the reason why the spirit is given, or faith, or any other graces are wrought, is, because the soul is already united to Christ. What then is the bond of union? I answer, Christ’s everlasting love; it is this which is the cement that knits and joins souls unto him: What was it that knit and united the souls of David and Jonathan together, and made them as if they had been but one soul, but love? What is it that knits the saints together? so as they appear to be of one heart and one soul, but love? This is the bond of union between them; and so it is between Christ and his church; and now who or what can separate from this love? This betrothment, which was done in loving kindness and in mercies, can never be made void; this marriage-knot can never be loosed; this union-bond can never be broken; Christ’s love is everlasting, unchangeable, and inseparable.

Now from this union flow,

1. An interest in all he has; he being ours, and we his by marriage; all his goods are ours, all the aforementioned things are ours.
2. A communication of names the church is called by the name of Christ, <sup><622></sup>1 Corinthians 12:12, <sup><236></sup>Jeremiah 23:16 compared with <sup><336></sup>Jeremiah 33:6, and Christ is called by the church's name, <sup><348></sup>Isaiah 49:3 which is somewhat remarkable; for though it is usual for the wife to take the name of the husband, yet not the husband the name of the wife.
3. Conformity to Christ: by virtue of this union, the soul receives the same spirit that Christ has, and has grace daily communicated from, is indulged with transforming views of, and therefore cannot but bear some resemblance to him; which will more fully appear in the other world, when saints shall be like him, and shall see him as he is.
4. Communion and fellowship with him: communion with Christ follows upon union to him; because his saints and he are both one, he is not ashamed to call them brethren; but takes them into his bosom, indulges them with his presence, grants them nearness to and familiarity with him.

**Thirdly**, These words are also expressive of the mutual affection, delight and complacency, which Christ and his church has in each other: it is as if she should say, He is a beloved to me, and I am the same to him; he loves me, and I love him; yea, there is no love lost between us. He says, that the lines are fallen to him in pleasant places, and that he has a goodly heritage: he is well pleased with his portion, and I am well pleased with mine: for, 'whom have I in heaven but him? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides him.' He says, that I am in his eye 'the fairest among women,' the greatest beauty in the world, and so is he in mine; he is white and ruddy, a complete beauty, 'the chiefest among ten thousand.'

**Fourthly**, There is in them a manifest declaration of the assurance of that knowledge and faith which she had of her interest in Christ; it shews us, that such a thing is attainable; and, sure I am, next to the enjoyment of the heavenly glory, nothing is more desirable; it is a mercy not only to have an interest in Christ, but also to know it, to be capable of saying with Thomas, 'My Lord and my God;' or with Job, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth;' or with the apostle Paul, 'I know whom I have believed;' for this makes much for the comfort of souls. The church seems to speak this in the triumph of faith, rejoicing in the comfortable views of Christ as her

own; and as it were boasting of it, excluding all other beloveds, as not worthy of her notice, and as not to be mentioned with her beloved.

**Lastly**, She tells us, that this beloved of hers was feeding among the lilies; ‘he feedeth among the lilies:’ which may be regarded either as an apostrophe to him, and may be read thus, ‘O thou that feedest among the lilies!’ thou, and thou only art mine, and I am thine: or else, these words may be descriptive of his person, and prevent a question that might be asked, viz. who her beloved was, that she thus claimed an interest in? To which she answers, My beloved is that yonder person you see feeding among the lilies; and at the same time also points out to us the place where he was, and what he was about: his employment was feeding, that is, either feeding himself; which Christ does, when he delights and recreates himself in his gardens, the churches, and among his lilies, the saints; observing how their faith grows, and how that and all other graces are exercised upon himself: Or else, feeding his flock, as R. Sol. Jarchi observes; for as he bears the character of a shepherd, so he performs the work of one; ‘he feeds his flock like a shepherd;’ see chapter ~~2007~~1:7. The place where he is here said to feed, is among the lilies; by which may be meant, either a good, quiet, and delightful pasture, as R. Sol. Jarchi glosses it; Christ leads and feeds his people in ‘green pastures, beside the still or quiet waters;’ and what can be more delightful than to lie down among, or to sit and feed where lilies grow? or else, by these lilies may be meant the scriptures of truth, the precious promises and comfortable doctrines of the gospel; and the ordinances thereof, with which Christ feeds his church: or rather, by them may be meant the saints, who are compared thereunto, in verse 2. of this chapter. Now it is among these that Christ feeds; and therefore do any want to know where Christ feeds, as the church did, in chapter 1:7? he feeds among his saints, where they are congregated in gospel order, where his lilies grow. It may be observed, it is not said, he feedeth on, or feeds his flock. with lilies, but among them; for it is remarked <sup>f373</sup> that sheep will not eat them: or the sense may be, Christ feeds himself, and feeds his people, and feeds among them, as if he was crowned with lilies, and anointed with the oil of them; as was the custom of the ancients at festivals <sup>f374</sup> thought to be here alluded to by some, who read the words, ‘that feeds;’ that is, feeds, sups in or with lilies, being crowned with them, and anointed with the oil of them. The lily is a summer flower <sup>f375</sup> the winter was now past, verse 11, and so agrees with the time when those words were spoken.

## VERSE 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 former part of these words, ‘until the day break, and the shadows flee away,’ may stand connected with either part of the preceding verse; either with those words, my ‘beloved is mine, and I am, his,’ <sup>f376</sup> which are expressly, as has been observed, of that mutual interest, union, communion, satisfaction and delight, which Christ and his church have in and with each other; and then the sense is, as long as day and night continue, and God’s covenant with both stands sure, so long will my covenant-interest in, and union to Christ, who is my beloved, abide solid and unshaken; I can no more be separated from his person, and from his love, than day and night can cease; and when they do, I shall be taken up into everlasting and uninterrupted communion with him, which is now subject to the same vicissitudes as these returning seasons are: or else, they may stand connected with the latter part of the preceding verse, ‘he feedeth among, the lilies, until the day break <sup>f377</sup> etc. and so are expressive of the continual presence of Christ in his church, until his second coming, when the everlasting day shall break, and all shadows of darkness flee away; till then, as in chapter ~~2046~~ 4:6 he will be on his mountain of myrrh, and hill of frankincense; where he will delight himself with, and feed among his saints, until all his elect ones are called by grace, and till all his lilies are grown up to their full maturity, when he will gather them to himself: though the words may be also considered as connected with the latter part of this verse, ‘turn, my beloved, etc.’ and so they contain a prayer of the church’s for Christ’s speedy access unto her, and continued presence with her, until the day should break, and the shadows flee away. In which may be considered,

**I.** The favor which she requests of him, which is, 1st, To turn, that is, unto her; and this she desires that he would do speedily, and therefore says, ‘be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.’

**II.** The time unto which she desires this favor might be continued to her; and that is, until the day break, upon which the shadows would flee away.



**I.** The favor which she desires of him is, that he would turn unto her; which seems to intimate, as though he was about to leave her; which, upon some account or other, she had a suspicion of, therefore importunes him to stay With her; and seeing him upon the motion, upon the turn, ready to depart, she desires that he would turn again, and continue with her: or else it supposes that he was entirely gone, and that she was sensible of it; and having a great value for Christ's person and presence, desires that he would turn again to her: such a petition as this, under a sense of desertion, is frequently put up by the psalmist, particularly in ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 60:1, and ~~Psalm~~ 69:16, 17, and ~~Psalm~~ 86:16. though the word may be rendered, *turn about* or *surround* <sup>f378</sup> that is, with thy favor and loving kindness; let me always be under thy care and protection; be thou a wall of fire round about me; so shall I be safe and secure from all enemies, until the glorious and wished for day breaks, when I shall be out of fear, as well as out of danger: and this favor she desires might be speedily granted to her, and therefore says, 'be thou like a roe or a young hart;' which are not only loving and pleasant, but also swift and nimble creatures. She had experienced Christ to be so before, and therefore might the more comfortably hope that he would be so to her now: she adds, 'upon the mountains of Bether;' by which perhaps may be meant Bithron, of which we read in ~~2 Samuel~~ 2 Samuel 2:29. and was so called, because it was parted or separated from Judea by the river Jordan; though some think it should be read *Bethel*, by a change of a letter; and so the Septuagint read it in verse 9 which is there an addition to the Hebrew text; though they here render it, ὄρη κοιλωκάτων, *the mountains of cavities*, that is, such that were full of clefts and hollow places; but be they what they will, it is certain that they were such places where roes and fawns used to skip and run. The words may be very well rendered, *the mountains of division* <sup>f379</sup> which, if referred to Christ's first coming in the days of his flesh, may regard the ceremonial law, which made and kept up the division between Jew and Gentile, was the partition wall between them, which was broken down by Christ Jesus: or else, the two people divided by it, to whom Christ came, for whom he made peace, to whom he preached it, and thereby made both one. But if we refer the words to Christ's spiritual coming in a way of special grace to visit his people; then these mountains of division, upon which Christ comes, and over which he leaps as a roe or a young hart, may be our sins and corruptions, which often separate between him and our souls; though, when he is pleased to come, they are no obstacles in his way, but are easily surmounted or removed by him: but if they be applied to Christ's second coming at the day of

judgment; these mountains of division may intend the spacious heavens, in which Christ shall then appear, which at present interpose between him and us, and separate us from the enjoyment of his bodily presence; one part or branch of whose awful work then will be, to separate the sheep from the goats, But,

**II.** How long does she desire to be indulged with this favor of enjoying his gracious presence, in the discoveries of himself, and of his love unto her, without which she could not live, and therefore desires it might be speedily granted to her? and that is, ‘until the day break, and the shadows flee away;’ which may be understood, either,

**1st,** Of Christ’s coming in the flesh, which was the break and dawn of the gospel day, until the day break; or, according to the Hebrew text, ‘until the day breathe or blow,’ <sup>f380</sup> and naturalists <sup>f381</sup> have observed, that upon the sun’s rising, art air or wind has been excited; so upon the rising of ‘the sun of righteousness with healing in his wings? were raised some fine, cool, gentle, and refreshing breezes of divine grace and consolation. Before Christ’s coming in the flesh, it was night, hot only in the Gentile, but in the Jewish world; there was a great deal of darkness, blindness, and ignorance, infidelity, sleepiness, and security; but upon the arising of this sun, and breaking or breathing of this day, all this was in a great measure dispelled, and light, nay a great light, was introduced; for Christ’s coming was ‘as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds;’ he came as the light of the world, and made that day, that gospel-day, which, by way of eminency is so often spoken of in the Old Testament. when the shadows of the old law fled and disappeared: so the law is called ‘a shadow of good things to come,’ and that because it was a representation of them; which were no sooner come, but this was gone, and, like a shadow, appeared fleeting and transitory; and whilst it continued, was dark and obscure; though there was some glimmering of light in it, which led the faith of the Old Testament saints to Christ, who was represented by it: but now these shadows are gone, Christ the body and substance being come; this middle wall of partition is broken down; this hand-writing of ordinances is taken away, and the whole Mosaic dispensation and economy is waxen old and vanished; there being a disannulling of it, because of the weakness and unprofitableness thereof; and a glorious dispensation and bright day of gospel grace introduced in the room of it, and all by the appearance of Christ in our nature; which was the great thing promised, prophesied of, long expected, and earnestly

wished for by the Old Testament saints, as it was perhaps by the church here. Or else,

**2dly,** This may be understood of Christ's second coming to judgment; which, as the former, is called that day in the Old Testament by way of eminency, as being, that great, glorious and notable day of the Lord, so is this an the New; for the former, see <sup>23110</sup>Isaiah 11:10 and 25:9 and <sup>23301</sup>26:1 and 27:1, 2, 13; and for this, see <sup>3006</sup>Philippians 1:6, <sup>3012</sup>2 Timothy 1:12, <sup>3012</sup>1 Thessalonians 5:2, 4. and this as well suits both with the Hebrew text, and with the natural philosophy of it, as the former: Christ's second coming will be at the evening, both of the world and of the gospel dispensation, when 'the shadows of the evening are stretched out, upon us; at a time when there will be a great deal of darkness and ignorance, much want of faith, and a very great sleepiness and security, which will seize upon professors as well as upon profane; but upon Christ's appearance, a glorious and everlasting day will break, the shadows of darkness and ignorance will flee away; we shall know as we are known, and see him as he is; not as now, 'through a glass darkly,' but face to face;' all infidelity, doubts and fears, will be removed; everlasting joy will be upon our heads; no interposing clouds will be between Christ and our souls; but we shall have the everlasting enjoyment of him, and uninterrupted communion with him: there will then be no need of the sun and moon, of gospel-ordinances: for the glory of God will lighten both our persons and the place of our residence, and the Lamb: himself will be the light thereof; so shall we ever be in his presence, see his face clearly, without any mixture of darkness and unbelief, and without any fear of the shadows of the evening returning upon us; there will be no more night, but one pure, bright and everlasting day. Moreover, naturalists <sup>f382</sup> have observed, that the wind often blows fresh, and fine breezes of air are raised at the sun-setting, as well as at the sun-rising; so that the words, until the day blow or breathe, that is, at the cool of the day, when the wind blows fresher, and there are gentle breezes of air, which often are in the evening; at which time it may be very well supposed that God appeared to Adam in the garden after his fall: I say, these words may be very well applied to the evening of the world, or second coming of Christ; which, though it will be with flames of fire, to take vengeance on the wicked, yet to the saints it will be 'a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord;' which time is earnestly, wished for by them; their desire is, that Christ would be as a roe or young hart to hasten it; for, as he says, 'I surely come quickly,' they return and say,

‘Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus.’ So some Jewish <sup>f383</sup>writers interpret these words of the day of judgment, and compare them with ~~3001~~Malachi 4:1.

## CHAPTER 3.

For this chapter an account is given of an adventure of the church in quest of her beloved; of the time when, and places where, and the persons of whom she sought him: and of her success upon the whole; with a charge she gave to the daughters of Jerusalem, verses 1-5 by whom she is commended, verse 6. And then Christ her beloved is described by her; by his bed, and the guard about it, verses 7, 8, by the chariot he rode in, verses 9, 10, and by the crown he wore on his coronation-day; to which sight the daughters of Zion are invited, verse 11.

### VERSE 1

*By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth;  
I sought him, but I found him not.*

FROM hence it appears, that the day was not as yet broke, which the church had mentioned in the last verse of the preceding chapter; but that the night was still upon her, even the night of Jewish darkness, when the shadows of the ceremonial law were stretched out upon her; yet having some small knowledge of Christ by types and prophecies, which had raised in her a desire of knowing more of him, as well as filled her with love to him, she sought after him; which at present was not attended with success, it not being his will as yet to appear to her in that manner she was desirous of: though indeed the words may be taken in a more large and comprehensive sense; and may represent the state and condition of the church of Christ, and all true believers, in all ages of the world, at one time or another: and in them may be observed,

**I.** The church's case, which was the absence of her beloved.

**II.** How she behaved herself under it, or what she did in order to remove it; 'she sought him.' And,

**1st,** The person Whom she sought is described; 'him whom my soul loveth.'

**2dly,** The place where she sought him is mentioned; 'on my bed.'

**3dly,** The time when; 'by night.'

**4thly**, The success she had in seeking; ‘but I found him not.’

**I.** The church’s case here appears to be, absence of her beloved; which is not only manifest from her seeking of him, though that clearly shews that he was absent from her, but also from the time in which she sought him, which was by night; for as Christ’s presence makes the believers day, so his absence makes it night with them; as well as from the place where .the sought him, and that is, upon her bed; which shews that she was in a sleepy, slothful and secure frame of spirit, which is never attended with a lively sense and feeling of Christ’s gracious presence. Now from this being the church’s case, we may observe,

**1.** That the change of a believer’s frame is often very sudden; not only their frames are changeable, but they are often changed: it was not long since that the church was in the banqueting-house with Christ, and there had her fill of love, and was sweetly refreshed with his gracious presence: and though she fell into a relapse of dulness and sleepiness, yet he in love visits her again, and recovers her out of it; insomuch that she became so lively in the exercise of her faith, that she could claim her interest in him, and relation to him, and say, ‘My beloved is mine, and I am his;’ and yet now she is at a loss for him, and knows not where he is; she is grown dull and sleepy, carnal and secure, and he withdraws himself from her; so that a believer can sometimes say, as the Psalmist did, ~~<PRO>~~ Psalm 30:7 ‘Lord, by thy favor thou hast made my mountain to stand strong;’ and perhaps immediately, nay, almost at the very same time complain, ‘thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.’

**2.** That Christ absents himself from his own church and people; he hides his face from the house of Jacob,’ from his own flesh and blood, from his love, his bride and spouse; which he does both for her good; and for the advancement of his glory: though Christ’s absence is very uncomfortable and disquieting to his people; they cannot tell how to bear it, especially when they are sensible of it; for sometimes they are not, but are attended with sleepiness, carelessness and security; he is gone from them, and they are not aware of it, and therefore are unconcerned about it, until such time as they are awakened by him; and then they are made sensible that he is withdrawn from them: not but that Christ is always present with his church in some sense, though they have not always the comfortable sense of it upon their souls.

**3.** That Christ's absence does not dissolve that covenant-interest and union which his people have in and with him; though there may be a distance as to communion, yet there is a nearness as to union; she was his, and he was hers, now as much as ever, though absent.; from her; neither did it destroy that love and affection which she had in her heart towards him; for still it is 'him whom her soul loveth,' though she could not see him nor hear of him.

**II.** What the church did in this case, comes next to be considered: she sought him; which shews that she was sensible that he was gone from her. Believers are sometimes, like Samson, they wist or know 'not that the Lord is departed from' them; but it seems that the church was apprised of it; perhaps she had slept quietly for some time, imagining that her beloved was with her, but finding herself mistaken, seeks for him: and from hence it also appears, that she saw her need of Christ's presence, had a value for it, and was in hopes of enjoying it again, otherwise she would never have sought for him. Now Christ's presence, when lost, should be sought after;

**1.** Timely, or 'while he may be found,' as Isaiah says, chapter <sup>2586</sup>55:6 for otherwise, by missing an opportunity, as Thomas did, he may be gone, as he was in chap, 5:6 when the church opened to him.

**2.** With our whole hearts; not feignedly or hypocritically, as some did, of whom complaint is made in <sup>2587</sup>Isaiah 58:2, nor with worldly ends and views; not for loaves, as some of Christ's followers did.

**3.** Fervently, and not in a careless and negligent manner; as it may be the church did here, and therefore did not immediately succeed.

**4.** With care, diligence and constancy, until he is found, as the church did afterwards, in verses 2, 3, 4.

**5.** In proper places, as well as at proper times; as in the church of Christ, and in the public ordinances of the gospel, as well as privately in the closet, by prayer, meditation and reading; and such seekers as these are most likely to meet with success. But it will be proper to consider more particularly the seeking of Christ here; where may be observed.

**1st,** The description of the person whom she sought; 'him whom her soul loved:' which shews not only the reality and sincerity of her love to Christ, whom she loved 'with all her heart and soul, as appears from her retaining an affection for him, even when in the worst of frames, and when he was de-parted from her; for nothing could separate her from the love of Christ;

all the waters of afflictions, temptations, desertions, etc. could not extinguish that flame of love that was kindled in her soul: I say, it not only shews the heartiness and reality of her love to Christ, but also that she sought him from a principle of love, and not with sinister ends and views; she sought him because she loved him, and she loved him ‘because he first loved her;’ and this is an indication that she was not wholly forsaken by him; seeing this grace of love was in her soul, and maintained there by a secret and invisible hand, nay, brought into act and exercise an some measure.

**2dly**, The place where she sought him is also mentioned, and that is, on her bed: by which we are not to understand the temple, nor the church of Christ, and the public ordinance; thereof; for had she sought there, she had sought aright; besides, these seem to be intended in the following verse, by ‘the streets and broad places’ of the city this bed is distinguished both from that mentioned in chapter <sup>2016</sup>1:16. and also from that in chapter <sup>2017</sup>3:7; in the former of which places it is called ‘our bed,’ Christ having a joint property in it; and in the latter it is said to be his bed, Christ being the only maker and principal owner of it: but this bed is said to be hers, ‘by night on my bed;’ which was purely her own, and where she was without the presence of Christ, who was justly displeased with her for being there: moreover a different word is here used than what is in either of those places. Some <sup>f384</sup> by it understand the bed of contemplation;’ the bed being a proper place, as; the night is a proper time, to have the thoughts composed in meditation; see <sup>4004</sup>Psalm 4:4 but it seems rather to intend a bed of affliction, sorrow, and tribulation, which she was cast into, in which she sought the. Lord, as it is usual with persons in such a condition; see <sup>4022</sup>Revelation 2:22, <sup>3015</sup>Hosea 5:15. Though I should choose to-understand it of a bed of carnal ease and security, upon which she was fallen; and seems to be expressive of the manner in which she sought him, which was in a cold, lazy, lukewarm and formal way, rather than of the place where.

**3dly**, The time when she sought him, and that is, ‘by night;’ which shews, that it was either a time of great affliction with her; or else, of darkness and desertion; this is manifest enough; as also, that she was very uneasy and restless in her present condition, being brought in some measure to a ‘sense of it; and that she had an exceeding great love for Christ, seeing, that at a time When others were taking their rest, she was seeking for him. In the Hebrew text the word is in the plural number, and may be rendered, *by nights;* <sup>f385</sup> that it is one night after another successively, ‘I sought him;’ but



to no purpose; and so it may be expressive of her diligence and constancy in seeking, as well as of her condition when she sought.

**4thly**, The success she met with is here related, 'I found him not;' either, because she did not seek him aright, as James says, chapter ~~301B~~ 4:3, 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss;' so she sought and found not, because she sought amiss, in a cold and lifeless way and manner; Christ would not be found in such a way of seeking: or else it was the will of Christ to be absent for a time, and not manifest himself upon first seeking; not for want of love to her, nor because he was regardless of her, but to exercise her grace, try her faith and patience, and to make her more earnest and diligent in her search: as also that she might prize him the more when she had him, as well as be more careful to retain him; which had the desired effect upon her, as appears from verse 4.

## VERSE 2.

I will rise now, and go about the city, in the streets, and in the broad ways; I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.

THE church, finding that the former methods she had taken were not attended with success, consults others, being sensible that she was wrong before, which she resolves to pursue without any more delay. In these words we have,

**I.** The church's resolution, which consists of three parts:

**1st**, To 'rise now,' immediately.

**2dly**, To 'go about the city.'

**3dly**, To 'seek Christ in the streets and broad ways' thereof.

**II.** Her performance of this resolution; 'I sought him.'

**III.** Her success in it, which was as before; 'but I found him not.'

**I.** Here is the resolution of the church, to take other methods than what she had done before, in order to find her absent beloved; which shews, not only that she was sensible that she had taken some wrong ones before; and that no good was to be obtained that way, for Christ would not be found in such a Way of seeking him as upon the bed; but also, that her former

disappointment had not discouraged her from pursuing her search of him; nay, it had made her more lively and active, zealous and vigorous in it, as appears from this new resolution of hers, and her putting it into practice; which consists of the three following things.

**1st,** She resolves now to rise, that is, from her bed of sloth and carnal ease, and to appear more vigorous; and that now, without any more delay; for resolutions are not to be breathed upon; no time should be allowed them but the present; we should immediately proceed to the performance of them, otherwise flesh and blood, which are too often consulted in such cases, will find many ways to elude them; but these, as they are not to be made in our own strength, so neither are we to expect the performance of them by it; but, however, the church resolving to quit her bed, and forego her own carnal ease and pleasure in search of Christ, and that she might enjoy his presence and company, not only shews the exceeding greatness of her love to him, and the reality and sincerity of it, but also the uneasiness of her soul, and the distress of mind she was in; she could not be easy and contented without him, and therefore resolves to seek until she found him.

**2dly,** She not only resolves to rise, and that directly, but also to ‘go about the city.’ Her design in rising, was not to seek him in a superficial manner, but search the city, the streets thereof, and thus seek him whom her soul loved. By *city* is here meant the church of God, which is frequently called so in scripture; see <sup><1878></sup>Psalm 87:3. <sup><8122></sup>Hebrews 12:22, 23, and no doubt but here is a regard had to the city of Jerusalem, by which name the church often goes, and to which it is frequently compared in scripture; but why it is so, will be shewn on chapter 6:4, and therefore I shall only at present shew in what sense and for what reasons the church may be said to be a city, which are as follows:

**1.** Cities being large and populous, and having in them great and spacious build, ings, are generally built where there is a good foundation: the church of God is a city that is well founded; for ‘the Lord himself hath founded Zion, and the foundation which he has laid there is a sure one; and that is Christ himself, who is able to support the whole building, and will never fail; for he is that rock upon which his church being built, ‘the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.’

**2.** Cities are commonly delight, fully situated, upon an eminence, in a good air, and by a pleasant river: the church of God is ‘beautiful for situation;’ it stands upon rising ground; this’ mountain of the Lord’s house is

established upon the top of the mountains;’ it is in a good air, and is comfortably fanned with the gentle and refreshing breezes of the blessed Spirit; it is situated by a pleasant river, even the river of God’s boundless love and grace: ‘the streams whereof make glad this city of our God.’

**3.** In cities are usually fine, large, and magnificent buildings: the church is God’s architecture; it is of his building, and therefore must needs be well built; every believer is a temple, and that a temple of the, Holy Ghost’s; there is a great deal of glory, beauty, and excellency in these buildings, as well as strength and firmness; see <sup><2541></sup>Isaiah 54:11, 12; <sup><6210></sup>Revelation 21:10, 11, 12, 18, 21.

**4.** Cities are very populous and numerous; there are a great many inhabitants in them; so is the church of God: it is true, it is called but a little flock, when compared with the world, but yet, considered by itself, it is very large and numerous; John saw at once, after he had beheld the forty and four thousand, ‘a great multitude, which no man could number,’ and that of such who belonged to Christ, and were saved by him; and so will the church, even on earth, appear very numerous, when those prophecies are fulfilled, which you may read in <sup><2419></sup>Isaiah 49:19, 20 and <sup><2404></sup>Isaiah 60:4-8.

**5.** In cities; as there are large numbers of inhabitants, so there is a diversity of them, as rich and poor, good and bad: in Christ’s church here on earth, there is a very great difference of its members; some have greater gifts, and more grace than others have; some are more public-spirited than others, and so of greater usefulness; some are real and hearty believers, others are only painted hypocrites; for there has been always tares among Christ’s wheat, wolves and goats among his sheep, and some who have had a name and place in this city, whose names were never ‘written among the living in Jerusalem.’

**6.** In well regulated cities there is a good order and decorum kept; there are good laws made, and proper officers appointed to put them in execution; as well as a good watch and guard provided for the security of the inhabitants: in the church of God, there are good and wholesome laws enacted by the great legislator, which concern the admission of persons into this city, their behavior whilst in it, and their removal from it, if disagreeable; and these are preferable to all others, not only because God is the author of them, but also, because they are written upon the hearts of all those who are true citizens, according to that promise, <sup><2433></sup>Jeremiah 31:33.

‘I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts:’ moreover, here are proper officers appointed, such as ministers of the gospel, who are to see that these laws are carefully observed and exactly complied with; who also bear the character of watchmen in the next verse, being set as well for the defense of the church, as to give direction and instruction to her.

**7.** In cities there are peculiar privileges which belong to the citizens thereof; and so there are in the church of God:-all, who are Christ’s freemen, and are ‘fellow citizens of the saints, have a right to all the ordinances of the gospel, to all the privileges and immunities of Christ’s house: they shall never be arrested by justice, nor be brought into a state of condemnation; nor is it possible for them ever to lose their freedom.

Now her ‘going about the city,’ is,

**(1.)** Expressive of her diligence and industry in seeking Christ; she lost no opportunity; she sought in all other places, as well as in the open streets, wherever she thought he might be found, or there was any probability of hearing of him.

**(2.)** It shews the pains she took, as well as the diligence she used in seeking; for it must be very’ painful and laborious to go round about or all over a city, especially a large one, such an one as Jerusalem was, to which the allusion is here made; her search was as sorrowful and as fatiguing, as that of Joseph and Mary, who, after three days search, in their company, among their kindred, and about the city, at length found Christ in the temple: but all this toil and labor she regarded not, so she could but find him whom her soul loved.

**(3.)** This being done in the night, which was an unseasonable time to walk about the city in, especially for women, is a farther indication of the strength of her affection to him, in that she did not value the reproach that might attend her.

**(4.)** She not only ran the risk of reproach and scandal, but also of danger and mischief, which the night-season exposed her to; and which she experienced in chapter <sup>21817</sup>5:7, but being fired with love and fearless of danger <sup>f386</sup> she puts all to the hazard,, regarding no inconveniencies that might ensue; for her heart was so set upon finding

Christ, that she was resolved to try all ways, whatever she suffered in the experiment.

**3dly**, She resolves to seek ‘him in the streets and broad ways;’ where we have,

**1.** The person whom she was resolved to seek described, him ‘whom my soul loveth;’ which is the character she gives of him in the former verse; and shews that her love to him was still the same, was not abated, though she had been disappointed of finding him; nay, that it was rather increased, and therefore she repeats this over and over, as not knowing how to speak of him any other way:

**2.** The particular places in the city, where she resolved to seek him, ‘in the streets and in the broad ways;’ by which we are not to understand places <sup>f387</sup> where worldly business is transacted, and to which crowds of people flock for the same purpose, as the court, the market-place, or the exchange; for Christ is not to be found there; worldly employments, especially when, immoderately pursued, rather draw souls from him than bring them near to him: nor are the books, writings, and tenets <sup>f388</sup> of the Gentile philosophers here intended; for she could not expect to find him there, where he was never known or heard of: but by them we are to understand, either the Jewish synagogues, where prayer was wont to be made, and the word of God preached, there being a probability of finding him there; or rather, the public ordinances of the gospel, which are the ‘streets and broad ways of this city,’ the church, in which Christ walks, and often shews himself to his people; and in seeking him here, she sought aright; though, for reasons hereafter to be mentioned, she did not meet with immediate success. But these phrases may in general intend the diligence and exquisiteness of her search, as in <sup>f389</sup> Jeremiah 5:1. So some cities are described as having broad ways in them, as Troy <sup>f389</sup> and Athens. <sup>f390</sup>

**II.** She gives an account of her performance of this resolution; ‘I sought him,’ says she: she not only resolved upon it, but also did it; nay, she no sooner said it, but likewise did it. Resolutions, without putting, them in:practice, avail little; and unless they are made in the strength of Christ, and are performed by the same, are never performed, neither aright, nor to any good purpose; but this of hers was quickly performed; she was soon

enabled to set about it, being assisted by divine grace, and not left to consult with ‘flesh and blood.’

**III.** Her success is also mentioned by her, ‘but I found him not:’ which she seems to take notice of with much sorrow and concern; that though she had such an earnest desire after, so strong an affection for, and had been so diligent in her search of him, had spared no pains, and had run all risks of losing her good name, and of being exposed to danger, and yet he would not shew himself to her; she could not get sight of, nor hear any tidings concerning him; and this still shews that strong was her love; for had she not dearly loved him, she would not have been so much concerned at her disappointment in not finding him. And now this was,

- 1.** To chastise her for her former negligence in duty, and for her indulging herself in carnal ease and security; for he seems resolved, that as she had lost him through her ease, she should not find him without ‘trouble; for we are not to suppose that he resented her present way of seeking, nor her present behavior to him, which seems very agreeable; but this he does to shew how much he was affronted with her former carriage.
- 2.** To exercise her faith, and try her patience: thus when the. apostle Paul, ~~47118~~ 2 Corinthians 12:8, 9 was sorely buffeted by Satan, he ‘besought the Lord thrice that he might depart from him;’ but all the answer he could for the present obtain, was, ‘my grace is sufficient for thee.’
- 3.** To shew that even means themselves, though they are to be used, are not to be depended on; these cannot help souls to a sight of Christ, unless he is pleased in them to re.. veal himself; for, ‘when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? yet nevertheless, they are to be carefully observed and diligently used by us.

### VERSE 3.

*The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said,  
Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?*

THE church continues to give an account of her adventure, and what befel her when in the streets and broad ways of the city; as how she was found by the watchmen, whose business is to take up and examine persons that they meet with in the night; of whom she inquires after her lost spouse, but for the present can have no tidings of him. In these words we shall,

**I.** Inquire who are meant by ‘the watchmen,’

**II.** What by their ‘finding’ of her.

**III.** Consider the question proposed by her to them; ‘Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?’

**IV.** Shew why no answer is mentioned, as returned to this question.

**I.** It will be proper to inquire who are meant by the watchmen here: and by them we are not to understand angels, as some; <sup>f391</sup> though these are thought to be called watchers, in <sup><204B></sup> Daniel 4:13, 17 and are the saints’ life-guards, attend upon their persons, watch over them, and encamp about them: nor the princes and great men of the world, who have the care and government of kingdoms, provinces and cities; but are ignorant of Christ, and know not the ‘Lord of glory,’ as others: <sup>f392</sup> nor false teachers <sup>f393</sup> who are called, <sup><256D></sup> Isaiah 56:10 ‘blind watchmen, dumb dogs that cannot bark:’ but rather, the true ministers of the Gospel; the prophets under the Old Testament, and the apostles and faithful teachers under the New, who frequently bear the title of watchmen in Scripture; see <sup><250B></sup> Isaiah 52:8 and <sup><250E></sup> Isaiah 62:6, and <sup><253D></sup> Ezekiel 33:7. The Jewish writers <sup>f394</sup> interpret these words of Moses and Aaron with the Levites, who kept the watch of the tabernacle. The ministers of the Gospel are called watchmen, either in allusion to shepherds, who watch over their flock by night, <sup><250B></sup> Luke 2:8. or else, to watchmen in cities, as here; and their work may be considered,

**1.** With regard to themselves: they are to watch over themselves as well as others; they are to watch over their Conversations, that they be as become the Gospel they preach, and so that they may give no ill examples to others, nor cause the ways and doctrines of Christ to be evil spoken of, and render their ministry useless; they are to watch over their doctrines, and take heed that they be agreeable to the oracles of God; that they deliver nothing but the ‘wholesome words of Christ Jesus,’ and such as may be for the edifying of their hearers, and suitable to the cases of souls; they are to watch all opportunities to preach this gospel, as the apostle says, <sup><250E></sup> 2 Timothy 4:2. to ‘be instant in season and out of season;’ and then they are to watch and observe the success of it, and how it is blessed and made useful to souls: moreover, they ought to have a very great guard upon themselves; for if the enemy can but surprise, decoy or corrupt them, it turns much to his advantage. Now ministers of the Gospel should take

heed to themselves, lest they fall asleep, or grow careless and indifferent in the work of the Lord; or are diverted from it through the frowns or flatteries of the world; or be corrupted with errors and false doctrines; for these things tend much to the ruin of Christ's kingdom and interest.

**2.** With regard to others, their work is,

**1,** To give the time of night, as in <sup><2211></sup>Isaiah 21:11, 12. the question is put, 'Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?' the answer is, 'the morning cometh, and also the night.' Sometimes it is night with the church; she is fallen asleep upon a bed of security: the wise virgins sleep as well as the foolish; it is then the work of ministers to give the time of the night, to apprise the church what a condition she is in, and to endeavor to awake her out of it: though sometimes the ministers, the watchmen, are asleep, as well as the churches, and know not what time of the night it is, which is a dreadful case; and then are the churches of Christ in a poor plight and condition indeed.

**2.** Their work is to give notice of approaching danger; they are to give notice of the danger that sinners are in, who are walking in the broad road to destruction; and also the danger that churches may be in through errors and heresies springing up among them, as well as by indulging themselves in any vicious practices, which they are severely to check and reprehend. Now this work requires vigilance, prudence, courage and faithfulness; and also shews the necessity and usefulness of the public ministry, which can no more be dispensed with than watchmen in a city; and likewise what care the Lord has of his churches, in placing such officers in them, as well as the awfulness of the work they are concerned in; for if the watchman does not discharge his duty, the blood of those he has to do with will be required of him. These watchmen are farther described by their 'going about the city:' by the city, we are to understand the church of God, as in the former verse: and their 'going about' it, is mentioned to distinguish them from those that were upon the walls, who kept their stands, and did not stir from their places; and also to shew their proper work and business, which, as it appears from hence, they are diligent in; and so it proves them to be true watchmen and faithful ministers of the Gospel, who, in imitation of Christ their Lord and master, go about doing good to the souls of men.



**II.** Being thus in the discharge of their duty, and using diligence therein, they found the church; which is the next thing to be inquired into: they found me; that is, they fell upon the subject of my case and condition, in their sermons, and exactly took notice of and spoke to my case, as if somebody had told them of it beforehand, and as if they had particularly designed me above all the rest of their audience; which shews the power of the word, and its piercing and penetrating nature; it often finds out particular sinners in a congregation, and points out their particular sins unto them; it searches into the inward recesses of their hearts, brings secret sins to light, sets them in order before them, and brings them to an open and ingenuous confession of them; likewise it finds and points, out the particular cases of believers, oftentimes tin-known to the minister, and unlooked for by the believer, which seems to be the church's case here. It is amazing how this is sometimes effected; insomuch that some have thought that some friend or other, to whom they have communicated, their cases, have told the minister, and he has purposely treated on such a subject to meet with them; though when they have more narrowly inquired into it, have found it otherwise, to their great surprise; nay, sometimes a minister, by stepping out of the way, going off from his subject, and making a digression, has met with souls, and hit their case, as Austin did with the Manichee. God has given many instances of the secret energy of the word, and the mighty power and grace of the Spirit, in applying it to the different cases of persons. But,

**III.** Having met with something under the ministry of the word suitable to her case, she is encouraged to take her opportunity, after public worship was over, to speak privately to the ministers, and propose this question to them: 'Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?' in which may be observed,

**1.** The person concerning whom she inquires, and that is, him whom her soul loveth. Christ is still the subject of her discourse and inquiry; whether she talks with ministers or private Christians, she is upon the search after him; and though she cannot as yet find him, she is not discouraged from seeking; nor is her love and affection towards him abated, though she cannot see him.

**2.** The manner in which she proposes this question, and that is very abrupt; for, without giving them an opportunity to speak to her first, or using any preface to excuse her freedom with them, she immediately puts the question, as soon as she came up to them, 'Saw ye him,' etc. where it may

also be observed, as has been already on chapter 1. 2. that She uses the relative *him* without an antecedent, and does not express the person's name whom she inquires about; which shews the singular excellency of Christ, that he was to her the only him in the world; and likewise the singular esteem she had for him, the strength of her affection to him, how much her thoughts were upon him, and her desires after him; insomuch that she thought every body must know whom she meant, and whom she loved, without mentioning his name; and more especially it supposes, that she concluded that these, ministers knew whom she meant. 3. Her putting this question to them, shews,

(1.) That she had a value for them, had entertained a good opinion of them, and judged them proper persons to apply to; which might arise from what she had met with under their public ministry.

(2.) That she was unwilling to let any opportunity slip, in which there was any likelihood of finding Christ; therefore she will not only hear the ministers publicly, but converse with them privately; and such a practice is highly commendable in, and to be imitated by all the saints; oftentimes much is lost by missing an opportunity: What did Thomas lose by not being; with the rest of the disciples when Christ appeared to them? Why, a sight of Christ; and not only so, but also fell into a fit of unbelief.

(3.) That when persons apply to ministers, they should keep close to their own souls cases, as the church does here, and not trouble them with long and tedious discourses, filled up with invectives against their fellow Christians, and animadversions upon their weaknesses and imperfections; but their chief concern should be the ease of their own souls; and the subject of their discourse, Christ and his grace.

(4.) That ministers had need to be well acquainted with the various cases of souls, that they may know how to speak aptly to them, and communicate a word in season to their refreshment; which, when fitly spoken, is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. But,

**IV.** Here is no answer returned to this question, that is here recorded; the reason of which is, not because they could not give one; nor were those blind watchmen, which were without the light of faith and experience themselves; those dumb dogs which cannot bark, and know not how to speak to the cases of souls, being unacquainted with them, of which we

read in ~~2860~~ Isaiah 56:10 nor, it may be, was it because they did not return an answer, though she has not recorded it; and if they did not, it might be owing to her overhaste in not waiting for one; or if they did, yet she not being able to apply it with comfort to her own soul, takes no notice of it; and this might be, to let her see the need of a divine blessing upon means, and the power and grace of the blessed Spirit to attend them: but yet, though she did not find immediate comfort and relief, she might get something from them, which was afterwards useful to her as seems to appear from the following verse; for oftentimes the Spirit of God brings to our remembrance, and sets home, with power upon our souls, thin.Us which have been dropped in the ministry of the word, or in private conversation, which were of no use in the hearing of them.

#### VERSE 4.

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, until I had brought him unto my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

THE church having sought about the city, in the streets and broad ways of it, for her beloved, and made inquiry of the watchmen concerning him, though attended with little success; yet is not discouraged, but keeps on seeking, till at length she finds him; which not only filled her with a transport of joy, but also puts her upon using all the means she could to continue him with her, and secure his presence and company for the future. In these words are,

- I. An account of the church's finding Christ; 'I found him whom my soul loveth.'
- II. The place or time, where or when she found him; 'It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found,' etc.
- III. Her behavior towards him; 'I held him,' Sac.

I. The church gives an account of her finding Christ; 'I found him,' etc. She had sought, but not in vain; that promise was made good to her, 'seek, and ye shall find;' which was also when all means failed: she had sought him privately, by prayer and meditation; and publicly, by an attendance upon the ordinances of the gospel: she had heard the ministers of Christ

preach, and had conferred with them alone, and yet could not find her beloved; which may inform us,

**1.** That means, though they are to be used, yet not to be depended on; they will not avail without a divine blessing: Bethesda's pool must be moved by an angel, or no cure can be performed; the Spirit of God must move upon the waters, the ordinances, or they will not convey light and life to souls; Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but it is God only that giveth the in, crease: the most comfortable doctrines and' precious promises of the gospel, opened and delivered in the most powerful manner, will not be useful without the special energy of the Spirit.

**2.** That we should not be discouraged when all means fail; because he is found sometimes when they do so, as he was by the church here; therefore when, with <sup><B218></sup>Job 23:8-10 we have gone backward and forward, on the right hand and on the left, and yet cannot behold him; we should with him rest contented, and say, he knoweth the way that I take, though I do not know which way he has taken and when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

**3.** This shews us, that unless Christ shew himself, there is no finding him; for, 'when he hideth his face, who can behold him?'

**4.** Finding Christ, when all means fail, gives the greatest discovery of Christ's love and grace, the freeness and sovereignty of it; and makes it appear, that it does not depend upon our will or works, but upon his sovereign good will and pleasure.

**5.** Finding Christ after so many disappointments, must needs be joyful and welcome; she seems to speak it with an air of pleasure, and in an exulting manner, as those disciples did, who said, <sup><B144></sup>John 1:41, 'we have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ;' for his long absence from her, and the fatigue she had endured in seeking of him, did but serve the more to endear and sweeten his presence to her.

**II.** She declares where or when she found him; 'it was but; a little that I had passed from them:' that is, either it was but a little space of time, as R. Aben Ezra observes; or I, had got but a very little way ere I found him. She is said to pass from the ministers, not out of disrespect unto them, for she had an entire value for them; nor because she had received no benefit from them, for they had hit her case, though she had not present enjoyment of

Christ; nor was it because she was above ministers and ordinances, for these will continue in the church, and are to be used by believers until the second coming of Christ: but this passing from them shews, that she did not rest here; that though she applied herself to ministers, and made use of ordinances, yet she did not forget Christ, but looked beyond all these to him; and went a little farther than she had done before, in the lively exercise of her faith upon him: also her meeting with Christ, when she had a little passed them, shews, that Christ is not far from his ministers and ordinances; for he has promised to be with them unto the end of the world: and therefore there is a very great encouragement for souls to attend unto them, not only from that promise, but also from the church's experience, here recorded by her.

### III. Her behavior to him is next mentioned,

**1st**, She 'held him *fast*, and would not let him go.'

**2dly**, Brought him into *her* mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived *her*.'

**1st**, As soon as she saw him, she laid hold on him, and cleaved so close to him, that he could not stir a step from her; which, on her part, is expressive,

**1.** Of her faith in him: it is the nature of faith to lay hold on Christ; the actings of it are frequently expressed by it; see <sup><1188></sup>Proverbs 3:18, <sup><368></sup>Hebrews 6:18 the believer lays hold on Christ as his savior; on his righteousness, and pleads it as his justifying righteousness before God; on Christ, as God's strength, to do all for him and in him; and on the covenant which is in Christ's hands, with all the blessings and promises of it, and appropriates them to himself, <sup><275></sup>Isaiah 27:5 and <sup><504></sup>Isaiah 56:4.

**2.** Of her love and affection to him; and therefore she grasps him in her arms, will not let go her hold of him, nor suffer him to stir from her; but, could she have her will, would have him always in her sight; and, as Ruth said, chapter <sup><116></sup>1:16, to Naomi, where he goes, she is resolved to go; where he lodges, she will lodge; his people shall be her people, and his God her God; so pleased was she with him, so dearly did she love him.

**3.** Of her fears and jealousies lest he should remove from her: she knew the bitterness of Christ's absence, as well as had had experience of the sweetness of his presence, and therefore dreaded parting again; was afraid

of every thing that had a tendency to it, and therefore gives that solemn charge she does in the following verse.

**4.** Of her steadiness and resolution to hold him, whatever was the consequence; though she might be reproached, and persecuted for it, suffer the loss of her good name, and every thing else that was valuable in this world; yet Christ to her was worth more than ten thousand worlds; nothing could tempt her to part with him.

Moreover, on his part, these words are expressive,

**(1.)** Of a seeming offer or desire to depart; such an one as the angel who wrestled with Jacob made, when he said, ‘let me go, for the day breaketh,’ <sup><0132></sup>Genesis 32:26. which, as it made him, so it made her cleave the closer to him, wrestle the more with him, and keep faster hold of him.

**(2.)** Of a gracious allowance which he had granted her; to lay hold on him: it is a surprising instance of his grace, that such vile, sinful creatures as we, should be suffered to come so near his person; O astonishing grace! that such should be invited to come, and should be welcome to lay hold on Christ and his righteousness, and not incur the crime of rudeness nor presumption.

**(3.)** Of his wonderful condescension, to be held by a creature, and that a sinful one: it was not because she was stronger than Christ, that she held him and would not let him go, but because he condescended to let it be so; for she received the strength from him, by which she held him: it shews indeed the great power and strength of faith; thus to hold Christ; but then she had it all from him, who is the object of it.

**(4.)** Of that delight and pleasure he took in the exercise of her faith upon him: as it does not argue weakness in him to be held by her, so neither does it unwillingness; he was no more held against his will, than he was by a superior force; he was held by her because it was both his will, and well-pleasing to him; ‘without faith it is impossible to please God,’ or Christ; in the exercise of it they are much delighted, and are well pleased to be held as it were by it.

**2dly,** The other part of her behavior towards him, is, that she brought him into her mother’s house, and into the most private and retired part of it, even into the chamber of her that conceived her; and this is indeed what

she principally had in view in holding of him. The allusion is to the tents and apartments women had in former times, distinct from their husbands, <sup><0245></sup>Genesis 24:67 and <sup><0333></sup>Genesis 31:33. By her mother's house and chamber, the Targum understands the school that was kept in the chambers of Moses and Joshua, where the children of Israel studied the law; R. Sol. Jarchi interprets them of the tabernacle in Shiloh; as does R. Aben Ezra of the ark of the testimony. Some <sup>f395</sup> think that by her mother's house, is meant the temple; and by the chamber the holy of holies, which was accessible to none but the high-priest: though Brightman thinks, that both these phrases are expressive of Christ's incarnation, which the church was importunately desirous of, which may be expressed by her mother's house, and the chamber of her that conceived her; because in becoming incarnate, he was a partaker of the same flesh and blood with her; and she may be said to bring him into it, because it was for her sake that he assumed human nature. But I think it should rather be understood either of the visible church, which is the mother of all believers; see <sup><0425></sup>Galatians 4:26 in which many souls are born again through the ministry of the word, and are nursed, and nourished up with the words of faith and good doctrine, with the sincere milk of gospel-truths, and the re.. freshing breasts of gospel ordinances; and Christ may be said to be brought in here, when his name is publicly professed in the congregation of his saints, his gospel asserted and vindicated, and his ordinances submitted to; when the mighty instances of his grace to his people are made known, and united praises upon that account are offered up unto him: and this no doubt the church had in view in introducing him here, that she, and others with her, might magnify the Lord together, for all the special instances of his kindness to her, and that they' might in having fellowship one with another, in the house of God, have intimate fellowship with the Father and with the Son: or else, by her mother's house, may be meant her heart, where the incorruptible seed of divine grace was cast, and where the new creature was conceived, born and brought up; and where it grows until it becomes a perfect man, and arrives to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: and by the chamber of her that conceived her, the inmost recesses thereof; there she desired to bring him, that he might dwell there by faith; that he might live in her, and she in him, and so have intimate and uninterrupted communion with him; which is the purport and design of the solemn charge which is given to the daughters of Jerusalem in the following verse.

**VERSE 5.**

I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.

THESE are either the words of Christ <sup>f396</sup> adjuring the daughters of Jerusalem, young converts, who were the virgins, the companions of his bride, to give his church no disturbance, nor awake her, who was his love, before she pleased;f or the church was now taking sweet repose, being weary and fatigued with running after and searching for him till she found him; it is therefore the will of Christ, that now she be not disturbed: or else, they are the words of the church which is the more commonly received sense; who knew how to prize Christ's presence, having experienced a long absence, and had been at a great deal of pains and trouble to find him, and now having obtained her much wished for and long-desired end, she is not willing to part with him; but as she had had much trouble to find him, is willing to use some care and diligence to keep him: and being fearful lest these young converts should by any unbecoming word or action provoke him to depart, she gives this solemn charge; which is the same with that in chapter <sup><2117></sup>2:7 where it is more largely explained. The Targum understands it as the charge of Moses to the people of Israel, not to go up into the land of Canaan, until the term of forty years was expired.

**VERSE 6.**

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?

SOME of the Jewish writers <sup>f397</sup> think, that these are the words of the nations of the earth, wondering at the coming of the Israelites out of the wilderness, before whom the Lord went in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night, which appearance was very surprising to them. Though they are rather, as some <sup>f398</sup> think, the words of the Jews, wondering at John the Baptist and his ministry, of whom all men mused in their hearts whether he was the Christ or not and therefore the Jews dispatched messengers to him, to know the truth of it: his first appearance was in the wilderness of Judea, which fulfilled an ancient prophecy concerning him, 'the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness;' hither great numbers, like pillars of smoke, flocked to him, to attend upon his ministry



and baptism: he was a burning and shining light in his day there was a great deal of zeal, warmth and fervency in his preaching; for which work he was extraordinarily fitted, being richly perfumed with those gifts and graces of the Spirit, which are comparable to myrrh, frankincense, and all powders of the merchant. Others <sup>f399</sup> take them to be the words of the Jewish church, wondering at the large number of converts appearing in the beauties of holiness, in the Gentile world, which before was like to a dry heath or a barren wilderness; see <sup><342></sup>Isaiah 49:21 and <sup><308></sup>60:8, though others <sup>f400</sup> think Christ himself is here introduced, admiring the beauty of his church, and the graces of his own spirit in her. But I am rather of opinion, that they are the words of the daughters of Jerusalem, who, upon this happy meeting of Christ and his church, saw a greater glory and a more excellent beauty in her, than ever they had done before 'and especially, it must not be supposed, that the angels <sup>f401</sup> are here speaking and admiring the church's beauty, seeing these bear no part in this song; much less the church herself <sup>f402</sup> for this no way suits with that modesty and humility which always appear in her: but it very well agrees with the daughters of Jerusalem, to whom so solemn a charge is given in the former verse, which excited and stirred them up to take a fuller view of her; and the more they look., ed upon her, the more they wondered at her; and in expressing it, thus highly commend her, which they do,

**I.** By describing her as 'coming out of the wilderness.'

**II.** By comparing her ascent from thence to 'pillars of smoke.'

**III.** By saying that she was 'perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant.'

**I.** They commend her, by describing her as coming out of the wilderness. By the wilderness, out of which she is said to come, may be meant, either,

**1st,** A state of nature, which all the elect of God are in before conversion; out of which, by mighty and efficacious grace, they are brought. Now this may be called a wilderness,

**1.** Because of the barrenness and unfruitfulness of persons in such an estate: a wilderness is a dry and barren place; see <sup><947></sup>Psalm 107:35, <sup><403></sup>Zephaniah 2:13, and so are the hearts even of God's own people before conversion; and therefore are called 'dry, parched and thirsty ground,' <sup><337></sup>Isaiah 35:7 and <sup><348></sup>Isaiah 44:3 which is only moistened, watered, and

made fruitful by the effusion of God's Spirit, and the flows of his love and grace: whilst in a state of nature, they are like the barren heath or fallow ground, until they become God's husbandry, being broken up, manured, and made good ground, so as to bring forth fruit to his glory.

**2.** Because a wilderness is full of perplexed ways; a man that is in it is often at a loss, and knows not which way to take: and as bewildered is a man in a state of nature; he is a stranger to the way of peace, life and salvation, by Jesus Christ; there are many by-ways present themselves to him, which he is ready to imagine are the right; as his civility, morality, legal righteousness, and external profession of religion; which tracks he follows, if religiously inclined; if not, he pursues the paths of open sin and profaneness; and so he goes on, not knowing whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes; he is in a wilderness, and so he continues, until the Spirit of God guides his feet into the way of peace.

**3.** Because of the want of provisions therein; see <sup><19819></sup>Psalm 78:19, a man that is in a state of nature, has no spiritual provisions; no heavenly food, no divine refreshments; there is no bread of life here, only husks, which swine do eat; therefore souls that are in such an estate, are in a starving and famishing condition; hence it is called a 'pits wherein is no water,' <sup><38011></sup>Zechariah 9:11.

**4.** Because of the danger thereof: in a wilderness, there is not only danger of losing one's way, and falling into holes and pits, but also of being devoured by wild beasts; a state of nature is certainly a dangerous one; the wrath of God abides upon such that are in it; destruction and misery are written upon all the ways of sin; these have a tendency to bring souls thereunto, which they inevitably will, if grace prevents not. Now, in this state and condition God finds his people, when he calls them by his grace, as he did Israel of old; of whom it is said, <sup><16210></sup>Deuteronomy 32:10, 'he found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness: 'but he does not leave his people' here, he brings them out of it; which is an instance of his distinguishing and surprising grace, of which the church here was made a partaker; and therefore the daughters, in a way of admiration at it, say, 'Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness!' which is expressed in the present tense, because of the incompleteness and imperfection of the work of grace in this life; which, though it is at present unfinished, yet is continued and carried on, and will be performed unto the day of Jesus Christ. Or else,

**2dly**, By the wilderness, out of which the church is said to come, may be meant this world; so the nations of the world may be, and particularly the land of Babylon, into which the Jews were carried captive, is called the wilderness of the people, in <sup><3185></sup>Ezekiel 20:35. And now this world may very well be so called; and especially the passage of God's children thro' it, may be compared to the passage of the Israelites through the wilderness of Egypt,

- 1.** Because of the roughness of the way, the children of God, in their passage through it, as the Israelites did, meet with many difficulties, trials and afflictions; in this world they must have tribulation, and thro' a variety of it, 'must enter into the kingdom of God;' for the way to heaven is, **ὁδὸς τεθλιμμένη** an afflicted way, or a way strewed with afflictions.
- 2.** Because of the many pits, traps, and snares, that are in it: this world is full of them, every thing in it is of an ensnaring nature to God's children; therefore 'let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall.'
- 3.** Because of the many venomous creatures and beasts of prey which are in it; and therefore the wilderness, through which the Israelites traveled, is called, <sup><3185></sup>Deuteronomy 8:15. 'the great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions; to which the ungodly men of this world may be compared, for their poisonous and infectious practices, their serpentine cunning, spite, venom, and cruel malice, among whom the saints are obliged to be whilst in this wilderness.
- 4.** Because of the frequent want of provision, and the method of supplies in it the Israelites, whilst in the wilderness, were often in want of food, and sometimes reduced to such extremity, that they thought it almost impossible to have relief, and therefore said, <sup><3185></sup>Psalms 78:19. 'God furnish a table in the wilderness?' but yet, notwithstanding these seeming impossibilities and their frequent murmurings and complaints against him, he was pleased to give them meat to the full: so in this wilderness of the world, which yields of itself no suitable provision to God's children, they are supplied with food, and that in such a way, as the world knows nothing of; God feeds them with the bread of life, and gives them to eat of the hidden manna, the food of the wilderness; he refreshes their souls with his grace and presence, affords them spiritual nourishment from gospel doctrines, promises, and ordinances, and withholds no good thing that as proper for them.
- 5.** As the Israelites, through a great many windings and turnings came safe to Canaan's land, and were led by a right way, though

not a direct one, but often backwards and forwards, to the city of their habitation; so the people of God, through various turns of providence, and many trials and- afflictions, are led thro' the wilderness of this world, but yet always in a right way; in a way that makes most for God's glory, and their own good, and shall all be brought safe to the city of habitation and place of rest, Which God has prepared for them. Now the church is said to be coming out of this wilderness. Saints, though they are in the world, yet they are not of it, being chosen and called out of it; and then may they be said to be coming out of it, when they not only profess not to belong to it, but do openly withdraw from, and quit the company and conversation of the men of it; when their affections are so weaned from it, as that they can readily forsake, and chearfully suffer the loss of all things in it, for the sake of Christ. Moreover, when neither the frowns nor flatteries of the world can draw them aside from Christ and his gospel; but, regardless of either, are breathing and longing after another and better world than this: and when this is the case of souls, as perhaps it was of the church here, they have made a good progress towards coming out of this wilderness. Or else,

**3dly,** By it may be meant a state of sorrow and distress, which the people of God are often in, in this life, but are sooner or later brought out of it. God sometimes brings them into the wilderness, into a distressed, and disconsolate condition, being without his presence, and the discoveries of his love and grace; where having no views of Christ, and their interest in him, they are bewildered in their souls, and scarce know where they are, nor whither they are going; but he will not leave them. so, long, but will bring them out of it, and speak comfortably to them. Now in such a bewildered state and condition the church had been, not knowing where her beloved was, which caused her to run up and down, here and there, like a person in a wood, seeking for him, and calling after him; but now she is represented as coming out of this state, having gotten some glimpse of him, and enjoying some communion with him. But,

**II.** She is not only described by her coming out of the wilderness, but also this ascent of hers from thence is said to be like pillars of smoke; which seems to be expressive of the motions of her desires and affections towards Christ; and shews,

**1.** That her affections towards Christ were afresh kind., led; either by the fire of the Spirit, which was applied unto her; see <sup>4181</sup>Matthew 3:11 or of the divine word, which is compared thereunto, <sup>2439</sup>Jeremiah 23:29 which

powerfully wrought upon her; or else, by the presence of Christ, which sometimes causes the hearts of his people to burn within them; this she now enjoyed, which stirred up her affections the more unto him: now these being said to be 'like pillars of smoke,' intend the first appearances of them; for as soon as ever the fire takes, there will be smoke, and often in great abundance; for which reason the first appearance of grace in young converts is compared to 'smoking flax,' <sup><230B></sup>Isaiah 42:3,

**2.** That her affections were heavenly, and rising upwards, 'like pillars of smoke;' they were not set upon things on earth, but upon things in heaven, and especially upon Christ, who is there;. and particularly upon her person, blood, and righteousness; all which take much with the believer's affections, and are exceeding precious to him.

**3.** Her affections towards Christ, being compared to pillars of smoke, shew the uprightness of them; that they went up to him like pillars in a straight line, and did not bend either this way or that: and it may be observed, that the word translated *pillars*, signifies *palm-trees* <sup>f403</sup> or pillars arising up in the form of palm-trees; which grow very upright, even though very great pressures and weights be laid upon them; and therefore the righteous are compared unto, and said to grow up like them, in <sup><392D></sup>Psalms 92:12.

**4.** The steadiness and constancy of her affections to Christ may be represented hereby; which can by no means be diverted from him; neither by the winds of temptations, nor by the tempests of afflictions, nor by the blasts of persecutions; though it is true, pillars of smoke are by every wind easily turned this way or that: but perhaps the allusion is here made unto the smoke, which ascended daily from the altar of burnt-offering; and, if we will believe the Jews, this smoke could never be dispersed, nor bent by any wind; for, among the ten wonders which were seen in the temple, these are mentioned <sup>f404</sup> viz. That the rain never extinguished the fire of the wood, which was laid in order upon the altar; nor did the wind ever conquer the pillar of smoke, so as to disperse it, nor bend it in this way or that.

**5.** This may also represent the offering up of herself as a whole burnt-offering to the Lord, as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which was but her reasonable service; see <sup><520E></sup>Romans 12:1. Or,

**6.** It may set forth the obscure state and condition of the church in this world, by reason of outward crosses and afflictions which are such as hide her inward glory and beauty from the men of the world; for though she is

separated from the world, and is coming out of it, yet she looks like pillars of smoke, dark, and cloudy, but little brightness or glory appearing in her to them.

**III.** She is also said to be perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant.

**1st,** She is said to be ‘perfumed with myrrh;’ which may be understood, either of Christ himself, who is as ‘a bundle of myrrh’ unto his people, exceeding grateful, to them; and which renders them acceptable to God, being held in the hand, or carried in the bosom of faith: or else, of his death, which, though like myrrh, exceeding bitter to himself, yet is of a sweet-smelling savor to his Father, and a delightful perfume to believers: or else, of his righteousness; which is that garment of Christ’s, which, whether considered as in himself, or as put upon his people, ‘smells of myrrh, aloes, and cassia;’ and with which they being clothed, ‘their smell is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed.’

**2dly,** She is said to be also ‘perfumed, with frankincense;’ by which may be meant the mediation and intercession of Christ, which is that much incense, with which Christ offers up the prayers of all saints to his Father; and with which their persons and their prayers being perfumed, they meet with acceptance with God, which otherwise would be a stink in his nostrils; see ~~REV~~ Revelation 8:3, 4. ~~PSALM~~ Psalm 141:2.

**3dly,** She is said to be perfumed, or to be possessed with all powders of the merchant.’ Christ is this merchant-man; the graces of the Spirit are those powders which Christ, as mediator, is full of; all which are sweet and savory, rich and costly; ‘the merchandise of them is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.’ Some read this last part of the words thus <sup>f405</sup> ‘which is above or more excellent than all powders of the merchant, druggist or apothecary; <sup>f406</sup> for no spice in the merchant’s warehouse, no precious drug or aromatic powder in the apothecary’s shop, is to be compared with those graces of the Spirit, which Christ bestows upon his own people.

## VERSE 7.

*Behold his bed, which is Solomon's: threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.*

THESE are either the words of the daughters of Jerusalem continued, as some <sup>f407</sup> think; who having begun, go on to commend the church from that communion and fellowship she enjoys with Christ, and from that safety and security which she has in him: or rather, according to others <sup>f408</sup> they are the words of the church; who perceiving that the daughters of Jerusalem were much taken with her beauty; and fearing, lest they should ascribe too much to her, to the prejudice of her beloved; she breaks in upon them, and proposes a far more glorious object to them to gaze upon and wonder at, even Christ, from whom she received all her beauty and glory; him she describes by his bed, and the guard about it, in this and the following verse; by the chariot he rides in; in verses 9, 10. and by the royal crown he wore on his coronation day, in verse 11. In these words we have,

- I. To consider who is meant by *Solomon*;
- II. What by his *bed*.
- III. The *guard* that is about it, which is here described.
- IV. Why a *behold* is prefixed to all this.

I. It will be proper to consider who is meant by Solomon and I apprehend we are not to understand this literally of Solomon, the son of David, and king of Israel; but mystically, of Christ, who was typified by him; it may be said of this place, what our Lord said in another case, that a 'greater than Solomon is here;' Solomon was undoubtedly an eminent type of Christ; the whole seventy-second psalm, which is entitled, A Psalm for Solomon,' is generally expounded, not only by Christian, but also by Jewish interpreters <sup>f409</sup> of the Messiah, whom Solomon prefigured; and there is an agree-merit and likeness between them in the following things:

1. They were both the sons of David: Christ, as well as Solomon, was so according to the flesh; God promised that he would raise up the Messiah from his seed, which promise he accordingly made good: the Jews lived in the expectation of him, as being to spring from him; and therefore when

Christ put that question to them, ‘What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?’ they readily answer, ‘The son of David’ hence he is called both · the root and offspring of David;’ as he is God, he is thereof of David; and as he is man, he is *his offspring*.

2. They were both the sons of God; see <sup><1074></sup>2 Samuel 7:14 compared with <sup><8005></sup>Hebrews 1:5 only with this difference; Solomon was the son of God by adopting grace; Christ, by nature and eternal generation.
3. They were both Jedidiah’s, beloved of God: that Solomon was so, is manifest from <sup><1023></sup>2 Samuel 12:24, 25 and therefore had that name given unto him; that Christ is the dear son of God’s love, was testified by a voice from heaven more than once, particularly at his baptism, and at his transfiguration upon the mount; see <sup><1187></sup>Matthew 3:17. and <sup><1075></sup>Matthew 17:5.
4. They were both kings and preachers in Jerusalem; for Solomon, see <sup><1001></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:1-12, and of Christ it is manifest that here he exercised great part of his public ministry; and here also did he sit upon the throne of his father David, though in a spiritual way.
5. He was a type of Christ in his wisdom: It is said of him, <sup><1080></sup>1 Kings 4:30, 31 that his ‘wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east-country, and all the wisdom of Egypt; for he was wiser than all men:’ and of Christ it is said, <sup><5028></sup>Colossians 2:3. that ‘in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;’ he as much, nay, infinitely more exceeded Solomon in wisdom, than he did all other men; for never man spake such words of wisdom, his enemies themselves being witnesses, as he did.
6. He was also a type of Christ in the largeness of his kingdom: as God gave him ‘largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore;’ so he likewise gave him a kingdom suitable to its. and made him to reign ‘over all kingdoms, from the river unto the land of the Philistines:’ Christ’s kingdom, however small it may appear now, shall in the latter day be very large; for ‘he shall have dominion from sea to seas and from the river unto the ends of the earth; for when he takes to himself his great power, and reigns, ‘the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ;’ see <sup><1978></sup>Psalms 72:8, <sup><6115></sup>Revelation 11:15, 17.



**7.** He prefigured him in the peaceableness, as well as in the largeness of his kingdom: Solomon's kingdom was a peaceable one, as well as a large one; 'he had peace on all sides round about him;' and his subjects 'dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, all his days;' which was all typical of Christ and his kingdom; one of whose titles is, 'the prince of peace;' whose scepter is 'the gospel of peace;' whose kingdom is not 'meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;' and whose subjects are 'the sons of peace;' on whom he bestows peace of conscience now, and will introduce them into an everlasting peace hereafter.

**8.** He was also a type of him in the riches of his kingdom: there was such plenty of gold in the days of Solomon, 'that silver was nothing accounted of,' but was as common 'in Jerusalem as stones;' Christ's 'riches are unsearchable;' he has riches of grace, and riches of glory, which he bestows upon his subjects, so that they are all as kings and princes: it may be much more truly said of all Christ's subjects, what the king of Assyria in a boasting manner said of his princes, 'Are not my princes altogether kings?' all the subjects of Christ's kingdom are princes, and all these princes kings; and therefore it must needs be a very rich and opulent one.

**9.** Solomon was a type of Christ likewise in his marriage of Pharaoh's daughter, an Egyptian woman; one that was an' alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger from the covenant of promise;' which is not more surprising, nor indeed so much, as that 'the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth,' should espouse to himself such poor, mean, vile, and sinful creatures, as we by nature are; so that he who is our Maker, is also our husband; astonishing! stupendous grace!

**10.** He was a type of him in his building the temple, which prefigured the church of Christ which is built on Christ, 'the rock, the foundation, and corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:' nay, it is not only built upon him, but it is also built by him, therefore to him all the glory should be ascribed; for 'he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory,' ~~3063~~ Zechariah 6:13. And now seeing that Solomon was a type of Christ in so many instances, it need not be wondered at, that he should bear his name in this, and in some other parts of this Song. But,

**II.** The next thing to be enquired into, is, what is meant by his bed; and there is a variety of opinions concerning it, The Targum understands by it, the temple: R. Sol. Jarchi, the tabernacle of the congregation; in both which the priests' and Levites watched and kept guard: R. Alshech, the congregation of Israel. Some <sup>f410</sup> think that the temple of Christ's body is here intended, in which 'the fullness of the Godhead dwells;' and which was guarded and protected from the fury and malice of Herod and others, by angels, who were continually ascending and descending on him: others <sup>f411</sup> the hearts Of believers, in which Christ condescends to dwell; which are kept by his power, and guarded by that 'peace of his which passeth all understanding. Some <sup>f412</sup> have been of opinion, that Christ himself is this bed: others <sup>f413</sup> that it is his cross: and others <sup>f414</sup> that the happiness of the saints in glory is here meant; who, dying in the Lord, 'enter into peace, and rest in their beds;' which are those mansions that are prepared and reserved for them in heaven. Though others <sup>f415</sup> think that the scriptures are this bed; in hearing and reading of which, souls are often begotten again; they are written for the comfort of God's children, being opened, are made very useful to them, where they frequently meet with Christ, and have communion with him: these, notwithstanding the cunning and malice of wicked men, have been safely kept and strangely preserved by the providence of God; as the doctrines of them have been strenuously maintained and defended against heretics by the ministers of the gospel. But I am rather inclined to think, that by this bed, we are to understand the church of Christ: <sup>f416</sup> it is here Christ dwells; this is his resting-place; here souls are begotten and born again; and here he grants to his people nearness of access unto him, sweet familiarity, and delightful fellowship with him. Now this may he said to be his bed, because the Father has given it to him, and he has purchased it with his own blood; as also, because it is of his own making. But,

**III.** We now proceed to consider the guard about this bed; which are either the angels of God <sup>f417</sup> who are ministering spirits to the church, and 'encamp round about them that fear the Lord; who, as they are always ready, so they are able and mighty to do the pleasure of Christ, and to defend his church; who are as valiant and courageous in doing their master's work and will, as they are faithful and trusty: or rather, by this guard about the. church, we are to understand the ministers of the gospel; <sup>f418</sup> who, 'by night stand in the house of the Lord,' and act the part of

watchmen there; defend the truths of the gospel, and vindicate the cause of Christ against all opposers. These are described,

**1st**, By their number, threescore; which perhaps was just the number of guards which Solomon had every night about his bed; and that not only for the safety and security of his royal person, but as an indication of his majesty and greatness: and it may be observed, that these are just double the number of David's worthies, Solomon excelling his father in glory and majesty; though perhaps here is a certain number mentioned for an uncertain, which may be particularly mentioned, because it is a competent and sufficient one.

**2dly**, By their qualifications, 'valiant or mighty men:' they are such who are strong in Christ, in his grace, and in the power of his might; and so indeed they had need to be, to discharge the work they are called unto: they are capable of digesting the word of God themselves, and of dividing it to others; they have courage enough to defend the gospel against all its enemies, and are 'valiant for the truth upon earth;' they quit themselves like men, being strong; and 'stand fast in one spirit, striving together for the faith of the gospel.'

**3dly**, By their original, or descent, they are 'the valiant of Israel:' the Israelites were noted for valiant men, and were a terror to their enemies; and these were the choicest, the very flower of them; these were Israelites indeed, who had something of the spirit of old Israel in them; who, as a prince, had power both with God and men, and prevailed.

**4thly**, By their posture; they stood round about the bed, on all sides: which shews not only their diligence in their work, and how careful they were that nothing might prejudice the church, nor disturb its rest and repose; but also the safety and security of it: not that this is all the security the church has; for besides the angels, and these ministers of the gospel, who attend it, the Lord himself is round about it; 'for as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about his people, but yet it is a great mercy and blessing that the Lord is pleased to set such a guard as this about his bed, or set such watchmen as these upon the walls of his Jerusalem.'

**IV.** To all this a behold is prefixed; which may be considered, either as a note of attention, to stir up the minds of the daughters of Jerusalem to consider this great person, whose bed this is which is guarded after such a manner as is here represented; from whence they might conclude, that if his

bed was so stately, his person must be much more so: or else, as a note of admiration, which she takes up, not only to shew how much she was affected with the glory and greatness of Christ's person, and with those privileges which she enjoyed through, and by him; as that she should be in his bed, where he condescended to grant her communion with himself, about which so strong a guard is set as is here described: but likewise, she does it to stir up the affections of these daughters towards Christ, that they might be filled with desires after him, and not be at rest until they also had some enjoyment of him, in whose presence she had found so much sweetness.

### VERSE 8.

They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night.

IN these words is a farther description of the guard about Christ's bed: and that

**I.** By their armor; they 'all hold swords.'

**II.** By their skilfulness in using them; being 'expert in war.'

**III.** By their readiness to engage upon any occasion; 'every man hath his sword upon his thigh.'

**IV.** The reason of this guard, and their being thus armed, and standing in this posture, is also assigned; because 'of fear in the night.'

**I.** Here is a farther description of the guard about Christ's bed, by the armor which they appeared with; they 'all hold swords:' they are not only mighty and valiant men, men of courage 'but also armed men;' and therefore are more capable to act both defensively and offensively. Now by the sword, which they hold in their hands, or have girt upon their thighs, is meant the word of God, which in scripture is called,

**1.** 'The sword of the spirit,' <sup><4067></sup>Ephesians 6:17. and that because it is a spiritual one; for as none of 'the weapons of our warfare are carnal,' but spiritual; so likewise is this, which is no small part of our Christian armor; and which none but 'the spiritual man' does, or can use to any good purpose against 'spiritual wickednesses in high places;' as also because it is made by the Spirit of God; he is the author of it; it is he that furnishes us

with it, and makes it powerful and efficacious to answer the ends for which it is both made and used.

**2.** It is called a sharp one, nay, said to be, <sup><3012></sup>Hebrews 4:12, ‘sharper than any two edged sword;’ which sinners have found to be true, by those sharp threatenings and severe reproofs it has given for sin; and those cutting convictions, which, in the Spirit’s hand, it has laid them under for it; for then it pricks the very heart and conscience, and pierces, ‘even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit;’ it cuts and hews persons down, that are either going on in a course of profaneness, or are vainly boasting of their own righteousness; nay, it not only cuts, but kills, according to <sup><3015></sup>Hosea 6:5, compared with verse 4: ‘therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth.’ Satan has often felt the keenness of this sword, especially as it was in the hand of Christ, and managed by him against him in the wilderness; who repelled every temptation of his, with a ‘for it is written:’ neither is there any weapon more powerful and successful in the hand of faith, when strengthened by the Spirit of God, to resist that enemy of our souls, than this is; nor is there any that is more formidable to him, nor more dreaded by him. Moreover it has appeared, and has been sufficiently tried to be a sharp sword in the refutation of errors and heresies; it has at once cut the nerves and sinews of sophistic arguments, and laid open naked truth to public view; and will still appear more evidently so in the destruction of Antichrist, that man of sin, ‘whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming.’

**3.** It is also called a *two-edged one*; Christ is represented, <sup><6016></sup>Revelation 1:16, as having such an one proceeding out of his mouth; and the saints, in <sup><6916></sup>Psalms 149:6 as having the like in their hands; in both which places I am inclined to think, that the word of God is intended, whose two edges are the law and gospel. The law is one of those sharp edges of the word of God, which, in the hands of the Spirit, makes piercing and cutting work in the heart of a poor sinner; it lays open not only the gross enormities of life, but also the vile corruptions of nature, and discovers the wrath of God, which is the due desert thereof; it not only accuses and convicts, but also curses and condemns; nay, becomes a *killling letter*, so that the poor sinner, under the powerful workings of it, is in his own apprehension a dead man: this sharp and cutting work of the law, the apostle Paul went under; this keen and sharp edge of the word of God he sufficiently felt, as is manifest from <sup><610></sup>Romans 7:9-11. Moreover, the gospel is the other edge of this

sword; and a sharp one it is, in the Spirit's hand, to cut down both the best and worst in man; it cuts down the best in man, his goodness and goodliness, his strength and wisdom, his righteousness and best performances, and lays them all aside in the business of his justification before God, and acceptance with him: it also cuts down the worst of man; it gives the greatest blow at his sins and corruptions of any thing else, and teaches him the most powerfully to deny Ungodliness and worldly lusts; it puts him upon an abasing of himself, and a magnifying of the grace of God. Now this sword, the guard about Christ's bed had in their hands, and upon their thighs, to defend it from all the dangers it was liable to: and though in our bibles it is rendered swords, in the plural number; yet in the Hebrew text it is in the singular number, *the sword*; <sup>f419</sup> for it is but one sword, which is the word of God, that these persons were acquainted with; and firmly held for the safety and protection of the church.

And now, by their holding this sword, is meant, not only their acquaintance with the word of God, and their apprehension of it, but also their retention of, and firm adherence to it: they not only held it forth to others, but also held it fast themselves; which is a necessary qualification in the ministers of the gospel, or in those who are about Christ's bed; for having this sword always in their hands, they are in a readiness to 'war a good warfare;' which they are not strangers to, as appears from the following character of them. For,

**II.** They are farther described by their skilfulness in military affairs, 'being expert in war:' these had been in God's *γυμνάσιον*, or school of exercise, where they had been in some good measure taught, and versed in' the art of war, and had their, spiritual 'senses exercised to discern between good and evil.' The ministers of the gospel are, in common with other Christians, engaged in a war with sin, Satan, and the world; but being endowed with greater light and knowledge, faith and experience, as they must be supposed to have a greater degree of courage to oppose; so they must be allowed to have a greater expertness in managing a war with those spiritual enemies, than usually private believers have; having a large knowledge of, and acquaintance with the many windings and turnings of a deceitful and treacherous heart, as well as the depths of Satan, and the cunning and crafty wiles and methods he takes to deceive souls; as also the various, charming, and alluring baits of an ensnaring world: and besides all this, being set in a higher post and place in the church, it is highly necessary that they should be more expert in fighting 'the good fight of faith,' against all

opposers of the doctrines of the gospel; for it is not only proper that they should be mighty men, men of courage, who are concerned in such a work; but also men of skilfulness, who know how to use those spiritual weapons which they are accoutered with; so as both the truth of the gospel shall be defended and established, and error and heresy be refuted and overthrown.

**III.** They are also described by the posture of readiness which they are to engage upon any occasion; ‘every man hath his sword upon his thigh:’ to have the sword upon the thigh, is a preparation for war, and an indication of readiness to engage in it; see <sup><198B></sup>Psalm 45:3 for being there, it is near unto them; they can come at it on all proper occasions, and are hereby in a posture of defense. All this may be expressive of that familiar acquaintance which ministers of the gospel have with the word of God, and how near it is unto them? it is in their *mouths* and in their *hearts*; it dwells richly in their hearts, with which they meditate upon it; and it is in their mouths in the preaching of it; they can quickly and easily come at it, and furnish themselves with sufficient proofs of gospel-truths, and with proper arguments for the refutation of erroneous doctrines; so that as they are ‘set for the defense of the gospel,’ they are always in a posture of readiness to act for it.

**IV.** The reason of this guard about Christ’s bed, and of their being thus armed and standing, in this posture, is here assigned; which is, ‘because of fear in the night:’ which some understand of that dread and terror which is injected into the minds of men by evil spirits; and so the Targum explains this, as it does also the terror by night, in <sup><1910B></sup>Psalm 91:5 of apparitions and evil spirits which walk in the night; which those *who* have the seal of circumcision in the flesh, which the paraphrast supposes is meant by the ‘sword upon the thigh,’ have no reason to be afraid of: but it is much better, in the Talmud <sup>f420</sup> understood of the fear of hell, which is comparable to the night; though that fear, which believers are apt to be possessed of in their times of darkness, seems rather to be intended: and from hence may be observed,

- 1.** That believers have their nights of affliction, temptation, desertion, darkness, sleepiness, and carnal security.
- 2.** That they are often possessed with fears in such seasons; as ‘without are fightings,’ so ‘within are fears;’ as that Christ is not theirs; that they shall never get to heaven, nor hold out to the end; and are frequently terrified

with the formidable posse their enemies bring against them, to which they find their own power and strength unequal; and therefore are ready to faint, and be discouraged; and their peace, rest, and quietness in Christ, are much disturbed.

**3.** That Christ has provided a guard for his church, to remove those fears, support them under those discouragements, and defend them from those who would make inroads upon their faith and comfort; and these are the ministers of the gospel, whom he has set upon the walls of Zion, and placed about his bed, the church; that so the out-works and fortifications of gospel doctrines may be kept firm against all opposition without, and the precious promises of the gospel may be open and dispensed within; that so her peace and comfort may not be broken in upon; which, as it shews the safety and security of the church, so it does likewise the tender care and concern of Christ for her.

## VERSE. 9

*King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.*

THE church having described Christ's bed, proceeds to give some account of his chariot, which he had made for himself and spouse. The word here translated *chariot*, is to be found in no other part of the scripture, and is differently rendered. Some translate it a throne, which Solomon had prepared for himself; so Junius and Tremellius: others, a stately palace or bride chamber, which he had built on purpose for the more honorable reception of his bride; so David de Pomis, R. Sol. Jarchi, and Arias Montanus: others, a bed; which is so called from the fruitfulness thereof, which in chapter <sup><22116></sup>1:16. is said to be green; but then it must mean such a bed, in which the bride used to be carried, as R. David Kimchi <sup>f421</sup> observes. So that it seems to signify the nuptial bed, or an open chariot, or some such like thing, in which the bride was carried in pomp to the bridegroom's house: and in this sense is the word used in the Misnah; <sup>f422</sup> where mention is made of a decree 'that the bride should not go out into the city, **zwyrpab** beappirion, the word here used, 'in the nuptial bed or open chariot;' in which as R. Sol. Jarchi says, in his gloss upon the words, 'they carried her from the house of her father to the house of her husband.' And so the Septuagint here renders the word by **φορεῖον**, which signifies something in which persons or things are carried, and is very much like in sound to the Hebrew word; and some <sup>f423</sup> have thought that it is this very



Greek word which is here made use of, which might not be unknown to the Hebrews; and *zwyropa twnbl* is a usual phrase with the Rabbins, to express the celebration of marriage.<sup>f424</sup> It seems to be the nuptial chariot; in which according to Pausanias;<sup>f425</sup> three only were carried; the bride, who sat in the middle, the bridegroom on one hand, and the friend of the bridegroom on the other: something of this kind is the Palki or Palanquin of the Indians; in which the bride and bridegroom are carried on the day of marriage on four mens shoulders.<sup>f426</sup> By this chariot, R. Sol. Jarchi and Alshech would have the tabernacle of the congregation understood; though the Targum and R. Aben Ezra understand it of the temple, which was made of the cedars of Lebanon: but by it rather is meant, either,

**First**, The human nature of Christ, in which, as in a chariot, Christ made himself visible and conspicuous to men, and gave a glorious display of his greatness and majesty; ‘for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;’ it was in this he descended from and ascended up to heaven; and by which saints have access to God, and a communication of grace from him; for our way of access to God, and of acceptance with him, as well as of conveyance of all covenant-grace and blessings from him, is ‘consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, Christ’s flesh:’ Concerning which chariot of Christ’s human nature, we may observe,

**1.** The author, king Solomon, Christ himself: and this serves to set forth the magnificence of it; for if it is the work of so great a person, it must needs be curiously wrought; and at the same time it shews his wonderful humility and condescension, in that one who was possessed of royal dignity, should be employed in such a work; and in nothing did he give a greater instance of it, than in the assumption of human nature, in his being found in; fashion as a man: which work is purely ascribed to himself; it was *sine virili opere*, Without the help of man that Christ became man; his human nature is the ‘stone cut out of the mountain without hands,’ and the tabernacle which God pitched, and not man; and because of this, it is wondrous and surprising: when it was first prophesied of, it is ushered in with a ‘behold a virgin shall conceive, etc.’ and when the news was brought to the virgin herself, it was startling and astonishing to her, and made her say, ‘How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?’ but this being a work of God, with whom nothing is impossible, was effected by him: but though Christ assumed our nature, and became man without the help of man; yet not exclusive of the help and assistance of his Father, who

prepared a body for him; nor of the Holy Ghost, who formed and sanctified it in the virgin's womb.

**2.** The matter of it, and that is of the wood of Lebanon: Christ was conceived and born of the virgin Mary, who dwelt at Nazareth, a city of Galilee, at the foot of mount Lebanon; and the wood of that mountain, which was cedar, being of an incorruptible nature, may very well express the incorruption of Christ's human nature; for though he died and was buried, yet he never saw corruption: moreover this being very excellent and valuable wood, may denote the excellency and glory of Christ's human nature; whose countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; for though, by his sorrows and sufferings, his visage was more marred than any man, and his form than the sons of men; yet he was fairer than any of the Sons of Adam.

**3.** The end for which this chariot was made; it was for himself: for though all the three persons had a hand in making it, yet none but the second person appeared in it; it was the Son only, and not the Father, nor the Spirit, who was made flesh, and dwelt among us; which was done for the shewing forth of his own glory, as well as for the sake of his body, the church. Or else,

**Secondly,** By this chariot, may be meant the church of Christ; <sup>f427</sup> where he shews himself openly to his people in his ordinances, and they behold his power and his glory in the sanctuary; here he rides in triumph over his enemies; from hence he sends forth the rod of his strength, and makes mighty conquests by his grace over the hearts of men; here his gospel is preached, his ordinances administered, his name borne up, his cause and interest carried on, and his person alone exalted. Concerning which chariot we may also observe,

**1.** The author of it, Christ himself; it is he that builds this temple, and bears the glory; he is the rock, the foundation and corner-stone on which, and the chief architect by whom it is built; there are indeed many workmen and under-builders whom he employs herein, but he himself is the principal; his own hands have laid the foundation, and reared up the super-structure; it is he that has knit all together; and bears, supports, and maintains the whole fabric; and will bring in the head-stone, with the joyful acclamations of grace, grace unto it.

**2.** The matter of the wood of Lebanon: the temple which was built by Solomon, was an eminent figure of the church of Christ; now this was built of cedars fetched from Lebanon, which, though it was upon the borders of the land of Israel, yet was not in it i for Solomon sent to Hiram king; of Tyre for them, whose servants cut them down, hewed them, and made them fit for the building: Christ's true church is made up only of believers, such who are comparable to the cedars in Lebanon; who, though whilst in their state of nature are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and therefore are invited to come with Christ from Lebanon in chapter ~~2048~~4:8 yet are cut down from off their old stock, and being hewn and fitly framed for the building by the grace and spirit of God, are laid in it, and so grow up unto an holy temple in the Lord: and this wood of Lebanon being lasting and durable, may denote the final perseverance of the saints, and the continuance of the church of Christ; which being built upon him, the rock, the gates of hell cannot prevail against it; it is as immoveable as mount Zion,. and as incorruptible as the cedars.

**3.** The end for which it is made, and that is, for himself: Christ has made all things for himself; and more especially his church he has made for his own use; it is his house to dwell in, his garden to walk in, his bed to rest in, and his chariot to ride in; he has also made it for his own glory, and indeed much arises from it; his manifestative glory is much increased by it; this people he has formed for himself, and they shall shew forth his praise. Or else,

**Thirdly**, By this chariot, may be meant the gospel, and the preaching of it; which may be also represented by the white horse, in ~~6002~~Revelation 6:2 on which Christ rides and goes forth, conquering and to conquer; the ministers also of which may be compared to chariots, as Elijah, in ~~1122~~2 Kings 2:12 is called 'the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof:' so Theodoret interprets it of the holy apostles. In this chariot Christ shews himself in all the glory of his love and grace; here, as in a glass, saints behold the glory of the Lord, and are changed into it; in this he is carried up and down the world, and by it is conveyed to the souls of men; this is that vehicle in which he is brought home unto them, and in which he triumphs over all his enemies, and makes his ministers to do so likewise: so that this is a triumphal chariot which he has made, and in which he shews himself to the world. And,

**1.** He is the alone author, as well as the subject, sum and substance of it, and therefore it is called ‘the gospel of Christ.’ It is not the contrivance of human wisdom, the device of man’s brain, nor the produce of carnal reason; it was neither projected, formed, nor delivered by man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ; it is he that has given it to men, and given men a commission to preach it, and furnished them with all necessary qualifications for it.

**2.** The matter of it is said to be ‘the wood of Lebanon;’ which being incorruptible and durable, as has been before observed, as well as of a sweet-smelling savor, may very well be applied to the gospel of Christ, which is preached by his faithful ministers; who are not as some, who corrupt the word of God; but in doctrine, and also in life, shews incorruptness, gravity, and sincerity, and deliver sound speech which cannot be condemned; which will abide and continue, notwithstanding all the efforts of men and devils; and is of an exceeding grateful smell to believers, to whom it is the savor of life unto life.

**3.** This he has made also for himself; that is, for his own glory: which end is answered, when the riches of his grace and love are displayed, his person and offices magnified and exalted, and he declared to be the only way of salvation to lost sinners; as also when sinners are converted, and saints are edified under the ministry of the word, and the success of all ministerial labors is ascribed unto him. Or else,

**Fourthly,** By this chariot, may be meant the covenant of grace; in which, as in a chariot, Christ shews his royal person, and the glorious sovereignty and freeness of his love: by this, as in a chariots many poor souls are borne up and supported under, and are comfortably carried through a great many trials and exercises in this life, and in Which they are brought triumphantly to glory: the same blood of the everlasting covenant, which fetched Christ out of his grave, brings souls out of the pit wherein is no water, and introduces them into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. And,

**1.** Of this chariot, Christ, who is here meant by king Solomon, is the author: man is not in a capacity to make a covenant with God; he has nothing of his own, but what God, before all articles, agreements, conditions, grants, and promises, has a prior right unto; but Christ, as the representative of the elect, has made a covenant with his father on their account; his wisdom drew the plan and model of it, he then acting as the counsellor, or as the angel of the great council; <sup>f428</sup> his power effected it;

being the mighty God, and his grace filled it as the mediator of it; he had so great a hand and concern in it, as that lie is called the surety, mediator, and messenger of it, nay, the covenant itself.

**2.** The matter of it, or of what it was made, is the wood of Lebanon: which may intend the durableness and inviolableness of the covenant of grace; for God will not break it, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his lips; it is as lasting as the wood, and as immoveable as the mountain of Lebanon itself; its promises are yea and amen, and its blessings are irreversible; it is of an everlasting nature in itself, and can never be disannulled by men or devils; and contains things in it both for time and eternity.

**3.** His end in making this is his own glory, as well as the good Of his people; he had both in view: the former is mentioned here, he made it for himself; the latter in the next verse, where it is also said to be for the daughters of Jerusalem. Christ's glory and his church's good are inseparable; his glory is great in their salvation which shews with what wisdom, and in what a beautiful and excellent order, the covenant of grace is made. It is interpreted of the everlasting covenant by some Jewish writers. <sup>f429</sup>

### VERSE 10.

He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple; the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.

THE church goes on to give some farther account of this chariot, which Christ, the true Solomon, had made for himself; and says,

**I.** That 'the pillars of it were of silver.'

**II.** The 'bottom of gold.'

**III.** The 'covering of purple.' And,

**IV.** That 'the midst of it was paved with love; and that either by or for the daughters of Jerusalem.' Now the explanation of these several parts must be according to the several senses which have been given of the chariot in the former verse. And,

**I.** If by the chariot we understand the human nature of Christ, then,

**1st,** By the pillars of it, are meant the several graces of the Spirit, which both adorned and supported it; for besides the habitual holiness of his nature, and the innocence of his life, there appeared in him a strong faith in God; and that not only throughout the whole of his life, but in the midst of his dolorous sufferings, nay, when deserted by his Father; as also great courage and magnanimity of mind, as well as much patience and humility in doing and suffering all he did: and these may be called pillars, both for the mighty strength that was in them; for grace was not weak in Christ, as it is in us; and also for the support they were of unto him; in the exercise of which the chariot of the human nature was kept, as it were, upon its wheels: and these are said to be of silver, to denote the excellency, brightness, and solidity of those graces; and which appeared to be so, even when as silver they were tried in the furnace of affliction. And,

**2dly,** By the 'bottom of gold,' may be meant his deity; and so denotes, that the subsistence of the human nature is in the divine person; the human nature never did, nor never will subsist without it; as soon as ever it was conceived in the virgin's womb, it was united to the divine person of Christ, and has ever been since supported by it, both in its state of humiliation and exaltation; it is this which lies at the bottom of, and puts an efficacy into all Christ's mediatorial actions, and makes them powerful to answer the ends for Which they are performed; the effusion of his blood, the oblation of his sacrifice, and the bringing in of a righteousness, would not have been sufficient to have expiated sin, satisfied justice, answered the demands of a righteous law, and discharged the sinner, had they not been the blood, sacrifice, and righteousness of God; it is the impress of Deity upon them, which makes them efficacious to answer all these purposes. Now this being called a *bottom*, is no ways a lessening or a diminution of the glory of Christ's deity, any more than his being called a *foundation* is; but rather serves to set forth the glory and greatness of it, as its being said to be of gold manifestly shews. And then also,

**3dly,** By the purple covering of this chariot, which seems to be in allusion to the curtains of the tabernacle, <sup>(221)</sup>Exodus 26:1 may be meant, either the passion and sufferings of Christ in the human nature, by which his garments were as though they had been dyed; and he appeared red in his apparel; nay, clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; so that the covering of the human nature of Christ may well be said to be of purple: or else, it means his royal dignity, and his exaltation, after sufferings; this being a color used by kings and great persons; he was clothed with a purple robe before his

sufferings, by way of derision; but now he is really made lord and Christ; he was then, in a way of mockery, crowned with thorns; but now, in the same nature, is crowned with glory and honor. And then,

**4thly**, By the midst of it, which is paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem, may be meant the heart of Christ, which is filled with, and, as it were, paved with love for poor sinners; or, as the word <sup>f430</sup> may be rendered, *enflamed*, or set on fire with love: It was this that moved him to espouse their cause, take upon him the care and charge of their persons, assume their nature, and die in their room and stead; which love of his, as to its quality, is the best; as to its degree, the greatest; as to its duration, for ever; from whence there is no separation, to which there is no parallel; and at present, to us finite creatures, incomprehensible: and all this is for the daughters of Jerusalem, the elect of God, or young converts; that is, it is all for their sakes, and out of love to them he made this chariot, or assumed human nature, according to what is said, <sup><8024></sup>Hebrews 2:14, ‘forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same:’ or else the meaning is, that such is the love of Christ towards these daughters, that if any one could but look into his heart, they would find the very images and pictures of them drawn there; who are not only engraven upon the palms of his hands, but are also set as a seal upon his heart; which was prefigured by the high-priest’s bearing the names of the children of Israel in the breast-plate of judgment upon his heart, before the Lord continually; all which is expressive of that strong affection which he has unto them. But then,

**II.** If by the chariot we understand the church of Christ, then,

**1st**, By the pillars thereof are meant the ministers of the gospel; so of James, Cephas and John, the apostle Paul says, that they seemed to be pillars, and such as these are intended by the seven pillars, which wisdom had hewn out, and built her house upon, in <sup><300></sup>Proverbs 9:1 who, for their strength, stability, and support to the church of Christ, may be compared to those two pillars in the porch of the temple, which are called, the one *Jachin*, and the other *Boaz*: for these are of great strength to the building; there is a very great weight rests upon them; these are the legs in Christ’s body, which, like pillars of marble, stand firm and immovable, notwithstanding the several pressures of reproaches, afflictions, persecutions, etc. which fall very hard and heavy upon them; for none of these things move them; but with an unshaken courage and magnanimity of

mind they stand up under them; and in so doing, are very great supports to the cause, interest, and church of Christ; for though Christ is the foundation and the chief corner-stone, yet these are pillars, and have their usefulness. Now these are said to be of silver, because of their valuableness, both in the esteem of Christ, who has placed them in his church, and from whom they have all their strength and usefulness; and likewise in the esteem of saints, to whom they are made useful; for the tongue of the just, and especially of a gospel-minister, is as choice silver: these are the silver trumpets, which sound forth and proclaim peace and pardon, life and salvation to poor, lost, and rebellious sinners; their words, when fitly spoken, and adapted to the eases of souls, either of afflicted saints, or distressed sinners, are like apples of gold in pictures of silver. Moreover, this may be expressive of their shine and lustre, both in doctrine and life; who preach the gospel in its power and purity, hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience; and who, the more they are vilified, reproached, afflicted and persecuted for the sake of the gospel, the brighter they are, like silver purified seven times, And then,

**2dly**, By the ‘golden bottom,’ may be meant Christ; who is the foundation of his church and people, on which they are laid and firmly built; and is the only foundation of their everlasting salvation, of all their faith, hope, joy and comfort here, and of their eternal happiness hereafter: and a good bottom this is; happy is every one that is upon it; it may well be said to be ‘of gold,’ because of the glory and splendor of it; it is the ‘foundation of the apostles and prophets,’ which they ministerially laid, and on which their persons are secured equally with others; hence the foundations of the new Jerusalem are said to be twelve, and each of them compared to a precious stone to set forth the excellency thereof: nay, this foundation is a super-excellent one; for ‘other foundation can no man lay,’ which is in any respect valuable, or upon any account to be compared to this ‘which is laid, which is Christ Jesus.’ Moreover, for the durableness of it, it may be said to be of gold; for ‘the righteous is an everlasting foundation;’ that is, the righteous man’s foundation is such an one; or he is built upon one that will last for ever; and such an one is Christ; a foundation that will never decay; but will always abide firm and strong; and is sufficient to bear the whole weight of the building to all eternity. And then,

**3dly**, The ‘purple covering’ may intend either,



**1.** The suffering state of the church; being attended with a variety of afflictions tribulations and persecutions, and sometimes as it were covered with blood, as the histories of several ages testify. Or else,

**2.** Her regal dignity, to which she and all believers are advanced by Christ, who has made them ‘kings and priests to God and his father;’ purple being a color in use among great persons, may very well represent this. Or,

**3.** Her being clothed with the robe of Christ’s righteousness; which may be said to be of a purple color, because it is the produce and effect of Christ’s blood, and is as it were dipped into it; hence believers are said to be ‘justified by his blood’ in ~~411~~ Romans 5:9. Or,

**4.** It may signify her being washed in Christ’s blood, together with the outward garments of her conversation, and so appear to be of this dye, And then,

**4thly,** By the midst thereof, which is ‘paved with love,’ may be meant, either the hearts of believers, or of the church, filled with a sense of Christ’s love shed abroad in them, or inflamed with love to Christ <sup>f431</sup> which, though it is sometimes in a decaying and declining condition, yet is never entirely moved; for who ‘can separate from the love of Christ?’ that is, either from Christ’s love to his people, or from their love to him: or else, by this pavement of love in the midst of the church, may be meant the ordinances of Christ; which he has instituted for the sake of the daughters of Jerusalem, or young converts; through which he discovers his love unto them, and by an attendance on which they discover their love, both to Christ and to his church; and the church again discovers her love to them, by a cheerful admission of them to these ordinances. But then,

**III.** If by the chariot we understand the gospel and the preaching of it, then,

**1st,** By the ‘silver pillars thereof,’ are meant the truths and doctrines of it; which, like pillars, are solid and substantial, and continue firm and immoveable, and not like chaff, which is driven away with every wind; nor like such combustible and perishing things, as wood, hay and stubble; but like gold, silver, and precious stones; and are of very great use to support God’s children under the several trials and exercises which they are attended with, and that either in adversity or prosperity, in life or in death; and therefore for their value, utility and duration, may be compared to

pillars of silver; and ought to be as diligently and carefully sought for and into as silver is, and to be received and preferred before it; for, to get wisdom in gospel-truths, 'is better than gold;' and to get understanding in gospel-doctrines, 'is rather to be chosen than silver,' <sup>Proverbs 16:16</sup> Proverbs 16:16. And then,

**2dly**, By 'the 'golden bottom,' may be meant Christ himself, who is the sum and substance of the gospel: to preach Christ, and him only, as God's way of salvation to sinners, was the old, primitive, and apostolical way of preaching; and which God blessed and owned, and continues so to do, for the conversion of sinners, and the comfort of saints: that gospel, of Which Christ is not the sum and substance, is like a chariot without a bottom; and such an one is good for nothing; for who would venture to ride in it? but where Christ is the main and principal subject insisted on, there is a good bottom, nay) a golden one; or a good seat, ἀνακλίτον, 'a reclining place,' as the Septuagint render it, to sit and rest in, or lean upon. And also,

**3dly**, By the 'purple covering,' may be meant particularly those doctrines of the gospel, which concern our redemption from the law, and the curses of it; the pardon of our sins, and our justification through Christ's precious blood; for which reason they may be said to be of this color. And,

**4thly**, This pavement of love may signify, that the whole gospel is full of love; wherein, in a very lively manner, is set forth the love of God the Father, in contriving and drawing the scheme and model of our salvation before all time; and in sending his Son in the fullness of time, to accomplish what was agreed on before, that he should do; as also the love of Christ in becoming man, sustaining all the sorrows of life, and sufferings of death; and all for the sake and in the room and stead of vile, sinful, and rebellious sinners; it gives us such instances of love as never were heard of before, which never were, nor never will be paralleled; its whole language is love; it is nothing else but a free promise and declaration of God's love and grace to sinful man; so that it may well be said to be paved with it: and how delightful must such a pavement be to the daughters of Jerusalem, to all young converts, either to behold or sit upon, where nothing but the love that is between Christ and his church is beautifully described? But then,

**IV.** If by the chariot we understand the covenant of grace, then,

**1st**, By the silver pillars, may be meant the promises thereof; which, like pillars, are firm and. immoveable, solid and substantial; they are all yea and

amen in Christ; not one of them shall ever fail, being free, absolute and unconditional; and therefore are called better promises, as being preferable to those in the covenant of works, which required conditions to be fulfilled before the enjoyment of the things promised. These, like pillars, are the support of God's children, under the variety of troubles they are exercised with; these yield them relief, are reviving cordials, and fill them with joy and comfort when nothing else can. O! of what profit and advantage has a promise been to a sinking believer, when it has been seasonably brought, and suitably applied by the spirit! there are some promises which the saints would not have out of their bibles for millions of worlds: and these may be said to be of silver, because of their preciousness, richness and durability; they are 'exceeding great and precious,' are of more worth than 'thousands of gold and silver;' and will last for ever, being the sure 'mercies of David;' nay, the more they are tried, used, and handled by faith, the brighter and more glorious will they look. And then,

**2dly,** By the golden bottom of this covenant, must be meant. Christ; who is the covenant itself, not only materially, but fundamentally; he is not only the matter and substance of it, all the blessings and promises of it being comprised in him, but also the foundation of it; he bears the whole weight of the covenant, and is, as has been observed, the surety, mediator, and messenger of it. Now this bottom, for its richness, firmness and duration, may be said to be of gold; souls who are in this chariot, the covenant of grace, need never fear falling through; it can never be unbottomed; once in covenant, and always so; and therefore it is said to be ordered in all things, and sure; because it has such a bottom, it can never be broken, nor will it ever be removed. And then,

**3dly,** Its purple covering may intend the blood of Christ, which is called 'the blood of the everlasting covenant;' by which, not only the covenant is ratified, and confirmed; but all that are in it and are under this cover <sup>f432</sup> have their sins blotted out, hid and covered; so that when they are sought for, and the most diligent scrutiny made for them by justice, they shall not be found. Moreover, their persons are hereby eternally screened from the wrath of God; so that though showers of wrath shall fall upon the heads of Christless sinners, yet all under this purple covering shall be safe, and not have the least drop fall upon them; but shall, in this chariot of rich and glorious grace, be safely preserved, protected, and conveyed to eternal glory.

**4thly**, The midst of it being paved with love shews that this covenant is full of love: It was love that set Christ on work to make it, and engaged him to be the surety, mediator, and messenger of it; it is made up of nothing but love; love has filled it with precious promises and spiritual blessings; and all for the daughters of Jerusalem, to whom love in time communicates them: O! what a delightful and easy chariot must this be to ride in, which is lined with love! love is the hangings of it all around, and the velvet cushions and pillows on which faith leans; with what splendor, stateliness and majesty, as well as ease and pleasure then, does the believer go to glory?

The Jewish writers as I have already observed, by the chariot, understand the tabernacle or temple; and by its pillars, bottom, covering and middle, the ark of the testimony, with the two tables of stone, which are more precious than gold and silver; the golden mercy-seat, the vail of blue and purple, and the seat of the shechinah between the two cherubims, which are upon the mercy-seat: To this purpose are the Targum, and the gloss of R. Solomon Jarchi upon the place.

Moreover, besides the several senses which have been already given of these words, it may not be amiss to observe, that by this bride-chamber, as some render the word in verse 9 may be meant the royal palace; and how well the description of it in this verse agrees with what is given of the new Jerusalem, in Revelation 21 will best appear by comparing both together: which bridal-palace Christ is now preparing for his spouse, and when that is ready for her, and she for that, being ‘perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,’ she shall be kindly welcomed and cheerfully received; where the nuptial feast will be kept, and Christ shall be seen by all the daughters of Zion in all his glory, and with his royal diadem upon his head, as he is described in the following verse.

### VERSE 11.

Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and beholding Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him, in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.

THESE are not the words of Christ, for he is the person spoken of and represented in this glorious manner; nor are they the speech of the daughters of Jerusalem, young converts, for they are the persons spoken to, who are here called the daughters of Zion; nor are they to be considered as the angels exhortation to all the elect to forsake the world, and

contemplate Christ by faith in the glory of his kingdom after his resurrection, as some think: but they are the words of the church, who, observing that the daughters of Jerusalem were first struck with admiration at the sight of her, as coming up out of the wilderness, in verse 6. and that their eyes were now intently fixed upon the bed and chariot she had been describing in the former verses, calls them off from these things and proposes a far more glorious object to them, to whom her own glory was not to be compared; nay, king Solomon, in all his glory, either on his coronation or marriage-day, to which the allusion seems to be, cannot equal him; and if his bed and chariot were so acceptable to them, and gave them so much pleasure to behold, she might well conclude that a sight of his person, especially in all his regal glory, could not but be grate, ful to them; and therefore bids them go forth and behold him to which no doubt they would be forward enough; for the sight of a crowned king, as he passes along the streets, especially on his coronation day, is very desirable to people, who come forth out of their houses, or look out of their windows to behold the sight.

There is a very great variety in the opinions of interpreters about the time to which these words should be referred. The ancient Jewish writers <sup>f433</sup> refer them to the time of Solomon's finishing the temple, and his dedication of it, and to the joy and gladness which appeared on that solemn occasion; but that was neither his coronation nor his marriage-day: R. Solomon Jarchi <sup>f434</sup> applies them to the time of the giving of the law, when the Israelites acknowledged God as their king, by subjecting themselves to it; for though Moses was legislator, yet God was king in Jeshurun; as also to the erection and dedication of the temple in the wilderness: Others refer them to the time of Solomon's being crowned king of Israel, which may be ascribed to his mother Bathsheba, as the moral cause of it; <sup>f435</sup> who, by her intreaties and supplications, procured it for him; and which was 'the day of his espousals' to the people of Israel, and no doubt 'the day of the gladness of his heart.' Others <sup>f436</sup> refer to the time of his marriage to Pharaoh's daughter; at which time it was the custom, not only of other nations <sup>f437</sup> but of the Jews, to crown married persons, to which perhaps the allusion is made in <sup>3162</sup> Ezekiel 16:12 and of those nuptial crowns mention is made in the Misnah; <sup>f438</sup> others refer them to the incarnation of Christ; <sup>f439</sup> and think that by the crown, is meant his humanity, which he received from his mother, the virgin Mary; at which time he espoused our nature, and was no less a day of gladness to him than to us: it being what he gladly performed,

and had been long desirous of, as is manifest from the several preludiums of it in the Old Testament: though others <sup>f440</sup> have been of opinion, that the words regard the passion and sufferings of Christ; at which time he was crowned with a crown of thorns, and by his blood purchased and espoused the church to himself; which bloody baptism of his was so desirable to him, that he was even straitened until it was accomplished: but though the allusion, as I have already hinted, is to the coronation and marriage-day of king Solomon; yet I should rather think that the words have reference to Christi as the glorious mediator, when first discovered to a poor sinner in all the fullness of his grace, as sitting and riding in the chariot of the everlasting gospel: concerning which we may observe,

**First,** The persons who are spoken to and exhorted to go forth and behold Christ, and they are the daughters of Zion: Zion was a mount, situate on the north side of Jerusalem, and is sometimes used for the city itself; and was a figure of the church of Christ, which sometimes bears this name in scripture: by the daughters of it, we are to understand the same who are in this song often called the daughters of Jerusalem; by which we have all along understood young converts; who may be called the daughters of Zion, because Christ, who is here thus gloriously described, is king thereof; see ~~<HEB>~~ Psalm 149:2. ~~<ROM>~~ Zechariah 9:9.

**Secondly,** The object which is proposed to them to behold, is king Solomon, or the Lord Jesus Christ, who is greater than Solomon, and was typified by him, and in what respects has been shewn on verse 7. And it may not be amiss to remark, what one <sup>f441</sup> well observes, that there is a manifest gradation in these verses: in verse 7 he is only called Solomon; in verse 9 king Solomon; and here in this verse, ‘king Solomon with a crown;’ for, as the same author observes, ‘the longer she speaks of Christ, and insists in mentioning his excellency, her thoughts draw the deeper, she sets him up the higher, and becomes warmer in her apprehensions, affections, and expressions concerning him.’ And therefore I shall now,

**Thirdly,** Consider this circumstance of Christ’s glory, he being represented with a ‘crown, wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, etc.’ and here it will be proper to inquire,

**1st,** Who we are to understand by his mother.

**2dly,** What by the Crown wherewith she crowned him.

**3dly**, The time of his coronation, which is here expressed, 'in the day of his espousals, etc.'

**1st**, By his mother, we are not to understand Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon; nor the Virgin Mary, the natural mother of Christ: but either, the church of Christ, the Jerusalem above, which is the mother of us all, who being the mother of Christ mystical, may be said to be the mother of Christ also; or else, every particular believer may be intended, who stands related to Christ as his brother, and as one who has sucked the breasts of one and the same mother; see chapter 8:1 who not only is called Christ's brother and sister, but also his mother: <sup>(4120)</sup> Matthew 12:50 in whose heart Christ is formed, by whom he is affectionately loved, even as an only child is by a tender mother; and for whose honor, glory and interest there is a very great concern. But,

**2dly**, What is meant by this *crown*, wherewith he is crowned by his mother. Christ has a crown and kingdom, as he is God, equal with the Father, but this is not put upon him, nor given to him by any; he has a natural right unto it which none can give nor take away from him; he being 'in the form of God,' and in all respects equal to him, 'thought it no robbery' to assume this crown and kingdom to himself: he has also one as he is Mediator; and this is put upon him, not by his mother, but by his Father; who has 'anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows,' and placed him as 'king over his holy hill of Zion,' and set 'a crown of pure gold upon his head.' And thus now, by faith, believers see him, 'crowned with glory and honor;' all which will more manifestly appear at the last day, when there will be a more open and visible coronation of Christ than has hitherto been; though he has very often now a 'crown given to him,' as the triumphant conqueror over the hearts of men; by the mighty power of his grace displayed in the everlasting gospel, in which he goes forth' conquering and to conquer.' But it seems to me that the crown which is here meant, is that which every true believer puts on Christ, when their souls are brought to venture on him, and believe in him: every act of faith is a putting the crown on Christ's head; and every submission to his commands and ordinances, is an acknowledging of him as king of saints; and the giving up of their souls unto him, and owning him as their head and husband, is 'a crown of glory, and a royal diadem' in his hand; even as converts are a 'crown of rejoicing' to ministers, and 'a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband:' and in nothing more do believers do this, than when they ascribe all they have and are, to his grace, and say, with the apostle, It is 'by the grace of Christ I am

what I am;’ for by so doing, they not only cast their crowns at Christ’s feet, but set another upon his head; whereas, on the contrary, they take the crown from off Christ’s head, who do not believe on him, despise his commands, neglect his ordinances, and ascribe their salvation, either in whole or in part, unto themselves, their own works and duties. Moreover, this honor Christ justly deserves from us; and it is an incumbent duty to give it to him; for he, in creation, crowned man, and set him over all the works of his hands, and made him but little inferior to the angels themselves; and by his incarnation, has crowned the human nature with such glory and honor, as it never had in a state of innocence itself; it being united to a divine person, and is now exalted at the Father’s right hand, which is an honor none of the angelic race ever enjoyed; for, ‘to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit at my right hand?’ who also, in the redemption of us from the curse of the law, the slavery and servitude of sin, Satan, and the world, in the remission of our sins by his blood, the justification of our persons by his righteousness, and sanctification of our hearts and natures by his grace and spirit, has ‘crowned us with loving-kindness and tender mercies.’ In short, he has laid up for us a ‘crown of righteousness, life and glory,’ which he, the righteous judge, will give unto and put upon the heads of all his people; so that there is a great deal of reason to crown Christ, and acknowledge him alone as our Lord and King, our head and husband, our savior and redeemer, who was crowned with thorns for us, and has crowned us with his grace now and will ere long crown us with glory. But,

**3dly,** The time of this coronation as next to be enquired into; and that is said to be ‘in the day of his espousals,’ that is, on his marriage-day; for Christ’s coronation and marriage day are one and the same day. Now, by this ‘day of his espousals,’ we are to understand the time of a poor sinner’s being enabled, by mighty grace, to give up itself to the Lord, when it consents to be his for ever: this marriage was made and agreed upon in the everlasting council and covenant of grace and peace; Christ made it his request to his Father, and he granted him it; he gave his full consent unto it; so that there remained only the actual consent of the persons themselves, for whom Christ had such a strong love and affection which is obtained by the powerful workings of his grace and spirit in time upon their hearts; and that often under the ministry of the word, where they are ‘espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ;’ at which time there is a large breaking forth; not only of Christ’s love to and upon their hearts, but also of theirs to Christ



which is called the love of their espousals, and which Christ afterwards remembers, when it has grown cold and chill towards him: thus every time that a particular soul is brought to Christ, it is both a coronation, and an espousal day; but the great coronation and espousal-day is yet to come, when all the elect shall be brought in, and it shall be said, ‘The marriage of the lamb is come, and the bride is ready; then shall the king, with her, enter into the marriage-chamber, where the nuptials will be solemnized, and he openly and publicly crowned king of saints, where he will reign with them in all his glory. Some of the Jewish writers interpret this ‘day of espousals,’ of the days of the Messiah<sup>f442</sup>

Now this ‘day of his espousals,’ with particular believers, as well as the more glorious one that is to come is called ‘the day of the gladness of his heart:’ which shews how welcome poor sinners are to Christ, and how gladly and cheerfully he receives them; it is not only the joy of angels, but the joy and gladness of his heart, when sinners are converted to him, and believe on him; the bridegroom cannot more rejoice over his bride on his marriage-day, than Christ does over poor coming sinners; and when all his saints are together with him in heaven to behold his glory, what joy and gladness will then fill his heart? But,

**Fourthly,** We may observe the duty which is enjoined those daughters of Zion; and that is,

- 1.** To go forth, i.e. out of themselves; for a man can never see any glory and excellency in Christ, until he looks out of himself alone to him: the church would have these daughters turn away their eyes from every thing else, and view this glorious object only; for every thing else, though never so valuable, is to be forsaken and left for the sake of him, who is preferable to all enjoyments whateverse
- 2.** To behold him: the former is in order to this; for as persons sitting within doors, cannot behold an object that is passing by, unless they arise, get up, and go forth or look out; so neither can believers discern this glorious object without going forth. The church would have these daughters behold Christ with attention, affection, faith, and admiration; she would have them fix their eyes upon him, look upon him, and love him; look upon him, and believe in him; look upon him, and wonder at him; for there are astonishing beauties, incomparable excellencies, transcendent glories in him, which deserve such looks as these.

## CHAPTER 4.

In this chapter is contained a large commendation of the church's beauty by Christ: first, more particularly, by an enumeration of several parts, as her eyes, hair, teeth, lips, temples, neck and breasts, verses 1-5, and more generally, verse 7; and having observed where he himself was determined to go, he invites her to go with him; which he enforces, partly from the danger she was exposed unto where she was, verses 6, 8, and partly from the comeliness of her person and graces in his esteem; with which he was ravished, and therefore was extremely desirous of her company, verses 9-11; and then enters into some new descriptions of her, as a garden and an orchard, as a spring and fountain, verses 12-14. All which she makes to be owing to him, verse 15. And the chapter is closed with an order from Christ to the winds, to blow on his garden, and cause the spices of it to flow out; and with an invitation of the church to Christ, to come into his garden, and recreate himself there, verse 16

### VERSE 1.

Behold thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead.

IN these words Christ reassumes his part in this Song, and enters upon a commendation of his church's beauty; which he does,

**First**, More generally by asserting it, when he says, 'Behold thou art fair,' etc. in which general commendation of her beauty, we have,

**1st**, An affectionate character given to her, 'my love.'

**2dly**, Something asserted of her, that she was fair.

**3dly**, This assertion repeated

**4thly**, To this assertion the word *behold* prefixed.

This commendation we have already met with, expressed in the same words, in chapter <sup>2015</sup>1:15. where this kind and loving character has been opened; in what sense the church may be said to be fair, shewn; as also the reasons of Christ's repeating this assertion, and prefixing to it the word

behold, are given: The reasons why these words are again mentioned by him, perhaps may be to shew how much his heart was taken with her beauty; that his love to her was the same as ever it was, notwithstanding her sleepy frames and unbecoming carriage to him; as also, because she might stand in need of the fresh discoveries of his love.

**Secondly**, He gives some particular instances of her beauty' in this and the four following verses.

**1st**, He describes the beauty of her eyes, and asserts, that she has doves' eyes within her locks: in which words we are to consider,

1. What we are to understand by her eyes.
2. Why they are called doves' eyes.
3. Why they are said to be within her locks.

**1.** By the church's eyes we may understand, either the ministers of the gospel, who are to the church what eyes are to an human body; they are placed in the more eminent part of Christ's body, the church, to watch, overlook, guide and direct the other members of the body: or else, by them may be intended, the eyes of the understanding being illuminated by the divine Spirit; and more especially the eye of faith, by which a soul, enlightened by divine grace, beholds the glory, fullness, and suitableness of Christ, and looks to him alone for life and salvation.

**2.** These eyes are called doves. Why ministers of the gospel are compared to doves, and the eye of faith said to be a dove's eye, have been already shewn on chapter <sup>2115</sup>1:15.

**3.** These eyes are said to be within her locks; which, if applied to the ministers of the gospel, may denote,

1. The imperfection of their light and knowledge, and that a great deal of darkness and obscurity attends them: they know but in part, and prophecy but in part; as eyes under the locks, being covered with them, cannot see so clearly, as when they are removed from them; so the ministers of the gospel cannot see so clearly into gospel-truths in this state of imperfection, as they shall, when these locks of darkness are removed; for then they shall see eye to eye: their knowledge of Christ is imperfect now; their light into gospel truths is weak and dim; and proportionate to their light and knowledge do they preach: the apostle

Paul, who had the greatest light into the gospel, and the largest share of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, that perhaps, ever any man had, yet desired to know more of Christ, and the power of his resurrection, ~~1080~~Philippians 3:10.

**2.** It may be expressive of their modesty and humility: locks being decently tied up, as this word signifies <sup>f443</sup> is an evidence of modesty, as the contrary is of wantonness: the ministers of the gospel, though they have the greatest gifts bestowed upon them, yet reckon themselves less than the least of all saints; for notwithstanding all their parts, gifts, and graces, they do not think themselves sufficient, either to think or speak any thing as of themselves: but acknowledge that their sufficiency is of God, who only hath made them able ministers of the New Testament; and whenever their labors are blest and owned, either for the comfort and edification of God's people, or for the conversion of sinners, they ascribe it not to themselves, but to the grace of God that as with them.

**3.** This phrase may be added, to set forth their beauty; eyes, from under or within the locks decently and modestly bound up, look very beautiful; or under locks of hair, plaited and curled about the face, so that the eyes are but just seen, which add to the beauty of them: the ministers of the gospel appear beautiful, not only to Christ, who has counted them faithful, and put them into the ministry; but also to those to whom they are made useful, either for comfort and establishment, or for conviction and conversion; to these, even the very 'feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, are beautiful,' ~~2517~~Isaiah 52:7.

But if by these doves eyes we understand the enlightened eyes of the understanding, and particularly the eye of faith; then this phrase perhaps is used to denote,

**(1.)** The imperfection of faith: the greatest believer has need to pray, with the apostles, 'Lord, increase our faith;' there are some, **τὰ ὑστερήματα**, some things lacking, some deficiencies in faith which need perfecting; it is true, 'faith is the evidence of things not seen,' yet oftentimes it is very dark and obscure: indeed, when compared with Old Testament saints, believers under the New may be said with open face to behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord; but when compared with saints, possessed of the beatific vision, they see but through a glass darkly; their eyes are within their locks.

(2.) To shew us what a modest grace faith is; it looks alone on Christ, it lives only on him; it receives all from him, and gives all the glory to him; it ascribes nothing in man's salvation to itself, nor to any thing done by the creature, but all to Christ and his grace; and so excludes boasting, as the apostle says, <sup><6182></sup>Romans 3:27. 'Where is boasting then? it is excluded: By what law? of works? nay; but by the law of faith.' Had works any thing to do in man's salvation, boasting would have been encouraged and established; but God of his infinite wisdom has ordered it, that it should be of and through faith; that it might appear to be of grace, and not of works, lest any man should boast.

(3.) To set forth how beautiful faith is in Christ's eye, and how much his heart is taken with it; as appears from the ninth verse of this chapter, where he says, 'Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes,' that is, with the eye of faith.

**2dly,** He describes her beauty by her hair, which he says 'is as a flock of goats that appear from mount Gilead;' that is, like the hair of such a flock of goats, so Ben Melech; which in some countries, hangs down like the locks of womens hair plaited <sup>f444</sup> and is thought to be most like truman hair, <sup><6993></sup>1 Samuel 19:13 in the hair of women their comeliness greatly lies, and without which they are not pleasing, as Apuleius <sup>f445</sup> observes: It is compared not to such hair for length and sleekness as for the color of it, being yellowish, which with women formerly was in esteem, and reckoned graceful; and great care was taken to make it look so, even as yellow as gold <sup>f446</sup> nor was it unusual to compare the hair of women, and represent it as superior to a fleece of the choicest flock; <sup>f447</sup> women in former times had their perukes made of goats hair. <sup>f448</sup> This may be understood, 1st, Of the outward conversation of the saints; which may be compared to hair, for the following reasons.

**1.** Because as the hair is for covering, <sup><6115></sup>1 Corinthians 11:15, so is a well-ordered and gospel.conversation a covering to the saints. h believer has many coverings; he has more garments than one: he is clothed with 'the garments of salvation, and covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness; this is his justification, and what gives him a title to glory:' he has also the garment of sanctification, which is curiously wrought by the Spirit of God; and this makes him meet for the king's presence: and he has, besides these, his conversation, garments, which he is to watch and keep from being

spotted with the flesh, and to wash them and make them white in the blood of the lamb; but these cannot cover sins, nor skreen him from divine justice; this only the righteousness of Christ can do, by which his sins are so covered, that when they are sought for they shall not be found; but his outward conversation is ‘a covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in,’ so as to be hid and secured from divine justice; if he was only to appear herein before justice, these very clothes would both abhor and condemn him: nor can they make him meet for the king’s presence; this only the garment of sanctification can do: but then the outward conversation of the saints is a cover and a fence against the reproaches of the world; for though they have not whereof to glory before Gad, yet at some times and in some cases they may lawfully do it before men, and say, as Samuel did, ‘Whose ox have I taken? whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed, or of whose hand have I received any bribe?’ thus their conversation is a cover and fence unto them; and is of service to make those ‘ashamed who falsely accuse their good conversation an Christ, and to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

**2.** As hair is very ornamental to the believer: as garments, though they do not make, yet they adorn the man; so a good conversation, though it does not make, yet it adorns the Christian: It is decent and becoming the gospel of Christ Jesus; it adorns the doctrine of God our savior, and recommends religion to others.

**3.** As hair that is ordered aright, and well taken care of, so is a well-ordered conversation; that is such an one as is ordered, according to the rule of God’s word, and by God himself; for, ‘the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.’ David knew this full well that God did so, and that he himself was insufficient for it; and therefore he thus prays, ‘order my steps in thy word,’ that is, according to thy word, which is the rule of faith and practice: and such a conversation as this being like a well-set and ordered head of hair, is very grateful and well-pleasing to Christ; therefore he says, ‘to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God,’ ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 1:23.

**4.** As the hair upon the head is conspicuous and manifest to all, so is the conversation of the saints: that they are justified by Christ’s righteousness, and sanctified by his Spirit, are not seen and known of all men; but their outward conversation is manifest, and so it should be; ‘let your light so

shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven,' <sup><4156></sup>Matthew 5:16.

**5.** As hair has its dependence upon, and influence from the head; so has the outward conversation of the saints its dependence on, and influence from the grace of the Spirit: a graceless professor, though he may keep up a moral conversation for a time; yet it will drop off from him like leaves from trees in autumn, or like hair that is shed from the head after a violent distemper; the 'root of the matter' not being; in him: the difference between a man of grace and a graceless professor, is elegantly given by Jeremy, <sup><2475></sup>Jeremiah 17:5-8. the one is like the 'heath in the desert,' dry and barren; the other is like a 'tree planted by the waters,' moist and flourishing; 'his leaf is green,' and 'he ceaseth not from yielding fruit.' Thus the outward conversation of the saints may be compared to hair: and what may farther confirm this sense of the words, is, that the apostle Paul, in <sup><5489></sup>1 Timothy 2:9, 10 instead of broided hair, recommends shamefacedness, sobriety and good works, as more becoming godliness; and the apostle Peter, in <sup><4183></sup>1 Peter 3:3, 4, instead of plaiting the hair, exhorts to an adorning with the 'ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.'

Now this hair of the church's, or the outward conversation of the saints, may also be compared to a 'flock of goats which appear from mount Gilead;' or, on mount Gilead, as Noldius: Gilead was a very proper place for cattle, <sup><0631></sup>Numbers 32:1, and no doubt the goats which were fed there, as were usual on mountains <sup>f449</sup> were fat and fruitful; and being in large numbers, and kept in good order, might appear from this mount, to distant spectators, beautiful and magnificent; their hair particularly might be long, smooth, sleek and glistening, and look very beautiful and lovely; especially in the morning at sun-rising, that glancing on them, with its bright and glittering rays, they were very delightful to behold; so R. Jonah, from the use of the word in the Arabic language which signifies the morning, interprets it, 'which rise early in the morning:' and which, as Schultens <sup>f450</sup> observes, some render, 'leading to water early in the morning:' the Vulgate Latin version is, 'that ascend from mount Gilead;' from a lower to a higher part of it; which Bochart approves of it. <sup>f451</sup> So saints, being fruitful in every good word and work, and orderly in their lives and conversations, appear even to the world amiable and lovely; they are like to the he-goat, 'comely in going,' <sup><4189></sup>Proverbs 30:29-31, nay, to a flock of them on mount Gilead. Or else,

**2dly**, By her hair, we may understand the inward thoughts of her heart <sup>f451a</sup>  
For,

- 1.** As hair arises from and has its dependence upon the head, so do thoughts from the heart; it is out of the heart all evil thoughts proceed; <sup><451b></sup>Matthew 15:19. ‘out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, etc.’ and so all good thoughts, which are likewise formed and cherished there by the Spirit of God.
- 2.** As the hairs of the head are numerous, so are the thoughts of the heart: a believer has many thoughts of heart; there is a multitude of thoughts within him, <sup><491b></sup>Psalm 94:19, concerning the corruption of his nature, the sinfulness of his actions, and his frequent backslidings from God; a multitude of thoughts concerning Christ and his grace, and the glories of another world.
- 3.** As the hair of the head is weak and easily moved and tossed about by the wind; so are the thoughts of a believer’s heart, sometimes this way and sometimes another; and are like the eyes of fools in the ends of the earth, unless fixed and established by the Spirit of God upon proper objects.
- 4.** Being rightly ordered by the Spirit of God, as a well-managed and well-ordered head of hair, they are exceedingly admired and valued by Christ Jesus; for he has a ‘book of remembrance written,’ not only for them who speak of him and fear him, but also for those who think upon his name, <sup><481b></sup>Malachi 3:16.

And as the thoughts of a believer’s heart, thus fixed, managed and ordered by the Spirit of God, may be compared to hair, so likewise to a flock of goats on mount Gilead; and then may they be so. when they ascend on high, and dwell upon the everlasting, unchangeable and boundless love of God in Christ; which love has its heights and depths, its lengths and breadths; when they soar aloft, and dwell upon the everlasting covenant of grace; which covenant ‘is ordered in all things and sure,’ filled with all spiritual blessings and precious promises; when their thoughts are composed and settled upon the consideration of Christ’s person, fullness, blood and righteousness; when they are employed about and concerned in the contemplation of the sublime doctrines of the gospel, and the invisible realities of another world; all which are things that are above; then may they be said to be like a flock of goats which appear from mount Gilead.  
But,



**3dly**, I rather choose to understand, by the hair, believers themselves: Thus the people of Israel and inhabitants of Jerusalem are represented by hair, <sup><481></sup>Ezekiel 5:1-5. Now believers may be called so,

**1.** For their number: the hairs of a man's head are numerous; therefore when the Psalmist declares the large number of his sins and transgressions, he makes use of this metaphor, saying, 'they are more than the hairs of my head:' indeed believers, when compared with the world, are but few, a small number, a remnant, and a little flock; yet considered and viewed by themselves, and when all together, they are a great multitude which no man can number, <sup><470></sup>Revelation 7:9.

**2.** For their growing upon, and receiving nourishment from Christ, the head: the hair grows upon the head, receives its nourishment from it; Christ is the head of his body, the church; believers are the hair which grow upon, and grow up into this head; and from thence do they receive all their grace and strength, their life and liveliness, their food and nourishment, and so increase with 'the increase of God,' <sup><405></sup>Ephesians 4:15, 16; <sup><109></sup>Colossians 2:19.

**3.** For their weakness in themselves, and dependence on Christ, the head: hair is a weak thing of itself, and has its dependence on the head; believers are weak, in them., selves, and can do nothing of themselves without him; their dependence is on him for strength, as well as for righteousness; and it is only through him strengthening them, that they do the things they do.

**4.** For their being an ornament to Christ, the head: hair is an ornament to the head; 'the beauty of old men is the grey head:' saints are the ornament, beauty and glory of Christ; they are a crown of glory and a royal diadem in his hand, and upon his head.

**5.** For their valuableness to him, and the care he takes of them: a well-set head of hair is highly esteemed, and is taken much care of among men; but this cannot be more valued, and taken more care of, than believers are by Christ; he values them as his jewels and peculiar treasure, and he will not lose one of them; the hairs of our head are all numbered, and so are all the hairs of Christ's head, and not one of them shall be lost: it is true, those who are only nominal professors, and only by an external profession hold to the head, not being rooted in him, shall be shed from thence; but so shall not one of those who are one spirit with him, and grow upon him.

Now saints may be compared to a flock of goats on mount Gilead.

(1.) They may be compared to goats: it is true, this word is used of carnal and Christless sinners; who are called so in opposition to, and contradistinction from Christ's sheep; but these creatures being offered up in sacrifice under the old law, prefigured Christ, <sup><2116></sup>Exodus 12:5, and therefore we need not wonder that saints bear this character, who are enabled to present themselves to God, holy, living and acceptable sacrifices; as also, perhaps they may be so called, on the account of the remainder of sin and corruption: for in them, that is, in their 'flesh, dwells no good thing;' and are stinking and abominable in the esteem of the world, reckoned by them the offscouring and refuse of all things, as well as mean and vile in their own eyes.

(2.) May be compared to a flock of them, because they belong unto and are under the care of one and the same shepherd, folded in one and the same fold, and fed together in one and the same pasture; as also, on the account of their Social worship, their assembling and walking together in the faith and order of the gospel.

(3.) To a flock of them on mount Gilead: they have a good pasture upon a goodly mount; they live and feed upon the Lord Jesus Christ, that great mountain, which shall ere long fill the whole earth; here they find the best of pasture, and become fat and flourishing, like the goats on mount Gilead; here they live and dwell safely, secured from danger, and out of the reach of enemies; their place of defense is a munition of rocks, their bread is given them, and their waters sure, <sup><2396></sup>Isaiah 33:16.

## VERSE 2.

Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing: whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them.

THESE words contain the third particular instance of the church's beauty, viz. her teeth. Which were like the teeth of sheep, as her eyes were like the eyes of doves, and her hair like the hair of goats: and Galen long ago observed <sup>f452</sup> that human teeth are much like the teeth of sheep, in figure, order and structure, as well as are small and white, neatly set, innocent and harmless; not ravenous and voracious, cropping only herbs and grass: the

whiteness of the teeth is chiefly intended, in which the beauty of them lies; <sup>f453</sup>and for which they are sometimes compared to Parian marble or whiteness. <sup>f454</sup>These are compared,

- I.** To a ‘flock of sheep.’
- II.** To a flock of sheep, ‘even shorn.’
- III.** To a flock of sheep that are just ‘come up from the washing.’
- IV.** To a flock of sheep that are fruitful, ‘whereof every one bear twins,’ etc.

By her teeth we may understand, *Ist*, The ministers of the gospel; <sup>f455</sup>the Targum interprets it of the priests and Levites; and other Jewish writers <sup>f456</sup>of the disciples of the wise men. Ministers may be called the church’s teeth,

**1.** For strength: teeth are strong, being of a bony nature; and indeed the work that is allotted to them requires strength: the ministers of the gospel are Christ’s strong men; who are, or at least need to be, ‘strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus;’ they have need to be ‘strong in the Lord, and in the power of his mighty;’ for their work is great, and requires it, which is to labor in the word and doctrine; a work so great, arduous and difficult, that the great apostle Paul, notwithstanding all his gifts and grace, said, ‘Who is sufficient for these things?’ they have need of strength to quit themselves like men in the defense of the gospel, for which they are set, against all opposers and gainsayers; they have need of strength to withstand Satan’s temptations; for he generally bends his bow, shoots his arrows, and casts his fiery darts most at them; they have need of strength to bear the world’s reproaches and persecutions, of which they generally have the greatest share, and to sustain the infirmities of weaker saints, which are not few.

**2.** For their sharpness: teeth are sharp, and they ought to be so upon many accounts: the ministers of the gospel, though they are not to be like that generation, ‘whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw-teeth as knives;’ to devour the flock; nor like ravenous wolves, who will not spare it, but prey upon it, for they are to use meekness and tenderness; yet in some cases, they are to use sharpness also, according to a power that Christ has given them, and lodged in them; as when persons are unsound in the faith, and corrupt in their morals: also as sharpness is necessary to teeth, that they

may penetrate into, chew and prepare the food for the stomach; so is it necessary to ministers of the gospel, that they have abilities to penetrate into gospel-truths, in order to feed souls with the bread of life.

**3.** In nothing can they more fitly be compared to teeth, than in their preparing food for souls: as the teeth break the food, chew it, and prepare it for the stomach; so ministers of the gospel break the bread of life, make hard things plain, easy and intelligible; for not only in Paul's epistles, but in many other places of scripture, there are some **δυσνόητα**, 'things hard to be understood.' Now it is the work of the gospel to open and explain those difficult passages, remove the hard shell that is over them, that souls may eat the kernel; nay, they not only break the bread of life, but chew it, *i.e.* meditate upon the word, and digest the doctrines of grace themselves, that so they may not propose unto, or set before persons, crude, raw, and undigested food; but having chewed, digested, and well prepared it, they then present it to them; for these are the church's teeth, which cut <sup>f457</sup> and rightly divide the word of truth,' and give to every one their 'portion of meat in due season.' Now these teeth of the church, the ministers of the gospel, may be compared,

**I.** To a flock of sheep, and to their teeth, for their harmlessness and innocence. They are sent forth by Christ as 'sheep among wolves;' and so they live like sheep, useful to many, but hurtful to none; live harmless and inoffensive lives, though exposed to a variety of evils, for the sake of Christ and his gospel: 'they are counted as sheep for the slaughter;' and yet, like sheep, they patiently bear all without murmuring, in imitation of their dear Lord, who was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and like the sheep before her shearers, is dumb, so he opened not his mouth, <sup><2831></sup> Isaiah 53:7.

**II.** To a flock of sheep even shorn. There is no word in the original text for any animal, neither sheep nor goats; it is only 'to a flock of shorn ones;' and may be supplied from the preceding verse, 'a flock of goats even shorn:' for in some countries, particularly in Cilicia, goats were shorn, as sheep in other places; <sup>f458</sup> and so in Lycia: <sup>f459</sup> but inasmuch as the word *sheep* is in a parallel text, chapter <sup><2116></sup> 6:6. it seems best to supply it so here: and the comparison is to their teeth, that are equally alike in bigness and size; do not stand out nor rise up one above another; but are as if they had been cut, and planed, and made alike, as some <sup>f460</sup> render the word; which is a better rendering, since sheep are not shorn before washing, but after it; nor is the word ever used of sheering wool: which may denote the equality

of the ministers of the word, having such an agreement with each other, as the cherubim in Solomon's temple, which were of 'one measure and one size,' <sup><1065></sup>1 Kings 6:25. Now the ministers of the gospel may be compared to such teeth,

**1.** Because they are equal in power and authority; though one may be superior to another in gifts and grace, in parts and learning, yet one has not a superior power and jurisdiction over another; for, as Christ says to his disciples, <sup><1075></sup>Matthew 20:25, 26; 'the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them; and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you; but whosoever shall be great among you, let him be your minister:' no such dominion and authority are allowed by Christ to be exercised by one minister, pastor or bishop, over another; they are like to the teeth of sheep that are even; one is not higher than another, nor superior to another in power; Peter was not above the rest of the apostles.

**2.** They have all the same commission, and are sent about the same work: the disciples of Christ were equally sent to preach the gospel to every creature; and the commission now is of the same and of as large extent as ever; and the same commission that is given to one minister, is given to another; for they are all sent to preach one and the same gospel, in the full extent of it; not one part of it is assigned to one, and another part to another, but the whole is assigned to them all; for a different gospel is not given in commission to one to preach, than what is given to another; though their manner of preaching, and their success in their ministry, may not be alike.

**3.** They may be said to be as the teeth of sheep even, on the account of the harmony and agreement there is between the doctrines which they preach: though there may be a diversity of gifts, and one minister may have more gospel-light and knowledge than another, yet the doctrine of grace, preached by them, is one and the same; it is one and the same Jesus whom they preach; one and the same way of salvation which they shew; and one and the same heavenly inheritance which they are pointing at; which harmony and agreement of doctrine will more manifestly appear, when the 'watchmen shall see eye to eye,' even at the time 'when the Lord shall bring again Zion,' <sup><2818></sup>Isaiah 52:8.

**4.** These teeth of the church may be said to be like to the teeth of sheep even, to denote their mildness, meekness, harmlessness and innocence;

sheep not having teeth or tushes, standing out more, or rising up higher than the rest, as ravenous beasts, such as lions, bears, etc. but are all equal and even; so such ministers do not devour, but feed the flock; do not assume a lordly and domineering power over them; but, behaving themselves quietly and peaceably among them, seek their good and welfare, and not their hurt.

**III.** To a flock of sheep just ‘come up from the washing; and so are white and clean; which is another thing in which the beauty of teeth consists; for it is not only requisite that they should be even, so as one does not grow out from, nor rise higher than the other; but likewise that they should be white and clean, like sheep that are just come out of the washing pit: which some <sup>f461</sup> think intends baptism; though it may be better understood ‘of the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost,’ which the ministers of the gospel ought not to be strangers to; for he that is not ‘born again of water, and of the spirit,’ as he shall neither ‘see nor enter into the kingdom of heaven’ himself; so is he not fit to preach the gospel of the kingdom of heaven to others: though I rather think, it intends the pure and unspotted lives and conversations of Christ’s ministers; who, being persons that hate the ‘garment spotted with the flesh,’ and who ‘have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb;’ become examples to the flock, not only in faith, but in purity of conversation.

**IV.** To a flock, of which ‘every one bears twins, and there is none barren among them.’ The figures are just and beautiful; it is common with sheep to bear twins or more in the eastern countries, as the philosopher <sup>f462</sup> observes: these may answer to the two rows of teeth, and the word for teeth is in the dual number; and when these are white, clean and equal, are well set, and not one is wanting, none rotten, nor shed, nor fallen out, look very beautiful. This is to be understood of the fruitfulness and successfulness of their ministry, in begetting and bringing forth many souls to Christ; which was more especially verified in the apostles and first preachers of the gospel, whose ministry, after an extraordinary manner, was blessed and owned for the conversion of many sinners; three thousand were converted under one sermon; the savor of Christ’s ‘knowledge was made manifest by them in every place;’ they bore twins to Christ, and were instrumental in the conversion of many, both of Jews and Gentiles; they went forth bearing and sowing the precious seed of the gospel; and

returned, 'bringing their sheaves with them,' having reaped a glorious harvest: they travailed in birth, till Christ 'was formed in souls;' and they did not travail in vain, for he that brought to the birth, caused to bring forth.

**2dly,** Or else by teeth, if applied to particular believers, we may understand meditation and faith, by which they feed on divine and spiritual things,

**1.** By meditation a soul feeds on Christ, on his person, blood, and righteousness; and finds a pleasure, sweetness, and delight therein: it is sometimes, as in <sup><39316></sup>Psalm 63:5, 6; satisfied as with marrow and fatness, when it remembers Christ upon its bed, and meditates on his love and grace in the night-watches; by it a believing soul feeds upon the gospel, its truths and promises, and receives much refreshment from thence; like Jeremy, <sup><24516></sup>Jeremiah 15:16. it finds the word by meditation, and eats it, and it is the joy and rejoicing of its heart. Now meditating souls may be very well compared to a flock of sheep, which are clean creatures, and chew the cud; for these chew the word of grace, and ruminate upon it; and to a flock of sheep even shorn, being in some measure rid of the old fleece of vain, carnal, and worldly thoughts; and are come up from the washing; being cleansed in some measure from the former filthiness and uncleanness of their minds, they ascend heavenwards in their thoughts, desires, and affections, which they employ by meditating upon pure, spiritual, and heavenly things; and such souls are usually fruitful; they are not barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ and his gospel; but generally bring forth the twins of prayer and praise 'meditation fits a man for prayer, and fills him with praise; meditating souls are commonly praying and praising ones; for whilst they are musing, the fire burns, and then speak they with their tongues, either in prayer or praise; it puts them either upon praying to God for a mercy, or upon praising him for one.

**2.** By faith a soul feeds on Christ and his grace: faith serves a great many purposes; it is the soul's eye, by which it sees Christ; and its feet, by which it goes to him; and the hand, by which it receives him and lays hold on him; and likewise the teeth, by which it feeds upon him: faith is expressed by eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, in <sup><48156></sup>John 6:56. 'he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.' An oral, corporal manducation, is not here intended, but a spiritual one, which is by faith: faith feeds on Christ, the bread of life, and eats that hidden manna, the food of the wilderness, lives wholly and entirely on him; which grace is

peculiar to Christ's sheep, and therefore is called the 'faith of God's elect;' and the reason why others do not believe and live upon him, is, because they are not of Christ's sheep; and though in some persons it is strong, and in others weak, yet it is in all alike precious faith in its own nature, and to Christ Jesus: these teeth are even, and so fit for eating; faith is alike as to its quality in all believers, though not as to degree; and, like Judah's teeth, is white with the milk of the word, is pure, unfeigned and sincere; and is always fruitful, attended with good works; and more especially bears and brings forth those twins, love to Christ, and love to the saints; for 'faith works by love,' <sup><4816></sup>Galatians 5:6.

### VERSE 3.

Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.

IN these words Christ proceeds to give the fourth and fifth instances of the church's beauty; and says,

**I.** That her 'lips are like a thread of scarlets' etc.

**II.** That her 'temples are like a piece of a pomegranate.'

**I.** Her lips are compared to a thread of scarlet. The Targum on this place, by eyes, understands the princes and wise men of Israel, who sat in the sanhedrim, and enlightened the world; by the hair, the rest of the people of the land, in verse 1. by teeth, in verse 2. the priests and Levites, who offered the sacrifices, and eat the holy flesh; and by lips here, the lips of the high priest, who (as the Targum expresses it) by his prayer on the day of atonement, changed the transgressions of the people of Israel, which were like to a thread of scarlet, and made them white as wool: It is a received tradition among the Jews <sup>f463</sup> that when the scapegoat was sent into the wilderness, a scarlet thread was tied to the temple-door, and when the goat was come to the wilderness, the scarlet thread turned white; which was not only a sign of the goat's arrival thither, but also a token to them of the remission of their sins, according to <sup><2018></sup>Isaiah 1:18. 'though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow:' and they tell us <sup>f464</sup> that this scarlet thread ceased turning white forty years before the destruction of the temple; which was about the time that Christ, the great sacrifice for sin, was offered up. R. Aben Ezra thinks, by the eyes are meant the prophets, who in scripture are called seers; by the hair, the Nazarites; by the teeth,



the strong and mighty men; and by the lips here, the singers, who sung the high praises of God. R. Solomon Jarchi expounds it, of the beauty and comeliness of the lips, in making and keeping promises; as the spies did to Rahab the harlot, whose token to know her house by, was a line of scarlet.

Lips are the instruments of speech; and by the church's lips here, are meant her words, which the following expression, 'and thy speech is comely,' manifests and confirms; which are compared to a thread of scarlet; to a thread for thinness, and to a thread of scarlet for color; for these two things, thinness in substance, and redness of color, are the beauty of the lips: thin, red lips being beautiful, as well as white teeth; so the beautiful Aspasia had red lips <sup>f465</sup> and teeth whiter than snow; hence we sometimes read of red and purple lips; <sup>f466</sup> and which were not only expressive of beauty, but of health, and of a sound constitution. Now by the church's lips, or words, are meant, either,

**1st,** Her prayers: Christ's prayers are, in ~~<320>~~ Psalm 21:2. called the request of his lips; and so may the church's prayers, and every believer's, be called the request of their lips; which may be compared to a thread of scarlet,

**1.** For thinness: The prayers of believers are not filled with great swelling words of vanity, but with humble confessions of sin; bewailing the corruption and depravity of their natures; earnestly imploring views of pardoning grace, and the discoveries of God's love to their souls; acknowledging that they are unworthy to receive the least mercy and favor at the hand of God, but deserve the severest strokes of his justice, and the highest instances of his displeasure: they do not address the throne of grace with vanity and pride, but with an humble boldness, and oftentimes under a great deal of brokenness of soul; being conscious of their own guilt, and filled with a sense of God's majesty and greatness; was it not for the mediator Christ Jesus, and his precious blood, which is carried within the vail, and his spotless righteousness, which they are allowed to plead, they durst not presume to approach the divine presence; they do not exalt themselves, and magnify their works of righteousness, nor extenuate their sins and transgressions, but are silent in the one, and frankly acknowledge the other, with all their aggravating circumstances; they do not act like the proud Pharisee, ~~<281>~~ Luke 18:11-13. who 'stood and prayed thus with himself; God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican; I fast twice in the week, I give tythes of all that I possess;' but like the poor publican, who stood afar off,

and ‘would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner:’ the lips of the publican, in this prayer, were like to a thread of scarlet,

**2.** For their constancy, and continuance in them: the prayers of believers are like one continued thread of scarlet; no sooner are souls born again, but behold they pray; and they continue, or at least ought to continue praying souls all their days. Christ spoke a parable to this end, that ‘men ought always to pray, and not to faint,’ and the apostle, <sup><5012></sup>Colossians 4:2, exhorts believers to ‘continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving:’ not that it is intended, in these places, that persons should always be actually engaged in this duty; but that believers should be often at the throne of grace; and when they are there, be importunate for the blessing they stand in need of; watch for a return of their prayers, and then be as diligent to attend the throne of grace with thankfulness; and when this is the common and constant course of a believer’s life, his lips may be said to be like to a thread of scarlet.

**3.** For the fervency of them: the scarlet color may denote the ardency, warmth and fervor of a believer’s spirit in prayer; such a warm, fervent, praying soul was Jacob, who wrestled with God, and would not stir without the blessing, but, ‘as a prince, had power with God, and prevailed;’ and such an one was the Syrophaenician woman, who would take no denial from Christ; and such an one was Elias, <sup><5016></sup>James 5:16-18, who prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not; and again he prayed that it might rain, and the heavens gave rain; for the ‘effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.’ now when believers are thus fervent and importunate in prayer for the mercy or blessing they want, then may their lips be said to be like a thread of scarlet.

**4.** Because a believer’s prayers are all tintured with the blood of Christ, and so become like a thread of scarlet: they are all presented through Christ’s mediation, being perfumed with his much incense; a believer does not put them up in his own name, but in the name of Christ; he pleads not his own worthiness, but the precious blood of Christ, and expects that they will meet with acceptance only through his mediation.

**5.** For their acceptableness with God: the scarlet color is the best of colors, and most highly esteemed of; the prayers of the saints being offered up in faith, and in the name of Christ, being presented thro’ his mediation, are very acceptable to God; they are pleasant music in his ears, and sweet

fragrant odors in his nostrils; he is so far from despising the prayer of the destitute, that he delights and takes pleasure in it; it is like a thread of scarlet to him. Or else, by the church's lips, we may understand,

**2dly**, Her praises: as prayer is called the request of the lips, so praise is called the fruit of the lips, <sup><3135></sup>Hebrews 13:15, as with our lips we pray to God, so with our lips we praise him: and the lips of believers in praising, as well as in praying, may be compared to a thread of scarlet,

**1.** They are thin, like a thread of scarlet: they are not filled with big, swollen praises of themselves, and of what they have done; a believer takes the advice the wise man gives, <sup><3172></sup>Proverbs 27:2. 'Let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips:' he does not speak in the commendation of himself, but of the goodness and grace of God; he praises him for all temporal mercies, for his being, the preservation of it, and for all the mercies of life, which make it comfortable; acknowledging that he is not worthy of the least of the mercies which God has shewn him; and then his praises and thanksgivings rise higher for spiritual ones, for those all spiritual blessings, with which he is blessed in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: how does he adore, admire, and praise distinguishing love and grace, that such a poor, blind, ignorant creature as he, should be called out of darkness into marvellous light! that such a guilty wretch should be justified by Christ's righteousness from all his sins! that such a filthy creature should be washed and cleansed in Christ's blood, and have all his iniquities pardoned through the same! that he should be adopted into God's family, and be made an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ Jesus! how thankful is he for the gospel and the ministers of it, which have brought him the news of, and shewed him the way unto life and salvation by Jesus Christ! and, above all, how thankful is he for Christ, that unspeakable gift of God's love! Now when the lips of believers, in praising, move in such a strain as this, then may they be said to be like a thread of scarlet.

**2.** The praises of believers are compared to a thread of scarlet, for the heartiness, sincerity, and affection that go along with them; as they draw nigh to God with their mouths, and honor him with their lips, so their hearts are not far from him; all the while they are praising, the fire of love burns within them; their souls are enflamed with it, and their lips look like scarlet, being touched with a live coal from off God's altar.

**3.** For the acceptableness of them through Christ's mediation: our praises, as well as our prayers, must be tinctured with Christ's blood; they must be offered up by him; for no other way are these sacrifices well pleasing to God, or accepted with him. Or,

**3dly,** By her lips may be meant the doctrines of the gospel, delivered by her ministers; which are the church's lips, that 'drop as an honey-comb,' and publish the glad tidings of peace, life, and salvation to poor souls. Now these doctrines of grace, delivered by them, may be compared to 'a thread of scarlet,'

**1.** Because they are spun out of the scriptures: all scripture being divinely inspired, **θεόπνευστος**, breathed by God, 'is profitable for doctrine,' as well as for other things' it is the fountain from whence all the doctrines of grace spring; and the Lydian stone, by which they are all tried; for whatever is not according to this 'law and testimony,' is not to be received: hence Christ advises to 'search the scriptures,' and the noble Bereans are commended for doing so.

**2.** This scarlet thread of the gospel, being spun out of the scriptures, is smooth and even; there is an harmony and agreement in the truths of the gospel; there is no jar and discord among them: this great trumpet does not give an uncertain sound; the doctrines of it are not yea and nay, contradictory to one another and truth itself, but are all of a piece, like one single 'scarlet thread;' there is a close connection between them; they are linked and chained together, and cannot be separated; they look like, and are answerable to one another; there is a proportion or analogy of faith, according to which they are all measured.

**3.** The great subjects of the gospel are the blood, death, and sufferings of a crucified Christ; *we*, says the apostle, <sup>4013</sup>1 Corinthians 1:23. · preach Christ crucified:' a crucified Christ was the sum and substance of their ministry; therefore the gospel, and the doctrines of it, may well be compared to a 'scarlet thread:' the chief doctrines of the gospel are, that the pardon of sin is procured by Christ's blood; that he has made peace and reconciliation for sinners by the blood of his cross; that sinners are justified by his blood, and so shall be saved from wrath to come; that Christ sanctifies his people with his blood, and has by it opened the gates of heaven tot them; that it is by that he himself has entered into the holy of holies, and by which saints have a right so to do. Now these are the scarlet-colored doctrines of the gospel; which,

**4.** Are valuable, precious, and highly to be esteemed of as scarlet; they are comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; which angels desire to look into, and are by saints preferred to their necessary food; yea, are dearer to them than their lives, or any thing in life; witness the fines, imprisonments, loss of goods, racks: tortures, and death itself, which they have voluntarily and cheerfully underwent for the sake of it: thus her lips are like ‘a thread of scarlet.’

It is further added, ‘and thy speech is comely:’ which words are exegetical of the former; and manifestly shew what is intended by her lips, namely, her speech; which is said to be *comely*, that is, graceful, amiable, and to be desired. And so is,

- 1.** A believer’s speech concerning Christ. When believers speak to others of what Christ is unto them; how he is ‘of God made unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption; and of what he has done for them, in atoning for their sins, bringing in an everlasting righteousness, and saving them from sin, law, death and hell; when they speak of the glories of his person, the preciousness and efficacy of his blood, the excellency of his righteousness, and completeness of his sacrifice: when believers speak ‘often one to another’ of these, ‘he hearkens and hears,’ listens as it were to hear what they talk of, and puts it down in the ‘book of his remembrance,’ as being well pleased with it.
- 2.** The speech of a believer is graceful and comely to Christ, when they speak for him, in vindication of his person, people, truths and ordinances; for he says, ~~4002~~ Matthew 10:32 ‘whosoever shall confess me before men. him will I confess also before my’ Father in heaven.’
- 3.** The speech of a believer to Christ is exceeding grateful and well-pleasing, whether it be in prayer or in praise, as has been already shewn; hence Christ says, chapter ~~2114~~ 2:14, ‘let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.’
- 4.** It may intend the gracefulness of a believer’s speech in his common conversation: it being attended ‘with grace,’ ‘and seasoned with salt, ministers grace unto the hearers;’ is not infectious, pernicious and destructive, as the corrupt and unsavory communication of the wicked is; but tends to the pleasure, profit and edification of others.

**II.** Her temples are next commended in these words, which is the fifth particular instanced in the church's beauty; 'thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.' R. Aben Ezra interprets these words of the priests, who had pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet, round about the hem of the *ephod* which they wore: but the Targum, on the place, understands by *the temples*, the king who was the head of the people of Israel, and was full of good works, as the pomegranate is of kernels; and by *the locks*, the governors and princes, who were next to him: but it seems more agreeable, that ecclesiastical officers are here intended, whom Christ has placed in his church, to take care of the discipline of his house, as well as to maintain and defend the gospel.

That there is, and ought to be such officers in churches, who have the presiding; ruling, governing power therein, not only the nature of societies requires, but the scripture also does abundantly confirm, more especially the following ones; 'Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, etc. Obey them that have the rule over you, etc. He that ruleth with diligence,' <sup><5167></sup>1 Timothy 5:17; <sup><5137></sup>Hebrews 13:17; <sup><5128></sup>Romans 12:8. Their work is not only to preach the gospel, and feed the flock with wholesome food; but to admonish, warn and rebuke those who stand in need thereof; to lay on and take off censures, to open and shut the doors of the church, that is, in admission and excommunication of members. Now this power is originally in the church, and only derivatively in them; they are but the administrators of it, in the church's name: they have no despotal, arbitrary, and tyrannical power, lodged in their hands, to rule at pleasure; but are limited by the laws of Christ, which he has provided for the orderly government of his house, which they are to see put into execution. Now these may be called,

**First,** The church's *temples*.

**1st,** The *temples* are called, in the Hebrew tongue, by a word <sup>f467</sup> which signifies thinness and tenderness; because the temples have but little flesh upon them, and are covered only with a thin skin; which may teach us,

**1.** That those persons who are called to such a work and office in Christ's house, though it cannot otherwise be but they must have flesh as well as spirit in them, being men of like passions and affections with others; yet these more especially Ought not to live in and walk after the flesh; there should be a less appearance of carnality in them, and a greater discovery of

spiritual-mindedness, and of the life and power of godliness in their conversations; therefore the apostle is very particular in giving their characters, <sup><400></sup>1 Timothy 3:1-7; <sup><400></sup>Titus 1:6-9.

**2.** It may also teach us, that there ought to be it great deal of tenderness in them, and used by them in the discharge of their work; for in so doing, they are like to be most successful: admonitions and reproofs for sin, mildly and tenderly given, are often kindly taken; they are like ‘an excellent oil, which does not break the head,’ but wins the heart: tender-heartedness is requisite in all Christians, but more especially in officers of churches, who are to deal as tenderly with persons, as surgeons do in dressing wounds, or in setting broken or dislocated bones; hence the apostle, in <sup><400></sup>Galatians 6:1 uses a metaphor taken from them, ‘you that are spiritual restore,’ **καταρτίζετε**, joint in, or set in joint again, ‘such an one in the spirit of meekness;’ though it is true, in some cases sharpness is to be used; as when there is a gangrene in a member, which endangers the body, there must be a cutting off, an amputation of the member; so persons, when all means have been tried for their recovery and restoration, and there is no reclaiming them from an error in doctrine or practice; they are not only to be rebuked sharply, but to be cut off from the body, the church.

**2dly,** The *temples* are called in Greek, **κρόταφος** <sup>f468</sup> from the evident beating of the pulse there: now as a person’s constitution may be judged of by the beating of his pulse; so may the constitution of a church by her temples, the officers, in their administration of affairs: if church discipline is neglected, and Christ’s laws are not put in execution against delinquents, the church is in a bad state and in an unhealthful and declining condition; and on the contrary, when officers are lively, zealous and diligent in their work, and all things are kept in a just order and decorum, the church is then in an healthful and flourishing condition.

**3dly,** The *temples* are placed between the eyes and the ears; and church officers being called so teaches us that they have need of both in managing the affairs of Christ’s house. Christ indeed, being God omniscient, ‘shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears;’ but we have no other way of judging than by the sight of our eyes, and by the hearing of our ears, and therefore both are to be employed: the ears of the church-officers are to be open, without respect of persons, to rich and poor, high and low; they are to hear complaints and charges exhibited, if introduced in a regular manner, and then the evidence to

support these complaints and charges; they must also hear the answers of the person or persons accused and complained of, and must not shut their eyes against clear light and plain evidence.

**Secondly,** These temples are said to be ‘within the locks;’ under locks of hair plaited and curled about them; expressive both of secrecy and beauty: which may teach us,

**1.** That admonitions, in case of private offenses, ought to be given privately, according to that golden rule given by our Lord, <sup><4815></sup>Matthew 18:15-17. ‘If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone;’ let no one know it before thou hast told him, and let none be with thee when thou dost; ‘if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother;’ therefore for ever after never speak of it to others, nor upbraid him with it; ‘but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them,’ matters being thus prepared, ‘tell it unto the church;’ and then thou shalt have witnesses to support and make good thy allegations. This rule is so plain and easy, that one would think, none could mistake or go aside from it; and was it but closely adhered to, would prevent a great deal of scandal and reproach that is cast upon religion, as well as a great many disturbances, occasioned in churches by the neglect of it: and in so doing, the church’s temples, in this branch of the administration of discipline, may be said to be within her locks; though it is true, in case of public offenses, admonitions and rebukes are to be given publicly, that ‘others may fear,’ <sup><5481></sup>1 Timothy 5:20.

**2.** It may also teach us, that all the affairs and concerns of churches ought to be kept private, and not blazed about in the world; their debates and determinations ought not to be told to other churches, unless there is a necessity for it; much less told in Gath, and published in the ‘streets of Askelon;’ for every particular church should be as a ‘garden inclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed,’ <sup><2712></sup>Song of Solomon 4:12.

**3.** The temples being within the locks, may denote the humility of church-officers in their work; they lie hid under the hair, the rest of believers; they do not rise up above them, though they are taller and higher than they are in gifts and grace, as well as by virtue of their office and station in the church; yet they are, in their own esteem, ‘less than the least of all saints:’ they do not assume to themselves a domination and lordly power ‘over God’s heritage;’ they do not impose their sentiments upon churches for



final determinations in cases; but humbly submit themselves, preferring the judgment of the church to their own private ones; they be.. come ‘all things to all, that they may save some.’

**4.** May be expressive of the beauty of church-discipline: that church appears very beautiful, like the ‘temples within the locks,’ where the gospel is faithfully preached, the ordinances purely administered, and the laws of Christ’s house strictly regarded. Believers, who walk together in the order, as well as in the faith of the gospel, appear very beautiful, stately, and magnificent to spectators: they are ‘like a company, of horses in Pharaoh’s chariot;’ or like a garden, with a variety of flowers, well weeded and taken care of; or an ‘orchard of pomegranates,’ well dressed and managed: on the contrary, a church, in which no regard is had to order and discipline, is like ‘the field of the slothful, and the vineyard of the man void of understanding,’ which is all overrun ‘with thorns and nettles,’ its fence and ‘stone-wall being broken down.’

**Thirdly,** These temples are said to be ‘like a piece of a pomegranate; not of the tree, but of the fruit, the shell or rind being broken; so the Septuagint render it. <sup>f469</sup> The land of Canaan was a land of pomegranates; they grew there in great plenty, and therefore are frequently mentioned in this Song.

**1st,** The fruit, when the shell, or rind is broken, appears to be full of grains or kernels, and therefore is a *pomegranate*: and it is the nature of this fruit, that if it hangs long on the tree after it is fully ripe, it will burst and open of itself, <sup>f470</sup> and its kernels will become visible: one of the mansions of the Israelites is called by them Rimmon-parez, <sup>(4639)</sup> Numbers 33:19, the pomegranate of rupture, or the burstened pomegranate, where probably they found such. And the church’s temples are said to be like to such a burstened and broken piece of a pomegranate, that is full of kernels, and visible; because those who are called to such work and office in the church, as has been mentioned, should be men ‘full of the Holy Ghost,’ as Stephen was; they should be as full of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, as the pomegranate is of kernels, that they may be capable of discharging the work aright: Christ knows full well that they stand in need of such, and therefore, as he has ‘received gifts for men,’ so he ‘gives them to men;’ to qualify them for the work of the ministry, and for the well-ordering and governing of his churches; and yet, notwithstanding all that they receive, they are obliged to say, with the apostle, ‘Who is sufficient for these things?’ And as they should be men full of the Spirit, so likewise full of

good works; and these visible to men, even as the kernels of a burstened pomegranate; <sup>f471</sup> their ‘light should shine before men;’ they should have a good report of them that are without, and be examples to those that are within; and when they are so, then may the church’s *temples* be said to be ‘like a piece of a pomegranate within her locks.’ Also the pomegranate, when broken, appearing to be full of kernels, all set in a beautiful order, and joined to each other, may be expressive of that union, harmony, and consent of church-members, with their officers, in acts of discipline; censures are laid and taken off, members are received or rejected, not by some single person or persons, but by the joint consent and unanimous voice of the whole church.

**2dly**, As this fruit is full of kernels, so, when broken, there springs from it a reddish, purple, sweet and delightful juice . . . hence you read of the ‘juice of the pomegranate,’ chapter 8:2, which the church would cause Christ to drink of; and nothing is more delightful in Christ’s eye, odorous to his smell, and sweet to his taste, than this juice of the pomegranate is; namely, a pure administration of his ordinances, and a strict regard and close adherence to the laws of his house; nay, even to believers themselves, result from hence pleasure, delight and satisfaction.

**3dly**, The fruit of the pomegranate is very useful in medicine.

**1.** For repressing the heat of choler, and malignity of fevers. <sup>f472</sup> God’s children too often fall out by the way; there are frequently differences and divisions among them: many of them are of hot, fiery and choleric dispositions; do not know ‘what spirits they are of,’ and at every turn are, like the disciples, for calling ‘for fire from heaven’ upon those who have disobliged them. Now officers in churches are like a piece of a pomegranate; they allay and repress these heats, by wholesome advice and proper admonitions; they are instruments in making peace, and reconciling differing brethren; and either remove the causes of contention, or else, with the consent of the church, remove those who are the causes of these divisions and contentions.

**2.** For stopping the fluxes of the belly: <sup>f473</sup> the pomegranate is of an astringent nature, the kernels bind more than the juice, and the shell or rind more than either; the officers of churches are useful in putting a stop to loose and disorderly practices, by warning, admonishing, rebuking, or withdrawing from those who walk disorderly.

**3.** For comforting the stomach and bowels: <sup>f474</sup> so these officers comfort the children of God; for as they ‘warn the unruly, so they comfort the feeble-minded, and support the weak,’ by directing them to the person, blood, righteousness, and fullness of Christ Jesus; by delivering the sweet doctrines) and opening the precious promises of the gospel.

Thus church-officers, in managing the affairs of Christ’s house, in conjunction with his church, may be called her temples, which are ‘like a piece of a pomegranate within her locks;’ or her veil <sup>f475</sup> as some render at; so Symmachus, covered with a veil, as her eyes were, verse 1. and here her cheeks; and so the Septuagint render the word in <sup><347D></sup>Isaiah 47:2; such veils, covering those parts, were wore by women in the eastern countries) expressive of their modesty; and what was latent, and much out of sight, seemed more beautiful. Likewise the temples, taken in a large signification, not only intend that part of the face, between the ears and eyes) and upwards, but include the cheeks also; and so the Septuagint <sup>f476</sup> translate the word here: the purple juice of the pomegranate well expresses the color of them, which is their beauty; hence we often read of purple cheeks as beautiful <sup>f477</sup> and of rosy ones blushing through shamefacedness and modesty: <sup>f478</sup> a pomegranate cut affords a very agreeable resemblance of a beautiful cheek; and in Talmudic language, as Jarchi observes the cheeks are called **ypad ynmwr** the pomegranates of the face. And these being compared to ‘a piece of pomegranate within her locks,’ may denote her modesty, shamefacedness, and beauty.

**1.** Her modesty: the cheeks are the seat thereof, and being within her locks, give the greater evidence of it. The church of Christ, or believers, are very humble and modest; they think the worst of themselves and the best of others, and so take the apostle’s advice, <sup><318B></sup>Philippians 2:3. ‘Let each esteem other better than themselves:’ they are apt to think every saint has more grace and less sin and corruption in him than they have, and esteem themselves the least of saints and the chief of sinners; they frankly acknowledge that all they have, and all they are, is owing to the grace of God; that whatsoever they have, either of nature or grace, whether temporal or spiritual, they have received from him; and whatever they are, they say it is by the grace of God they are what they are; they do not envy the gifts and grace of God, which are bestowed on others, but could wish, with Moses, <sup><041D></sup>Numbers 11:29, that ‘all the Lord’s people were prophets;’ yet they could be glad of more themselves, and are not puffed up with what they have, and therefore are far from despising others who are inferior to

them; they are willing to be instructed by, and receive admonition from the meanest saint: they are very sparing in speaking of themselves; like their dear Lord, their ‘voice is not heard in the street;’ and, when they do open their mouths, it is not in commendation of themselves and their own righteousness; but in lamenting the depravity and pollution of their nature; in acknowledging the imperfection of their obedience, and that when they have done all they can, they are but unprofitable servants.

**2.** Her shamefacedness and blushing; which is elegantly set forth by the broken piece of the shell or rind of the pomegranate, tintured with the red and purple juice thereof: a believer oftentimes blushes before God under a sense of sin, and especially when committed against love, grace and mercy; thus we read of Ezra, in <sup><4306></sup>Ezra 9:6. that he was ‘ashamed and blushed to lift up his face to God, because that grace had been shewed them from him; and he had left them a remnant to escape, and had given them a nail in his holy place, and had extended mercy to them in the sight of the kings of Persia;’ and yet, after all this, they had forsaken his commandment: it is this which cuts and grieves a believer’s heart, and fills his face with shame and confusion; and never more is he put to the blush, than when he views sin in the glass of pardoning grace and pacifying love, according to <sup><2166></sup>Ezekiel 16:63. ‘That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee;’ then are their checks like a piece of a pomegranate within their locks, or under a veil; they blush when no eye sees them, and for that which none ever saw or could charge them with: and whenever they are charged with or reprov’d for sin, they have not a brow of brass to outface the charge, but soon discover their consciousness of guilt by the blushing of their countenance. Moreover, whenever they cast their eyes upon their own righteousness, they are ashamed of it, it being nothing but filthy rags, and ‘as an unclean thing;’ and oftentimes, when they come into Christ’s’ presence, not having that holy boldness and confidence of faith in him, they hang their heads, and dare not so much as lift up their eyes to him; wherefore he says to them, as in chapter <sup><2114></sup>2:14. ‘Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely;’ and that in order to remove their fears, cheer their souls, and encourage their faith.

**3.** Her beauty: when a pomegranate is broken, there appears a reddish juice, like blood, as Pausanius <sup>f479</sup> remarks; interspread between the white kernels, which gives a lively idea of her beauty; she being, as she says of

her beloved, 'white-and ruddy,' and so a perfection of beauty: her modest dress and blushing looks; her temples or cheeks being within her locks, or under a veil; and these like a piece of a pomegranate, made her extremely beautiful in Christ's eye. Modest and humble souls he fixes his eye on, and delights to dwell with; to these he will give more grace, and will beautify them yet more with his salvation.

#### VERSE 4.

*Thy neck is like the tower of David, builded for an armory;  
whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.*

In this verse Christ proceeds to give a sixth instance of the church's beauty, and compares her neck to the tower of David, etc. The Targum, by her neck, understands the 'chief of the session, or great council,' who, for his works and worthiness, was like David king of Israel: R. Aben Ezra expounds it of the king, and the bucklers and shields of the princes: R. Solomon Jarchi interprets the neck of the chambers of hewn stone, where the great council sat, which, he says, was the strength and fortress of Israel; the bucklers or shields, the law, which is a shield or buckler to Israel, which God hath commanded to a thousand generations: and others of the Jewish writers <sup>f480</sup> think, that by the neck, the house of the sanctuary or temple is intended. Though rather, by the church's neck are meant, either,

**First,** The ministers of the gospel; who,

**1.** As the neck, are placed next the head, in the more eminent part of the body, they are set above the rest of the members; but yet in subjection to Christ, the head; they are fixed between the head and the body, and are ruled by the one, and govern the other; but with no other laws but what are given forth by the head.

**2.** As the neck, they are adorned with chains of golds which are the gifts and graces of the Spirit; which, in a variety, are given to them, to make them both beautiful and useful in the place wherein they are set.

**3.** As the neck joins to the head, so they hold to the head, Christ Jesus, and nothing can separate them from him; the flatteries and allurements of the world cannot draw them; nor its terrors, reproaches and persecutions, drive them from Christ; but they still espouse his cause, vindicate his person,

preach his gospel, and hold fast their profession, though it be with the peril of their lives.

4. As the neck, they bear up and support the head. that is, the name, cause, and interest of Christ Jesus; so the apostle Paul is said to be 'a chosen vessel, to bear Christ's name among the Gentiles,' <sup><4915></sup>Acts 9:15, and Pselles, an ancient writer, thinks that he is here particularly meant.
5. As the neck joins the body to the head, so they bring souls near to Christ who are afar off; and that by preaching 'peace to them that were afar off, and to lead them that are nigh:' they shew souls the way of salvation, and direct them to a crucified Christ; they woo and beseech them, and are the instruments of espousing them to him.
6. As the neck is the means of conveying food to the body; so they are the means of conveying spiritual food to souls from Christ: all spiritual food and nourishment is derived to the members from Christ, the head; and very frequently, through the ministry of the word: Christ gives his ministering servants light, knowledge, and understanding in gospel truths, that they may feed others therewith; he breaks the bread of life, and gives it to them, that they may give to every one their portion; as he took the loaves, and distributed to his disciples, and they to the multitude. Now this neck of the church may be compared to the tower of David.

The tower of David <sup>f481</sup> was either the strong hold of Zion, which he took from the Jebusites, and rebuilt; or some other tower, erected by him for an armoury, wherein his worthies or mighty men hung up their shields; such an one as the house of the forest of Lebanon, afterwards built by Solomon, was, where he put two hundred targets, and three hundred shields, all made of beaten gold; and therefore mention is made in <sup><2218></sup>Isaiah 22:8 of 'the armor of the house of the forest.' Now the ministers of the gospel may be compared to David's tower: the Lord says of Jeremy, <sup><2167></sup>Jeremiah 6:27. 'I have set thee for a tower and for a fortress among my people?'

- (1.) They may be compared to the tower of David for its height; towers are usually built very high, and, no doubt, this tower of David's was built so; Mr Sandys <sup>f482</sup> says, it stood aloft in the utmost angle of a mountain, whose ruins are yet extant ministers are set in the highest post and place in Christ's house; are called with the high calling of God, to the greatest work therein, and are endowed with the largest

measures of gifts and graces for it, and ought to be highly esteemed of for their works' sake.

(2.) For its erectness; towers are built erect, and for this reason the neck is compared to one; the beauty of the neck consisting in its straightness and uprightness; which may set forth the integrity and uprightness of ministers, both in doctrine and conversation: as Christ has counted them faithful, and put them into the ministry, and has put the word of reconciliation into their hands, so they will not let it go; but will hold fast the faithful word, whatever it cost them, or whatever be the consequence of it: moreover, they are as careful to hold it forth in their lives, and to exercise a flood conscience void of offense, both towards God and man.

(3.) For its strength: towers, as they are built high and upright, so they are usually built strong; and no doubt but this tower of David's was: the ministers of the gospel, like towers, are strong and immoveable, cannot be easily moved away from the hope of the gospel; bonds and imprisonment will not move them, nor death itself scare them from it; but, like strong towers and walls of brass, they stand the batteries of Satan and the world.

(4.) Towers were built for defence, and so perhaps was this of David's; ministers of the gospel are set for the defense of it; and they have been enabled so well to do it, that it has not been in the power of the enemy hitherto to take and destroy it.

(5.) Sometimes they are built to watch in; thus we read of a watch tower, in ~~<small>Habakkuk 2:1</small>~~ Habakkuk 2:1 ministers of the gospel are represented as watchmen, whose work is to give warning of, and to prevent approaching danger, and to watch over and for the souls of men.

(6.) This tower of David was built for an armory <sup>f483</sup> on which were hung a thousand bucklers, etc. this may intend that furniture which ministers have for their work; and that *πανοπλία*, or whole armor of God, which they are supplied with out of the scriptures, to defend the gospel against all opposers. And so,

**Secondly,** By the church's neck, which is compared to 'the tower of David,' may be understood also the scriptures of truth; which,

**1.** As the neck is joined to the head, and being erect, discovers and makes it conspicuous; so the scriptures being near to Christ, point him out, lead and direct souls unto him; they hold him forth, and discover him to them; and therefore Christ exhorts us, ~~John~~ John 5:39, to ‘search the scriptures,’ and for our encouragement declares, that they testify of him.

**2.** They are the means of conveying spiritual breath to souls: the words which Christ speaks, and when he speaks them to the soul, ‘they are spirit, and they are life;’ and when attend. ed with an almighty power, they make ‘dry bones live,’ and become the ‘savor of life unto life’ to dead sinners.

**3.** They are the means of conveying spiritual food, as well as spiritual breath; as through the neck our breath is drawn, and food communicated to us, so through the scriptures we have spiritual breath and spiritual food; they supply us with that which is nourishing and satisfying, delightful and pleasant, sweeter than the ‘honey or the honey comb.’

**4.** As the neck is beautified with chains of gold; so are the scriptures bespangled with glorious truths and precious promises, where every truth is a golden link, and every promise a pearl, to a believing soul.

Now this neck of the church, the sacred scriptures, may very justly be represented by ‘the tower of David,’

**(1.)** For height: the scriptures are an high tower; the truths and doctrines contained therein are sublime; they are out of sight, beyond the a each, and above the capacity of a natural man; they are things which the carnal eye hath not seen, the carnal-heart cannot conceive of, and which are only known, judged, valued, and esteemed by the spiritual man, to whom the Spirit of God has revealed these deep things; for there are heights and depths in the sacred volumes, which require an eagle’s eye and an angel’s heart.

**(2.)** For strength, firmness, and im-moveableness: Satan and his emissaries nave used all their art and cunning, and employed all their power and might to remove the scripture out of the world; but they have found it ‘a burdensome stone’ unto them; ‘the gates of hell’ and earth have not been able to’ prevail against it;’ it has stood, and ever will, immoveable as a rock, and impregnable as a tower. **(3.)** It is like David’s tower, ‘built for an armory, whereon hang a thousand



bucklers, all shields of mighty men.’ From hence are saints furnished with spiritual armor,

[1.] To repel Satan’s temptations: when that enemy of souls set upon Christ in the wilderness, and threw his fiery darts and poisoned arrows at him; he defended himself, and vanquished the enemy with bucklers and shields, and the like pieces of armor taken out of his armoury; he repelled and weakened the force of his temptations, by saying, at every assault of the tempter, ‘It is written,’ so or so: and thus likewise believers are enabled to do more or less; there is no better weapon to engage with that enemy than ‘the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God;’ neither is there a better storehouse, and magazine of spiritual armor, than the scriptures be; the reason why those young men, in <sup>1</sup>John 2:14, are said to ‘overcome the wicked one’ is, because the word of God abode in them.

[2.] To defend the gospel, and refute erroneous doctrines: thus Christ refuted the errors of the Pharisees concerning the law, and of the Sadducees concerning the resurrection from the dead, and proved the spirituality of the one, and confirmed the truth of the other by scripture testimonies: so Paul and Apollos mightily convinced the Jews, and proved from the scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ, the true Messiah; for, as in <sup>2</sup>Timothy 3:16, 17. ‘All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God,’ every believer, and more especially a minister of Christ, ‘may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work;’ and particularly to defend truth, and refute error, for which he may be abundantly supplied out of this armoury; for here ‘hang a thousand bucklers,’ and these are ‘all shields of mighty’ men;’ which mighty men may use, and by which they may perform mighty actions, and do great exploits.

**Thirdly,** By the church’s neck, which as compared to the tower of David, we may also understand the grace of faith; and,

**1.** As the neck is united to the head and members, so believers, being united to Christ, lay hold upon him by faith, and closely adhere to him; by faith Christ dwells in our hearts, and by faith we dwell in him, being one with him.

2. It bears up and exalts the head; there is no grace which brings that glory to Christ, and honors him, as this does; it is a soul-emptying, self-abasing, and Christ-exalting grace.
3. Through it are conveyed, and by it are derived from Christ, the head, all life, food, and nourishment to our souls; it is by faith we live on Christ, and receive life, and the comfortable supplies of it; all food and nourishment comes from Christ, the head, which faith receives and conveys unto us.
4. It is adorned with other graces and good works; the other grace of the Spirit, such as hope, fear, love, humility, patience, self-denial, etc. are like chains of gold about this neck; besides, there are also the fruits of righteousness which attend it, and make it look very beautiful and amiable.
5. It is like to the neck for erectness; it looks not downwards, but upwards to Christ, who is 'the author and finisher' of it; it is attended with an humble boldness, an holy confidences and a becoming cheerfulness.

This may now be compared to 'the tower of David,

- (1.) For its height: the author of this grace of faith is the most high God; it has its original from above; its object is Christ, who is 'made higher than the heavens;' and to him it looks, on him it lives, in him it dwells; and is still pressing on toward 'the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'
- (2.) It is like a tower builded for an armory: faith is the believer's defense, his buckler and shield, whereby he is enabled 'to quench the fiery darts' of Satan; faith makes use of God as its shield, being encouraged so to do, by the declaration of grace made to Abraham, <sup>(151)</sup>Genesis 15:1. 'Fear not, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.' Faith improves and makes use of every perfection in God, as a shield, his love, grace, power, faithfulness, etc. faith makes use of all God's promises as such; there is never a promise in the gospel, but will serve for a buckler and shield for faith, which believers, at one time or another, have also used as such; but more especially, faith uses Christ as such, who is the believersun and shield, and will give grace and glory to them, and will withhold no good thing from them: Christ indeed, rather than faith, is a storehouse and magazine of armor, whereon hang a thousand bucklers; in whom an inexhaustible, overflowing, and all-

sufficient fullness of grace dwells: from whence faith is furnished with all sorts of graces and every needful piece of spiritual armor.

## VERSE 5.

*Why two breasts are like two young roes that are twins,  
which feed among the lilies.*

THESE words contain the seventh and last particular instance of the church's beauty; in which her breasts are compared to 'two young roes,' very elegantly expressing the beauty of them; they are compared to 'two young roes' for smallness, large breasts not being accounted handsome; to 'young does that are twins,' because they are of equal size and bigness, not one larger and higher than the other, for that would be a deformity; and to 'two young roes that feed among the lilies.' which are fat and plump, and so web expresses the fullness of them, they being not dry and empty breasts: such are sometimes called *sororiantes*<sup>f484</sup> as if they were sisters, being alike; and full and distended with milk, reach and join to, and as it were kiss each other as such; or, 'two fawns, the twins of a doe;' providence, as Plutarch<sup>f485</sup> observes, has given to women two breasts, that, should they have twins, both might have a fountain of nourishment, and though the hind, for the most part, brings but one roe at a time; yet the philosopher observes<sup>f486</sup> there are some that bring twins. Now by the church's breasts, we may understand either,

**First**, The ministers of the gospel. The Targum here makes mention of the Jews two Messiahs; which is a Talmudic fiction, and shews the work to be a later one than what is pretended: the words are thus paraphrased in it; 'Thy two redeemers which shall redeem thee, Messiah the son of David, and Messiah the son of Ephraim, are like to Moses and Aaron, the sons of Jochebed, who are compared to two young toes that are twins; who, in their integrity, fed the people, the house of Israel, forty years in the wilderness, with manna and fatted fowls, and water of the well of Miriam.' And agreeable to this paraphrase, other Jewish, writers<sup>f487</sup> would have Moses and Aaron here intended, who suckled and fed the people of Israel, and as twins, were very like one another. But I think they may be much better applied to the ministers of the gospel; who impart the 'sincere milk of the word' to persons; deliver the sweet, comfortable, and nourishing, doctrines of grace; which may be compared to milk out of the breasts, with which they feed them, as the apostles says, ~~AND~~ 1 Corinthians 3:2: 'I have

fed you with milk;’ which is nourishing to new-born souls, suitable to their natures, and easily’ digested by them. Now these breasts of the church, the ministers of the gospel, may be compared,

**1st,** To two young does, which are,

**1.** Loving and pleasant creatures; ‘let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe,’ etc. <sup><1159></sup>Proverbs 5:19, ministers of the gospel are loving and affection. ate to such souls more especially who are born again under their ministry, whom they feed with the milk of the word; they are as fond of them, and bear as great an affection to them, as the tender mother or nurse do to their sucking babes, according to what the apostle says, <sup><1171></sup>1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8. ‘But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children; so being affectionately desirous of you, we were will. ing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear to us;’ than which nothing can be more passionately spoken, nor in a more lively manner represent that strong affection and tender love and regard that ministers shew to souls: moreover as they are as the loving hind unto those souls, so they are as the pleasant roe in their esteem; they love them, and are loved by them; they appear exceeding beautiful and lovely in the eyes of those to whom God has made them useful; for the very feet of them that bring glad tidings are beautiful to them.

**2.** Those creatures are sharp-sighted ones; ministers of the gospel, having their understandings opened, their judgments informed, and their souls led by the Spirit of God, into ‘the truth, as it is in Jesus,’ have light, knowledge and penetration into the scriptures of truth, and are capable of directing and guiding the feet of, and shewing the way of salvation unto others.

**3.** They are swift creatures: thus the apostles and first ministers of the gospel, like young roes, ran, spread, and carried the gospel all over the Gentile world; ‘their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world:’ and it may also denote in general, how expedite and quick of dispatch ministers are in doing of their Lord’s work, notwithstanding a great many difficulties are in the way; yet, like young toes, they leap over these mountains, and skip over these hills, and are’ not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.’

**4.** Here is only mention made of two young roes, and that to suit with the number of her breasts; and two breasts being sufficient for one person,

denotes the sufficient number of ministers which Christ provides for his church: when he had sent out the twelve apostles, he afterwards sent out other seventy disciples, and these he sent out ‘two and two;’ and so in all ages of the world, as he has removed some, he has sent others, and when there has been want of such workmen in his vineyard, he has prayed ‘the Lord of the harvest’ to send forth more laborers; and as the fruit of his ascension and intercession, sufficient gifts have been given to a competent number of men to fit them for the ministry, for the good of his body, the church.

**2dly**, They are compared, not only to two young roes, but two young roes that are twins; which is expressive of their equal authority, joint commission, and harmony of doctrine, as has been already observed on verse 2.

**3dly**, They are compared to two young toes that ‘feed among the lilies; the lilies of the field,’ for such there were, <sup><4168></sup>Matthew 6:28, and we sometimes read of harts and hinds being among lilies <sup>f488</sup> Now the lilies, among which the ministers of the gospel feed, are either,

**1.** The scriptures, which they make their principal study, and the main subject of their contemplation; here their own souls are delighted, comforted and instructed, and so become useful in comforting and instructing others; from hence they gather food for themselves, and being nourished with the wholesome words of faith and sound doctrine, they are capable of feeding others also. Or,

**2.** The saints: in what respects the people of God may be compared to lilies, has been shewn on chapter <sup><2112></sup>2:2. among these the ministers of the gospel feed, and to these they break and impart the bread of life.

**3.** It may be observed, that it is where Christ himself feeds, as in chapter <sup><2116></sup>2:16. The ministers of the gospel feed where Christ feeds, and Christ feeds where they do: the great end of the gospel-ministry is, not only that saints may have communion one with another, but also with their head, Christ Jesus: Would any therefore enjoy communion with Christ? Are any desirous of knowing where Christ feeds? he feeds where his ministers do, and that is among the lilies, in the congregation of the saints; it may serve then as a direction to such, to sit under a gospel-ministry. Or,

**Secondly,** We may understand by the church's two breasts, the two Testaments, the Old and the New: A Jewish writer <sup>f489</sup> would have their two laws here intended, namely, the written law, and the oral law; the written law is that which was written on the two tables of stone; the oral law is what they imagine God gave to Moses by word of mouth, which he gave to Joshua, and so was handed down from one to another, and makes up the volume of their vain, unprofitable, and numerous traditions, called the Misnah: but it is much better applied by another of them <sup>f490</sup> to the two tables themselves, on which were written the ten commandments, five on one table, and five on the other; and so, like two young roes that are twins, answered one another: though the two Testaments, the Old and the New, seem to bid much fairer to be the sense of these words; which two breasts contain and impart the whole 'sincere milk of the word,' and afford every thing that is nourishing and refreshing to believers; here is milk for babes, and meat for strong men; and, like 'two young roes,' are exceeding pleasant and delightful to believers; they rejoice the heart, cheer the spirits, and fill the soul with an universal pleasure; and as two young roes that are twins are alike, there is an harmony and agreement between them: they look to one another as the two cherubim over the mercy-seat did. They agree,

**1.** In the person, office, and grace of Christ: the Old-Testament has said nothing concerning the Messiah, what he should be, do or suffer, but what the New Testament has fully confirmed and more clearly discovered: and the New Testament says nothing of Christ, his person, office and grace, but what the Old bears a testimony to; and therefore, says Christ to the Jews, <sup>(RSB)</sup>John 5:39, 'search the scriptures,' that is, of the Old Testament; 'for they are they which testify of me.'

**2.** They are alike in their doctrines; the doctrines concerning Christ's person, the remission of sins by his blood, justification by his righteousness, etc. are the same in both Testaments, notwithstanding they were spoken at 'sundry times,' and delivered in 'divers manners;' though perhaps they are more clearly revealed in the one than in the other: the apostle Paul, that great asserter of the doctrines of grace under the New Testament, said no other things than what Moses and the prophets said under the Old.

**3.** The promises and prophecies of the Old-Testament have their completion in the New; there was nothing promised to be done, or prophesied that should be, but what has been exactly fulfilled and brought

to pass; neither is there scarcely any thing in the New Testament, but what was promised and prophesied of under the Old.

**4.** The types and figures of the old law are exactly answered in the New-Testament: the law was nothing else but a ‘shadow of good things to come;’ the passover-lamb, the brazen serpent, the rock and manna, the Jewish sabbaths, sacrifices, new moon, washings and purifications, all prefigured and had their fulfillment in Christ Jesus. there is scarce any thing in the New-Testament, but what was typified under the Old; and nothing prefigured under the Old, but what has its completion in the New; and thus are they like two young roes that are twins: and they may also be said to be like roes that ‘feed among the lilies,’ because they abound with the lilies of gospel promises and gospel-doctrines; these two fields are full of them; there are ‘exceeding great and, precious promises,’ and heavenly and delightful truths, which make for the consolation, edification, and instruction of God’s people. Or,

**Thirdly,** By the church’s two breasts may be intended, the two ordinances of the gospel, baptism, and the Lord’s supper; which are not dry breasts, but the breasts of consolation, out of which believers suck and are satisfied; in the Lord’s supper, by faith they ‘eat the flesh,’ and ‘drink the blood’ of the Son of God, and feed upon the bruised and *broken body* of a crucified Jesus, and in so doing, receive much strength and nourishment; in the ordinance of baptism, they look to a buried and risen Jesus, behold the place where their Lord lay, ‘who was delivered for their offenses, and rose again for their justification;’ and oftentimes go away, as the eunuch did, rejoicing: now these, like ‘two young roes,’ are exceeding pleasant and delightful to believers, when they have the presence and Spirit of God with them, and the discoveries of his love unto them; for then are wisdom’s ways, ‘ways of pleasantness, and all her paths, paths of peace.’ Again, like two roes that are twins, they are both instituted by Christ, both lead the faith of God’s children to him; they both require the same subjects, namely, believers, and ought to go inseparably together; he that has a right to the one, has an indubitate right to the other; and he that subjects to the one, should also to the other; for so did the first primitive Christians, who, as soon as converted, were baptized, and the same day joined themselves to the church, and stedfastly continued in holy fellowship and communion with it; a practice to be imitated and followed by us now. Moreover, these may be said to ‘feed among the lilies,’ because they are all acknowledged, received, and submitted to by the saints, who are compared to lilies; who

not only entertain them, but maintain and vindicate them against all opposers.

There are some <sup>f491</sup> who think by the church's breasts are meant, love to God, and love to our neighbor, which are the two great commandments of the law; and therefore love is avid to be the 'fulfilling of the law.' Now 'we love God, because he first loved us,' and we love the saints, because they are loved with the same love, redeemed by the same blood as we are, have the same grace wrought in their hearts; as we ourselves have, and all as the fruit and effect of divine grace; and being thus filled with a sense of God's love, they become very fruitful in good works, and, like 'two young roes,' are exceeding pleasant and delightful to Christ; and therefore he says, in verse 10: 'How fair is my love, my sister, my spouse,' etc. both to me and to my saints: and like two young roes that are *twins*, are wrought at one and the same time in the soul; bear a very great resemblance to each other in their natures, properties, and usefulness, and do inseparably go together; for where there is love to God, there will be love to the saints: for to say we love God, and do not love our brother, is a manifest contradiction, as the apostle John says, <sup><B4B></sup>1 John 4:20, 'He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' and these being fed by scripture-precepts and examples, grow and increase abundantly, like two young roes which are fat and plump, feeding among the lilies: but the other senses of the words before-mentioned seem better to agree with them.

## VERSE 6.

*Until the day break, and the shadows flee away,  
I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.*

SOME <sup>f492</sup> think these are the words of the church; who, not being able to bear any longer to hear herself so highly commended, as in the preceding verses resolves to betake herself to some private place, where she might be out of the hearing of such praises and commendations: or else, being under great temptations and darkness of soul, resolves to go to the mountain of the Lord's house, the church of Christ, and there in reading, meditation, prayer, and other exercises, wait for his presence, and the manifestations of himself unto her: or rather, being in distressed circumstances, she is resolved to go to Christ himself, 'the rock that is higher than' she; who, for the odor of his sacrifice, the fragrancy of his intercession, and sweet-



smelling garment of his righteousness, may be called ‘the mountain of myrrh,’ and ‘hill of frankincense,’ as he is ‘a bundle of myrrh,’ in chapter ~~2013~~1:13. But I am rather inclined to think, that they are the words of Christ; in which we are told,

**First**, The place where he resolves to go to, and abide; ‘the mountain of myrrh, and hill of frankincense;’ which I apprehend intend one and the same place; though two places in Arabia were so called. <sup>f493</sup> The allusion may be to mountains and hills, where those odoriferous plants grew; such as were in or near Judea: it is said of Pompey the Great, that when he passed over Lebanon, after-mentioned, verse 8, he went through sweet-smelling groves, and woods of frankincense and balsam; <sup>f494</sup> and Lebanon is thought by some, <sup>f495</sup> to have its name from the frankincense that grew upon it; though rather, from the whiteness of the snow continually on it; and is, in the Targum of verse 8. called ‘the mountain of snow;’ see ~~2014~~Jeremiah 18:14. **Secondly**, How long he proposes to continue here; ‘until the day break, and the shadows flee away.’

Now by ‘the mountain of myrrh, and hill of frankincense,’ most of the Jewish writers <sup>f496</sup> understand the temple, which was built on mount Moriah, ~~1400~~2 Chronicles 3:1, the place where Abraham offered up his son Isaac; in which mountain as the Lord then, so frequently in after-ages, especially when the temple was built, appeared unto his people. Now the *temple* may be called ‘the mountain of myrrh, and hill of frankincense,’ either in allusion to Moriah, the name of the mountain on which it was built; which perhaps might have its name originally from the abundance of myrrh which grew upon it; or else, because in it was the holy anointing oil, one ingredient in which was ‘pure myrrh;’ and also the incense, which was made of ‘pure frankincense,’ together with other spices; which was likewise put upon their meat-offerings, which were there offered up unto the Lord: and this sense of the words is not altogether to be despised; for in the temple, the *shechinah* or divine majesty dwelt, until Christ came in the flesh, when the gospel-day broke, and the shadows of the ceremonial law vanished, fled and disappeared, as has been shewn in chapter ~~2017~~2:17. Though I think rather, by ‘the mountain of myrrh, and hill of frankincense,’ is intended the church of Christ; <sup>f497</sup> where he has taken up his residence, and resolves to dwell until his second coming; which may be compared to a hill or mountain,

1. For their height: hills and mountains are higher than any other parts of the earth; and so is the church of Christ than the rest of the world: saints are higher in Christ's esteem than all the world besides; and are exalted by his grace, and dignified with favors by him above all others; and however love and mean they may now appear in the eyes of the world, the time is coming when this 'mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills,' <XIII> Isaiah 2:2.
2. For their immoveableness: hills and mountains cannot be removed; no more can the church or believers in Christ, <VIII> Psalm 130:1, for 'they that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever:' they shall never be removed either from Christ's hands or Christ's heart; they shall never be removed from a state of justification to a state of condemnation; they are secured by electing love, and preserved in Christ Jesus; they are held fast by covenant-bands, and are built upon 'a sure foundation, upon a rock,' against which 'the gates of hell can never prevail.'
3. For being places where trees grow, as oaks, cedars, olives,' etc. and famous for these were Bashan, Hermon, Lebanon, the mount of olives,' etc. in the church of Christ are 'trees of righteousness,' which, being planted by Christ's father, flourish like palm-trees, and grow like cedars in Lebanon.
4. For being places of pasture for cattle; such were Bashan, Carmel, and Gilead: in the church of Christ there is pasture for all his sheep; there plenteous provisions of grace are made; 'a feast of fat things,' wine mingled, bread prepared, mad a table sufficiently furnished for all Christ's friends and guests, in this his *holy mountain*, the church.
5. In hills and mountains worship used to be given, and sacrifices offered up to God, as may be collected from the discourse of Christ with the woman of Samaria, <XXII> John 4:20, 21, as well as from other places of scripture: in the church of Christ the worship of God is maintained, the word of God is preached, his ordinances are administered, and the sacrifices of prayer and praise are offered up to him in the name and through the mediation of Christ Jesus. And as it may be compared to a mountain and hill, so likewise to 'a mountain of myrrh, and hill of frankincense,'

(1.) Because of the fragrantcy of those graces with which the church is perfumed: hence she is said, in chapter <sup>286</sup>3:6. to be ‘perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant;’ and in this chapter, verse 10. the smell of them is said to exceed all spices; and that more especially when they are in exercise; so grateful, well-pleasing, and sweet-smelling are they then to Christ Jesus.

(2.) Because of sacrifices which are of ‘a sweet-smelling savor, that are offered up here, as the sacrifices of prayer, which, in <sup>488</sup>Revelation 5:8, are called *odors*; and are more especially so to God the Father, when they are offered up through Christ’s mediation, being perfumed with his *much incense*: here are also the sacrifices of praise, which are of an exceeding grateful and delightful odor to God; for being offered up to him through Christ, these spiritual sacrifices become acceptable to him.

(3.) Because of that pleasure and delight which Christ takes in his people, and that sweet communion which they here enjoy with him; so that to them both it is ‘a mountain of myrrh and hill of frankincense;’ where the one concludes, it is good to be, and the other resolves to stay ‘till the day break,’ etc. The saints are ‘the excellent in the earth,’ with whom Christ delights to converse, and to whom his ‘goodness extends;’ he says, ‘the lines are fallen to him in pleasant places, and that he has a goodly heritage assigned him by his Father; inasmuch as they are his to live and dwell with him for evermore: and to the saints, Christ’s ‘tabernacles are amiable’ and lovely; they count ‘a day spent in his courts, better than a thousand elsewhere;’ because there they see him, and have fellowship with him whom their souls love. Now in this ‘mountain of myrrh, and hill of frankincense,’ Christ, as he delights, so he resolves to dwell, ‘until the day break,’ etc. Which is,

**1st**, Until the day of grace breaks in upon every elect soul, All that the Father hath loved with an everlasting love, and hath chosen in Christ before the world began, he put into his hands; who, upon the reception of them, laid himself under obligation to redeem them by his blood, and bring them safe to glory; and as he has already done the former, he is now doing the latter, through the ministry of the word; and therefore the preaching of the gospel, a standing ministry, and a church state, are continued on earth; in which he will stay, until every one of those other sheep are called by divine grace, whom he has laid himself under obligation to bring in: and now, when grace breaks in upon a poor sinner’s heart, it is like the break of day

unto him; light springs into his understanding, which before was darkened; he was darkness itself, is now made light in the Lord; and is no more reckoned among the children of the night, but among the children of the day; for now the shadows of ignorance and infidelity are fled away; the scales of darkness are fallen from his eyes, and in God's light he sees light: he now sees his lost and undone state without Christ, the corruption and depravity of his nature, and the plague of his own heart; he sees the impurity' and imperfection of his own righteousness, and the glory and fullness of Christ's; he sees Christ as a proper, suitable, able and willing Savior; he sees things he never saw before, and which will ever remain invisible to a carnal eye. Now until the day of grace has thus broke in upon every elect soul; and the shadows of blindness, ignorance, and infidelity, are thus fled and gone; Christ has taken up his residence, and will dwell in his church, which, to him, is a mountain of myrrh and hill of frankincense. Or else,

**2dly,** Until the day of glory breaks; that everlasting day, in which there will be no more night; when nil shadows of darkness, infidelity, doubts and fears, will flee away; when saints shall be attended no more with the long, tedious and dark nights of afflictions and sorrows, and shall stand in no need of shadowy ordinances; but shall enjoy Christ, the sum and substance of all, and dwell and be delighted with him perpetually, upon the everlasting mountains of spices, as has been shewn on chapter <sup><21217></sup>2:17.

## VERSE 7.

*Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.*

CHRIST having mentioned some particular parts of the church, wherein she appeared very beautiful; in describing of which his soul was so taken with her beauty, that he resolves to dwell with her till his second coming; and now, lest it should be thought that there was a defect of beauty in the parts not mentioned, he sums up all in this general commendation; 'Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee:' which commendation may regard the church in some particular period of time; or, in general, be expressive of the fairness and beauty of the church, and every believer in any age of the world. A learned Jewish writer <sup>f498</sup> would have the words referred to the days of Solomon; in which, he affirms, all Israel were righteous: and another <sup>f499</sup> to the time when Israel received the law from mount Sinai; when, it is said, there were none lame, blind, and dumb among them: but

they much better agree with the primitive and apostolic church, that was gathered by the ministry of the apostles after Christ's ascension, which is the mind of some Christian expositors; <sup>f500</sup> and indeed the church then bid as fair for this character, as in any' other period of time whatever. Therefore, it may not be amiss if we consider how well it agrees with it; which will appear, if we observe,

**First**, The pure doctrines of grace which were then preached: the doctrines of the gospel, by the first ministers thereof, were fully preached; they kept back nothing that might be profitable to the churches, upon any pretense whatever; they shunned not to declare all the counsel of God, whatever was the consequence of it: and this they did in all sincerity and godly simplicity; they used no artful methods to conceal their principles, but renounced those hidden things of dishonesty; they did not handle the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commended themselves to every man's conscience; they did not corrupt the word of God <sup>f501</sup> and blend it with their own inventions, but as of sincerity, but as of God, being sent by him, in the sight of God, so spake they in Christ; and were always jealous, lest the souls they ministered to should be seduced and drawn away, by cunning and artful men, from the simplicity of the gospel: they were careful to deliver those doctrines consistently; their trumpet did not give an uncertain sound; their word was not yea and nay, sometimes one thing, and sometimes another, to the dishonor of the gospel, and the confusion of souls, but was all of a piece; they preached agreeable to the analogy of faith, and were very solicitous to keep to that rule, and not swerve from it: and with a great deal of warmth and zeal they adhered to these truths; bravely withstood all opposers, feared the faces of none, and studied to please no man; but were bold in the name of God to speak the gospel of God, though with much contention; and however weak, mean, and contemptible their ministry might appear to the world, it was attended with a demonstration of the spirit and of power, and was made useful for the conversion of thousands of souls; for these truths being received in the love thereof, wrought effectually in them that believed; and were constantly adhered to and retained by them, mauger all the opposition of men and devils.

**Secondly**, If we consider the nature of their worship, which was pure and spiritual; the ordinances were kept by them, as they were delivered to them; were not mixed with human inventions, and, to their eternal honor, were constantly attended on by them; they were very frequent and fervent

in the duties of fasting and prayer, and did nothing of moment in the church without them; all the parts of religious worship were performed decently and in order by them; in all things they sought the glory of God, and the consolation and edification of each other.

**Thirdly**, If we take notice of their discipline, which was strict, and according to rule: proper officers were chosen by the joint suffrages of the church; ministers were by them set apart for the ministry; and deacons chose by them to take care of the poor, and serve the tables: church censures and excommunications were administered by the whole body, and that with a great deal of success; in case of private offenses, they gave private admonitions, and for public crimes, rebuked before all, that others might fear; those who were erroneous in principle, they sharply reprov'd; and such as were disorderly in practice, withdrew from; an heretic, after the first and second admonition, they rejected; and such who were the authors of division, and causes of contention, they carefully marked, observed and avoided.

**Fourthly**, If we take a view of their Christian communion and fellowship with each other; they lived in intire unity and harmony with each other; they were all of one heart and of one soul; one soul did, as it were, dwell in, and actuate all their bodies; they had a great deal of sympathy for each other in all distresses, whether inward or outward, and freely communicated to each other; they wept with those that wept, and rejoiced with those that rejoiced; they kept Christ's new commandment, and intirely loved one another; and in so doing, gave an evidence of their being the true disciples of Christ; so that the very heathens took notice of it, and could say; 'See how they love one another!' <sup>f502</sup> which, though they could not condemn, yet it was not very grateful to them.

**Fifthly**, Their conversation was as becometh the gospel of Christ Jesus: they held the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience; that grace; which was revealed unto them, and wrought in them, taught them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; and in so doing, they adorned the gospel, he-noured their profession, stopped the mouths of gainsayers, and recommended religion to others; and thus the primitive church much continued for 'the first three hundred years after Christ: but we are not to imagine, that there were no blemishes and imperfections in her during all this time; for there were many, and more especially towards the latter end; but, being

compared with the state of the church in after ages, she might then be said to be all fair, and no spot in her. But I rather think the words are not to be limited to the church in any one period of time, but are applicable to her and to all believers in any age of the world; who are all fair, not upon the foot of their own works, as the Targum on the place intimates; for all their righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and so are far from making them appear fair and beautiful in Christ's sight; but they are so, being justified by his righteousness, washed in his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit; and so shall be at last presented to him a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing,' <sup><017></sup>Ephesians 5:27.

The title and character which Christ here gives to his church, 'my love,'! have already met with and explained in chapter <sup><2109></sup>1:9. It is here predicated of her,

**1st,** That she is all fair. She is said to be fair, and is called by Christ, his fair one, and the fairest among women, before; but here, all fair: To shew,

- 1.** That she was a perfection of beauty, being made perfect through that comeliness which Christ put upon her; believers are perfectly justified by Christ's righteousness from all sin; stand complete in him, and so are esteemed all fair by him: and in respect of sanctification, there is a perfection of parts, though not of degrees; there is a perfect new creature in all its parts, though it is not as yet grown up to be a perfect man in Christ; even as a new born babe, which has every part and limb in just proportion, may be said to be perfect, though it has not as yet grown up to the stature and bigness it will do, if life is continued.
- 2.** That the whole church, and all the true members thereof are so; all of the church, every member, every individual believer, is fair in Christ's eye; the meanest and weakest believer, as well as the greatest and strongest, is made perfectly comely with Christ's comeliness, and equally accepted in the beloved.
- 3.** He says so of the church, to manifest the exceeding greatness of her beauty, and how much his heart was taken with it, that he, the king, greatly desired it, and delighted to be in her company.

**4.** To comfort her, banish her doubts and fears, and strengthen her faith; who, seeing her own vileness and sinfulness, and spots and blemishes, might be ready to despond in her mind, and call in question her interest in

Christ, and his righteousness; therefore he says, 'Thou art all fair, my love: I do love thee; thou art exceeding fair and beautiful in my eye; all of thee is fair and beautiful; thou art fairer than all others, being adorned with my' grace, and clothed with my righteousness.

**2dly**, He asserts that there was no spot in her; which is not to be understood,

**1.** As if there was no sin in believers; for this is contrary to all the experience of God's children, as well as to express texts of scripture; the humble confessions and ingenuous acknowledgments of saints in all ages, their frequent groans and complaints of the weight and burden of it, are plain proofs to the contrary; their ardent prayers at the throne of grace, for the manifestations of pardoning love, that: God would cleave them from secret, and keep them back from presumptuous sins, not only testify their commission of sinful actions, but also their sense of indwelling corruptions; and their daily slips and falls loudly proclaim the depravity of their natures; to imagine that we have no sin in us, is but to deceive ourselves, and to give an evidence to others, that the truth is not in us: therefore, when Christ says of his church, that there is no spot in her, we are not to understand it in this sense. Nor,

**2.** As if the sins of God's people were not sins; for, though they are justified by Christ's righteousness from all sin, and have all their sins pardoned through Christ's blood: yet their sins do not hereby cease to be sins: pardon of sin and justification by Christ's righteousness, free souls from an obligation to the punishment due to sin, but do not destroy the nature of sin: violations and breaches of God's righteous law, made by his own people, are equally esteemed sins by him, as those made by others; and though he never will inflict his vindictive wrath upon them for their sins; yet he does oftentimes, in a fatherly manner, chastise them for them, and brings them under a sense and acknowledgment of them before him. But,

**3.** The church and all believers are so in Christ's account; though they have sin in them, and have committed sin, and, through infirmity, continue to do so, yet sin is not reckoned and imputed to them; for, being clothed with his spotless righteousness, he looks upon them as if they had no spot in them; and they are so covered with it, that when their sins are sought for by divine justice, they shall not be found, nay, God himself, having accepted of Christ's righteousness and imputed it to them, sees no iniquity in Jacob,



nor perverseness in Israel: though all sin is seen by him, *in articulo providentiae*, in the article of providence, and nothing escapes his all-seeing eye; yet, *in articulo justificationis*, in the article of justification, he sees no sin in his people, so as to reckon it to them, or condemn them for it; for they all stand unblameable and unproveable in his sight; and Christ will ere long present them in open view to men and angels, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

## VERSE 8.

Come with me from Lebanon, (my spouse) with me from Lebanon:  
look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon,  
from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

CHRIST having, in the verses going before, given a large and full commendation of his church's beauty, and having his heart exceedingly taken with it, so that he could not bear a distance from her; invites her, as his spouse and bride to go along with him, and look off from the several places here mentioned. In the words are,

**I.** A special title given her, expressive of the nearest relation to him; 'my spouse.'

**II.** A kind invitation to go along with him, enforced with the most powerful arguments.

**I.** A special title is given to her, 'my spouse.' This is a new one, which we never met with before: He had called her his love, his dove, and his fair one, but never, till now, his spouse; which is expressive of that near relation and strict union that is between Christ and his church; which union is represented by several things in scripture, as by the union of the head and members, vine and branches; but by none more strongly than by the conjugal union of husband and wife, by which they become one flesh; which the apostle, ~~HEB~~ Ephesians 5:32, taking notice of, applies to Christ and his church: This, says he, 'is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and his church: Christ and his church being espoused together, become one spirit; hence it is that they are called by the same names: Christ is called by the name of *Israel*, which is the church's name, and the church is called by the name of *Christ*; hence all that Christ has is the church's, and all that the church has is Christ's; her debts become his, and his grace becomes hers; there is a mutual interest of persons and things; and that

which crowns all, is, that this union is indissoluble; this band can never be broken, nor this marriage-knot be ever untied.

I shall, now very briefly shew you,

**1st,** How the church came to be the spouse of Christ.

**2dly,** Why she is first called so here.

**1st,** How the church came to be Christ's spouse; a person so much beneath him, at such a distance from him, and so unlovely and unlikely in herself, it may justly seem strange and be wondered at, 'how she came to be so nearly related to him. And here now observe, that the Lord Jesus Christ from all eternity pitched, his love upon her: that he loved her from thence, is manifest from his suretyship-engagements for her; he asked her of his Father, who had a right to dispose of her, and he gave him his heart's desire, and did not withhold the request of his lips from him; which request being made by the Son, and consent given by the Father, he then betrothed her to himself for ever, and that in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and. in mercies; and resolved to bestow that grace upon her, which should cause her to know, own and acknowledge him to be her Lord and husband: but notwithstanding this, at present here was an actual consent of her own wanting; wherefore he sends his ministring servants in the several ages of the world to obtain it: these are sent to display his greatness, discover the richness of his grace, and speak of all his glories; which, being impressed upon souls by the mighty power of his spirit and graces they are willing to give up themselves to him to be his for ever, to love, own, and acknowledge him as their Lord and husband; which may be called 'the day of their espousals' to him: but all this will more visibly and gloriously appear, when all the elect are gathered in, and every soul of them made willing to be a holy spouse unto him; then shall the nuptials be solemnized, and that voice shall be heard in heaven, 'the marriage of the Lamb is come;' whose wife, being 'as a bride adorned for her husband,' shall be received by him, and enter with him into the marriage-chamber, where they shall spend an endless eternity in the enjoyment of each other.

**2dly,** Why she is first called so here; she is in the following verses, and in other parts of this song, frequently called so, but never before this time.

**1.** Being all fair, without any spot or blemish, being prepared by his grace for himself, and having a grant from him to be 'arrayed in fine linen, clean

and white,' he calls her his spouse; for now she looked something like one, having on the wedding garment, Christ's spotless righteousness.

**2.** The marriage was now consummated, 'the day of his espousals' was over, which is mentioned in chapter <sup><2181></sup>3:11. for all that comes between that and these words, is a commendation of his church's beauty, which his heart was wonderfully taken with on his marriage-day; and when he had finished the commendation, salutes her with this title, *my spouse*.

**3.** The mentioning of it here, may be also to prevail with her to go along with him: Where should a wife be? or with whom should she be, but with her husband? I am thy husband, and thou art my spouse and bride; and therefore both duty and affection to me should oblige thee to go along with me: so that the import of the words is much the same with those; 'forget thine own people, and thy father's house, so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him,' <sup><1950></sup>Psalm 45:10, 11. Which leads me to consider,

**II.** The invitation he gives her to go along with him,, Come with me, my spouse,' etc. or, as the words may be read, 'Thou shalt come with me' <sup>f503</sup> etc.' for whatever Christ invites and exhorts us to, he must give us grace and strength to perform, and, blessed be his name, he does.

Lebanon, from whence she is exhorted and invited to remove, was a goodly mountain, on the borders of the land of Canaan, northward; it was famous for odoriferous trees, and especially for cedars, wherefore frequent mention is made of it in this song; this was that 'goodly mountain and Lebanon; which Moses had such a desire to see before his death, <sup><1825></sup>Deuteronomy 3:25. the allusion may be to the bringing of Pharaoh's daughter, whom Solomon married, from the house of the forest of Lebanon, where she might be first placed, to the house he built for her, when it was prepared to receive her, <sup>f504</sup> <sup><1024></sup>1 Kings 9:24. Some of the Jewish writers <sup>f505</sup> think, that a mighty conflux of people to the temple, from all parts of Judea, and even from among the uncircumcised, who are compared to lions and leopards, is here intended: but rather, we are to understand the words as an exhortation, to remove from the temple and from Jerusalem; for perhaps by Lebanon here, may be meant the temple, as in <sup><810></sup>Zechariah 11:1. 'Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars;' which, by some Jewish writers, <sup>f506</sup> is expounded of the temple, and the destruction of it: for they tell us, <sup>f507</sup> that forty years before

the destruction of it, the gates of the temple opened of themselves; at which R. Jochanan Ben Zaccai, as if affrighted, rebuked them, and said, 'Now know I that thy destruction is at hand, according to the prophecy of Zechariah, the son of Iddo, Open thy gates, O Lebanon, etc.' The temple might be called so, because it was made of the wood of Lebanon, of cedars which were brought from thence, and because the frankincense which grew there, was daily burnt in it, and the glory of it was brought into it. Now in Christ's time the temple was become a den of thieves, as he calls it, in <sup><1213></sup>Matthew 21:13, and in the apostles time was a den of lions, and a mountain of leopards; was full of painted and spotted hypocrites, and cruel persecutors; wolves in sheeps clothing, who made havock of the church, and persecuted the saints from place to place: wherefore Christ removed from them, broke up housekeeping with them, and left their house desolate unto them; he took his gospel from them, ordered his ministers to depart far hence to the Gentiles, and calls forth his people from among them, to go along with him thither, 'Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, etc.' Also he bids her look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon: Amana <sup>f508</sup> was a mountain, which divided Cilicia from Syria; from whence perhaps the river at the foot of it took its name, which in <sup><1262></sup>2 Kings 5:12 is called Abana, but in the *keri* or margin it is read Amana: and so the Targum here expounds it of the people which dwelt by the river Amana: R. Solomon Jarchi would have it to be a mountain in the northern border of Israel, and that it is the same with mount Hor; <sup>f509</sup> and indeed, in every place where mention is made of mount Hor, the Targum of Jonathan <sup>f510</sup> always renders it, Taurus Umanus; for Amanus, according to Ptolemy, was a part of mount Taurus; it is joined with Libanu by Josephus, <sup>f511</sup> and was a part of it, where the snow lay all the summer; as it is both with that and Carmel by AElanus. <sup>f512</sup> Shenir and Hermon were one and the same mountain, called by different names: Hermon perhaps was the common name to the whole mountain; and that part of it which belonged to the Sidonians, they called Sirion; and the other part which belonged to the Amorites, they called Shenir, <sup><1269></sup>Deuteronomy 3:9. Now all these mountains may be called dens of lions, and mountains of leopards, not only because they were inhabited by those wild beasts, <sup>f513</sup> but because they were inhabited by cruel, savage and tyrannical persons, and by thieves and robbers, and such like persons, and especially Amana, as Strabo <sup>f514</sup> Cicero <sup>f515</sup> and Plutarch <sup>f516</sup> relate; and which appears also from what Lucan says, in his Pharsalia, lib. 3. verse 244.

— *Venere feroces,*  
*Cappadoces duri populus nunc cultor Amani.*

Shenir and Hermon were formerly, as Jarchi observes, the dens of those lions, Sihon and Og, kings of Bashan and of the Amorites; unless they should rather be thought to be the proper names of some places about Lebanon, for Adrichomius <sup>f517</sup> says,

‘The mountain of the leopards, which was round and high, was two miles distant northwards from Tripolis, three from the city Areas southward, and one from mount Lebanon.’

Now from the tops of these mountains, Christ would have his church look, and take a prospect how the gospel was received, what numbers of souls were converted, and how churches were planted in Phoenicia, Cyprus, Cyrenia, Antioch, etc. though it was contemned, rejected, and persecuted by the Jewish nation; so that the words may be understood of Christ’s carrying his gospel into the Gentile world, and succeeding in it, and calling his people to take notice of it. Or else,

This may intend in general Christ’s call to his church and people, to leave the society of, and come out from among the wicked men of the world, comparable to lions and leopards, and to go along with him, as in ~~1~~2 Corinthians 6:17 and ~~6~~Revelation 18:4. And here are two sorts of arguments, which he makes use of to enforce this upon them.

**First**, That the persons from whom he exhorts them to remove, were no better than lions and leopards; and to converse with them, was no better than to dwell in the dens and mountains of such.

**1.** Wicked and ungodly persons may be compared to lions, especially those who are of a cruel and persecuting nature: hence David, being among such, says, ‘my soul is among lions;’ he frequently represents the wicked as such, and desires deliverance from them: likewise the apostle Paul calls a persecuting Nero, ‘the lion,’ out of whose mouth it pleased the Lord to deliver him.

**2.** They may be compared to leopards,

**(1.)** For their being full of spots; the leopard is not fuller of spots, than the sinner is of sin; as the one is natural, so is the other; and as the leopard cannot change one spot, nor make any alteration in his nature; no more can the sinner change his own heart, nor by any power of his

own remove the spots and stains of sin; as Jeremy says, <sup><24132></sup>Jeremiah 13:23: ‘Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.’

(2.) For their craftiness and cruelty, as is manifest from <sup><24116></sup>Jeremiah 5:6. <sup><24117></sup>Hosea 13:7. Aelianus reports <sup>f518</sup> that when the leopard is in want of food, it hides itself among the thickets, so as it cannot be seen; and, by the sweetness of its odor, draws the fawns, does, wild goats, and such like animals to it; and when they are near, breaks out of its lurking-place, and makes them its prey ‘other artful methods it makes use of for the same purpose, as is recorded by others;’ <sup>f519</sup> which is a just emblem of the craftiness and cruelty of wicked and ungodly men, who use all the stratagems to ensnare, and exercise all the crusty they can devise upon those who are ‘quiet in the land.’

(3.) For their swiftness; so in <sup><24118></sup>Habakkuk 2:8, the horses of the Chaldeans are said to be swifter than leopards: wicked men, though slow and backward to that which is good, yet are swift to do mischief; no sooner do their hearts devise wickedness, but their feet run to accomplish it.

**Secondly,** The second argument he uses with her to quit the society of wicked men, is, the enjoyment of his own company, which is far preferable to theirs; ‘Come with me, my spouse.’

1. Christ’s company is much more pleasant than theirs; though the ways of sin may seem pleasant for a while, yet at length they will appear no other than the haunts of lions and leopards; though the company of sinners may seem now sweet and delightful, they will be found at last to be more bitter than death; but Christ’s ways are always ‘ways of pleasantness:’ it is good for the believer to be always in his company, where he finds solid pleasure, and inexpressible delight; more than ever he did in the tents of wickedness.

2. It is more profitable: the company and conversation of wicked men is hurtful and pernicious; ‘evil communications corrupt good manners;’ but the company of Christ is always profitable: a believer always gets something by it; it has a mighty influence upon the inward frame of his soul, and upon his outward walk in the world; it makes him both comfortable in himself, and useful to others; so that he sustains no loss, but undoubtedly is a gainer, who parts with the company of the men of the world for Christ’s.

**3.** Christ's company is much more safe than theirs: the company of wicked men is always dangerous; there is danger, not only of being infected with their sins, but also of partaking of their plagues; it tends to ruin here, and leads to everlasting destruction; but the believer is always safe in Christ's company, in what place or condition soever he be; though he walks through the waters of affliction, and fire of tribulation, nay, though through the valley of the shadow of death; yet he is always safe, being guided by his counsel, supported by his hand, and comforted by his presence.

Now Christ in all this discovers a great deal of care over, and affection to his church and people. One would think she cannot withstand a request, delivered in such an affectionate manner, where her own comfort, profit, and safety, are so much concerned: Who would dwell in lions' dens, and in the mountains of the leopards, when they might have such agreeable and delightful company as Christ's is? which is to be valued and preferred before this world, and all the things of it; though God's own children are too apt to be taken with them; and therefore have need, as here, to be called to look off from them to things that are spiritual and heavenly; and not take up their rest and satisfaction in those things and places, where lions dwell and leopards walk.

### VERSE 9.

Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister; my spouse: thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.

CHRIST, having invited his church to go along with him, here discovers the reason of it, because his heart was ravished with her; he had such an affection for her, that he could not bear to be at a distance from her. In these words, consider,

**I.** The titles given to her; 'my sister, my spouse.'

**II.** What he declares to her; 'thou hast ravished my heart;' which expression is doubled.

**III.** What it was his heart was so taken with, which had such a mighty influence upon him; 'with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.'

**I.** I shall consider the titles he gives unto her, and they are two, ‘my sister, my spouse;’ one of which, namely, ‘my spouse,’ has been explained in the former verse, and is here repeated to shew his affection to her, how much he delighted, in her under this character; as also, to assure her of the truth of it, as well as to manifest his satisfaction in this relation, and that he was not ashamed to own and acknowledge her as such: the other title, ‘my sister,’ we have not met with before. Now Christ may call the church his sister,

**1.** *More amatorio*, it being a love-strain; <sup>f520</sup> and this being a love-song, where Christ and his church are expressing their love to each other; such a title as this cannot be looked upon as an improper one: it being an endearing expression, used by bus.. bands to their wives; as by Raguel to Edna, Tobit 7:18, and by Tobias to Sara, chapter <sup><2104></sup>8:4.

**2.** *More Hebraeorum*: it being usual with the Jews to call those of their own kindred and country, brethren and sisters; and with none but such were they allowed to marry; and perhaps to this the apostle has a respect, <sup><4015></sup>1 Corinthians 9:5. ‘Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife?’ etc. agreeable to this, Christ calls his church, his sister, whom he had espoused to himself.

**3.** He may call her so on account of his incarnation; he assuming the same nature, and partaking of the same flesh and blood the children did; and so being of one and the same mass and lump with them, is not ashamed to call them brethren; which, it may be, is intended in that wish of the church’s, chapter <sup><2104></sup>8:1. ‘O that thou wert as my brother!’ etc. that is, O that thou wert incarnate! that we were of the same flesh and blood, and thereby thou appear to be my brother, and I thy sister.

**4.** On the account of her adoption: God has, by his sovereign, free, and distinguishing grace, adopted all his elect into his family, and has in his covenant of grace declared himself to be their Father, and them to be his sons and daughters; and now, being the sons and daughters of the same Father as Christ as the Son of, they become his brethren and sisters, which he acknowledges, <sup><4017></sup>John 20:17.

**5.** Being born again, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, they bear this character; and are so in Christ’s esteem, according to what he says, <sup><4020></sup>Matthew 12:50. ‘Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and



sister, and mother:’ Christ bears all relations to his people, and is willing to own them in all relations to him.

**6.** Perhaps the church is here first called Christ’s sister; because Christ having called his people out of Judea’s land, and gathered a church among the Gentiles, that little sister spoken of in chapter <sup><2188></sup>8:8, it might hereby appear that he had a real affection for her, that she was valued by him, and nearly related to him.

**II.** What he declares unto her, is, that she had ‘ravished his heart.’ It is but one word in the Hebrew text, and is used in this form and sense no where else, but twice in this verse; for Christ’s love being so unspeakable and inexpressible, he coins, as one, <sup>f521</sup> well observes, new words to discover it by; it is variously rendered, and perhaps by laying the several versions together, it will appear more fully what is intended by it.

**1.** The words may be rendered, ‘thou hast heartened me, or put heart into me,’ and caused me to be of good cheer; so Cocceius and Schmidt: the word is used in this sense, in the Syriac Testament, in <sup><408></sup>Matthew 9:2, and <sup><3154></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:14 and then the sense may be this; the love which I bear unto thee, the charming ideas of thee, which I always carry in my mind, and the ‘joy which was set before me,’ of having thy company and presence for ever in glory; have made my heavy sufferings easy, animated me as man and mediator, and cheerfully carried me through them all for thy sake, <sup><812></sup>Hebrews 12:2.

**2.** Others read them, ‘thou hast unhearted me;’ thou hast taken away my heart, and stolen it from me, so that I have no heart left in me, so the Septuagint; which reading, R. Aben Ezra confirms. Sometimes fear throws persons into such a condition, that they are as if they had no heart, spirit, life, or soul in them; as the Canaanites in <sup><478></sup>Judges 5:1 sometimes wonder and surprise; thus the queen of Sheba, when she had seen Solomon’s wisdom and glory, it is said, ‘there was no more spirit in her:’ and sometimes love has such an influence on the heart, and so it had here on Christ; it was so powerful, that it had taken away his heart; ‘thou hast ravished my heart,’ that is, thou hast taken it away from me, as it were, by force and violence, that it is no longer mine, but thine; thou art master over it, and hast the command of it <sup>f522</sup> having claimed it to thyself as thine own.

**3.** It is rendered by others, ‘thou hast drawn my heart unto thee,’ so R. Solomon Jarchi; or, ‘brought me near,’ or ‘caused me to draw nigh’: <sup>f523</sup>

that our hearts should be drawn to Christ, by views of his loveliness, and discoveries of his love to us, is no wonder; but that Christ's heart should be drawn to us, in whom were neither love nor loveliness, is surprising; which shews the exceeding greatness, freeness, and richness of Christ's love.

**4.** It may be read, 'thou hast coupled my heart with thine;' and in this sense the Talmudists use the word: <sup>f524</sup> Christ's heart and a believer's are so knit, joined and coupled together, that they are but one heart, one soul, and one spirit; 'he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit;' all the powers of hell and earth, united together, are not able to disjoin and separate, either a believer's heart from Christ, or Christ's heart from a believer.

**5.** The Targum paraphrases it thus, 'thy love is fixed upon the table of my heart;' it is wrote there in legible characters, which can never be erased: the church is not only engraven on the palms of Christ's hands, but also upon the table of his heart; and so the church has what she wished for, chapter ~~286~~8:6. 'Set me as a seal upon thine heart:' Christ's love to the church is so rivetted and fixed in his heart, that there is no removing it; 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' 6. It is translated by others, 'thou hast wounded my heart,' so the Vulgate Latin; which reading is not to be despised; R. David Kimchi <sup>f525</sup> owns it: Christ's heart was wounded with one of love's darts <sup>f526</sup> with an arrow shot from one of the church's eyes; which is expressive of the force and power of love, with what vehemence it dwelt in, and what influence it had upon the heart of Christ.

Now this expression is repeated, to shew the vehemency and passionateness of his love, and the exceeding greatness of it; as also to assure her of the reality of it, that he was hearty and sincere in it; and did not say this by way of compliment to her, as lovers too often do; nor was it a word which was rashly spoken by him, or that dropped from him at unawares; but as it proceeded from his heart, so it was spoken by him in a deliberate manner; therefore he repeats it, not to correct, but to confirm it.

Hence we may conclude what interest a believer has in Christ's heart. What may he not expect? what can he want? what need he fear, that has so great a share in Christ's heart and what reason has he to give Christ his heart, who has so much of Christ's?

**III.** I shall now take notice of the things with which Christ's heart was ravished.

1. 'With one of the church's eyes:' the eye is an attractive of love; <sup>f527</sup> and therefore it is said in <sup><165></sup>Proverbs 6:25. 'Neither let her take thee with her eye-lids.' By the eye, with which Christ was so taken, may be meant, the eye of faith; by which a soul looks on him, and loves him; beholds his fullness, and wishes for an interest in him; and looks to him, and expects from him alone life and salvation: He says, it was with *one* of her eyes; which shews that a believer has more eyes than one; and therefore we read of 'the eyes of their understanding,' <sup><418></sup>Ephesians 1:18, but it was with this eye of faith, by which she looked to him, and believed on him, that his heart was so ravished; and that but with one look from it, or glance of it, as both Junius and Ainsworth read it; nay, though but a very glimmering one; for faith, even in its lowest degree, is exceeding precious to Christ Jesus; which shews how easily and quickly a conquest is gained over Christ's heart by faith; his heart must needs be full of love to believers, since it is ravished and overcome even with a single glimmering look from faith's eye; and if so, how' much will his heart be ravished, when we shall see him 'face to face, just as he is;' take a full view of him, look at him, and feed our eyes for ever upon the unutterable glories of his person!

2. 'With one chain of her neck:' the neck is a beautiful part of the body, and being agreeably adorned, is exceeding enamouring: the Vulgate Latin version is, 'with one lock of hair of thy neck.' so Aquila; which hung down in it, and looked very beautiful, and with which lovers are sometimes taken. <sup>f528</sup> By the *neck*, we may also understand faith, as we have observed on verse 4. it being neither unusual nor improper to represent one and the same thing under different metaphors: and by the *chain*, may be meant the graces of the Spirit, which, being linked and chained, do inseparably go together; and being put about this neck of faith, makes it look very beautiful: every grace is as a golden link or precious pearl in Christ's esteem; who having, beautified his people with them, takes the utmost delight in viewing them; and whilst he is observing how beautifully they are adorned therewith, his heart is ravished with them.

## VERSE 10.

How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!

CHRIST having declared in the preceding verse, how much his heart was delighted in, and ravished with the faith of his church; now proceeds to

shew how well pleased he was with her love, and other graces of the Spirit, in these words; where.

**I.** The excellency of her love is set forth.

**II.** The sweet smell of her ointments is commended.

**I.** He gives some excellent characters of her love to him. Christ is the object of a believer's love; and he is well pleased with that love which they shew to him: the nature of this love, its spring and actings, have been shewn already, on chapter <sup>2008</sup>1:3, where it has been observed, that it is superlative and universal; a believer loves Christ above all, and all of Christ; it is, or at least ought to be, constant and ardent, and is always hearty and unfeigned; it springs and arises from views of Christ's loveliness, and sights of his suitableness and fullness, from a sense of his love, and a discovery of union and relation to him; and is heightened and increased by enjoying communion and fellowship with them; it manifests itself by a regard to his commands and ordinances, his truths, his people and his presence, and by parting with, and bearing all for him, as has there been more largely shewn, Now of such a love as this, he says, 1. That it is fair; 'How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse!' the titles and characters he gives her, have been already explained; it was proper to repeat them here, that whilst he was commending her love, he might shew his own; and assure her of the relation she stood in to him, and that he 'had an undoubted right to the affections of her heart: he here says, that her love to him was fair, that is, lovely, delightful, grateful, and acceptable; and it appears to be exceeding well-pleasing to him; for those persons, he declares, are the objects of his love, to whom he manifests himself in a way of special grace and favor; he overrules all things here for their good; he gives them more grace, has prepared glory for them, and will preserve them safe unto it: not that their love is the meritorious and procuring cause of all this, nor the condition of their enjoying it; for his love to them has resolved all these things for them beforehand, and is the cause of theirs; but when it is wrought in their souls, and discovers itself to him, he is pleased to shew by those instances of his grace, how fair and lovely it is in his sight.

**2.** He says, that it is 'better than wine:' he here asserts the same of her love, which she had of his, in chapter <sup>2009</sup>1:2. Christ and the church, in this Song, do frequently gather up each others words, striving, as it were, to

outdo each other in their expressions of love; but Christ will in no wise come behind, and be outdone by his church and people; though it may well be wondered at, that Christ should have the same to say of our love, as we have of his; yet so it is: he here declares, it is ‘better than wine,’ that is, more grateful and pleasant, more refreshing and reviving; ‘wine makes glad the heart of man,’ <sup><39A15></sup>Psalm 104:15. but it cannot cheer, and make glad the heart of man, more than a sinner’s love does the heart of Christ: wine was used in feasts, and counted a principal part thereof; therefore the ‘house of feasting’, was called the ‘house of drinking,’ that is, wine, <sup><20A02></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:2. the feast which the rich Pharisee made for Christ, was not, as one <sup>f529</sup> well observes, thought so much of by him, nor half so entertaining to him, as the love which the poor woman shewed him: wine was used in the legal sacrifices; but the wine of legal sacrifices, or any external performance, is not so valued by Christ as a sinner’s love is; and indeed no duties or performances whatever are acceptable to him, unless love be the inward principle from whence they flow, and by Which they are acted.

**3.** He sets off the greatness and excellency of it, by using a word of the plural number; ‘How fair are thy loves’ <sup>f530</sup> ‘how much better are thy loves,’ etc. which may be expressive of the several actings of it towards him, for it discovers itself various ways; and also of the several fruits which accompany or spring from it; all which serve for the greater commendation of it.

**4.** The manner of the expressions, which is by way of interrogation and admiration; ‘How fair! etc. how much better!’ etc. as if it could not be well expressed, how fair and lovely it was; which is an evidence of the valuableness of it, or at least an indication how much Christ esteemed it; Christ’s love has its heights and depths, and lengths, and breadths; and to hear souls speak after such a manner, concerning that, need not to be wondered at; but to hear Christ express himself after this manner, concerning ours, is strange and surprising.

**II.** Her ointments are next commended, and the smell of them: in chapter <sup><20A02></sup>1:3 we read of Christ’s ointments, here of the church’s; in both places one and the same thing is intended, namely, the graces of the Spirit; why these are called ointments, have been there shewn. These ointments, or graces of the Spirit, are first Christ’s and then the church’s: the head is first anointed with them, and then the members; he without measure, but they in measure; which being poured forth upon them, and they anointed with

them, the smell of them is exceeding grateful to him: the smell of these ointments intends the actings and exercises of grace upon him; which are very delightful to him, and preferred by him to all spices, even to all that were used in the holy anointing oil, <sup><1212></sup>Exodus 30:23, 24, that was not so valuable as this ‘anointing which teacheth all things;’ nor the smell of that so much esteemed by Christ, as this is.

## VERSE 11.

Thy lips, O my spouse! drop as the honey-comb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.

CHRIST having declared, in the two former verses, how much his heart was taken with the faith and love of his church, and delighted with the smell of her ointments, here, with pleasure, takes notice of her mellifluous language, and sweet-smelling dress. Two things are here commended in her;

**I.** The sweetness of her speech.

**II.** The smell of her garments.

**I.** The sweetness of her speech: Christ’s heart was not only ravished with her sparkling eye and dazzling chain, but also with her charming lips and graceful language; ‘Thy lips, O my spouse! drop as the honey-comb,’ etc. her lips dropped things for matter like the honey-comb; and these things in such a manner as the honey-comb does: so the speech of persons, flowing from the mouth and tongue, is said to be sweeter than the honey-comb; <sup>f531</sup> and lovers are said to be sweeter to one another than the sweet honey. <sup>f532</sup>

**First**, Things for matter like the honey-comb; ‘Pleasant words,’ says Solomon, <sup><1132></sup>Proverbs 18:24, ‘are as an honey-comb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.’ Such pleasant words, which are as the honey-comb, drop from the church’s, and from every believer’s lips,

**1.** In prayer; so the Targum expounds these words of the priest’s lips, dropping as the honey-comb, when they prayed in the holy court. The believer oftentimes drops things in prayer; which, as they are profitable to himself and others, for the effectual, fervent, **ἐνεργουμένη**, the inwrought ‘prayer of a righteous man availeth much,’ <sup><916></sup>James 5:16, so they are sweet, pleasant, delightful and acceptable to Christ: ‘the prayer of the

upright is his delight;’ the prayers of the meanest believer are as delightful music in his ears, as sweet-smelling odors in his nostrils, and like the honey or honey-comb to his taste.

**2.** In praises: Christ has done great things for his church and people in the redemption and salvation of them; and therefore praise becomes them; it is their duty: and as this work is oftentimes pleasant to their own souls; so in discharging it, they often drop things in the praise of Christ’s person and grace, which are exceeding grateful and well-pleasing to him.

**3.** In confessing Christ’s name, and owning his truths before men: this is a work exceeding necessary, and a duty highly incumbent on God’s children; at every opportunity, and whenever they are called to it, they ought to do it; and as the omission of it is much resented by Christ, so the performance of it will be graciously rewarded, as appears from ~~and~~ Matthew 10:32; thus Paul, both at Jerusalem and at Rome, and many other martyrs and confessors, have, in the behalf of Christ and his gospel, dropped words like the honey-comb.

**4.** In the ministry of the word: the church’s lips are the ministers of the gospel, so Theodoret; whose business is to deliver, not so much ‘the senses of the law,’ which is Jarchi’s note on the words, as the doctrines of the gospel; these lips drop ‘the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ;’ and not words which eat like a canker, but words, which, like the honey-comb, are ‘health to the bones.’

**5.** In common conversation: the lips of the saints do frequently therein drop words pleasant and delightful; which tend to the edification of those with whom they converse, and ‘minister grace to the hearers;’ and so are like the honey-comb, both pleasant and profitable.

**Secondly,** Her lips dropped these things in such a manner as the honey-comb does;

**1.** Freely, and without pressing or squeezing: a soul that has received the ‘grace of God in truth, cannot but speak of the things which he has heard and seen; being full of matter, his belly is as wine which hath no vent, and is ready to burst, like new bottles;’ therefore he must speak, that he ‘may be refreshed;’ there needs no other constraint to be laid on him, than what he feels in his own breast.

2. Gradually: the honey-comb does not pour out. all at once, but by degrees; a man of grace, like the virtuous woman in <sup><18B></sup>Proverbs 31:26 opens his mouth with wisdom, and not like the fool who pours out his foolishness, and utters all his mind at once; but delivers his words with moderation and discretion, and observes proper seasons and opportunities to speak his mind: now a word fitly, prudently, and seasonably spoken, is like apples of gold in pictures of silver;’ for as we are to walk, so we are to ‘talk in wisdom,’ both to those ‘that are without,’ and to those that are within.

3. Constantly: the honey-comb, though it drops gradually, yet it keeps constantly dropping; so a believer’s speech should ‘be always with grace;’ he should be always praying or praising, or dropping something which may tend to the magnifying of God’s grace, and the good and edification of souls.

These words in general shew the choiceness of a believer’s discourse; that it is not any thing that is the subject of it; no common and ordinary things which he is speaking of, but what are choice and excellent; as the honey which drops from the honey-comb is esteemed the best, being what we call life-honey; as also, how much Christ’s heart was taken with it, and his affections drawn by it; it had a mighty influence upon him, and strongly engaged his heart towards her; see <sup><18B></sup>Proverbs 5:3. Now the reason why her lips dropped after this manner, was, because ‘honey and milk were under her tongue;’ and. therefore they could not well drop otherwise. The ancients had a sort of food of this mixture, called by the Greeks *meligala* <sup>f533</sup> and sometimes *candylos* <sup>f534</sup> which was the same composition: according to Galen <sup>f535</sup> it was not safe to take milk, particularly goats milk, without honey; Jove is said <sup>f536</sup> to be nursed with such a mixture: and this being very grateful to the taste, the speech of the church for pleasantness is compared to it: so Pindar <sup>f537</sup> compares his hymn or ode to honey mixed with milk, as being sweet and grateful; and in Plautus <sup>f538</sup> it is said, ‘Your words are honey and milk:’ and it may be farther observed, that such a mixture of milk and honey, with poppies in it, was given to the new-married bride, when brought home to her husband; <sup>f539</sup> which was now the case of the church. By ‘milk and honey,’ may be intended the aboundings and overflowings of grace in a believer’s heart, which thereby is made like Canaan’s land, ‘flowing with milk and honey;’ now out of the abundance of this grace, received into the heart, the mouth speaks: or else, by them may



be meant the doctrines of the gospel; which may very well be compared thereunto, words sweeter than honey and milk. <sup>f540</sup>

**1st,** To honey,

- 1.** The gospel is gathered out of the choice flowers of the scriptures: the ministers of it, 'who labor in the word and doctrine,' are the bees, who come laden with the honey of the gospel, into the hive of the church, by which souls are delighted and refreshed.
  - 2.** It is like to honey for its sweetness: thus David could say, <sup><B390B></sup>Psalm 119:103. by experience, 'How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea sweeter than honey to my mouth.' a gracious soul, who feeds on the gospel, and tastes the sweetness of it, finds it, as Ezekiel did his roll, 'like honey for sweetness' in his mouth; and so it is always thus grateful to a spiritual man, who has a proper gust and relish of it.
  - 3.** Like honey, it is of a nourishing nature: honey was not only the food of babes, but of grown persons, as appears from <sup><23715></sup>Isaiah 7:15, 22, the gospel has in it food both for 'children and for strong man and that which is exceeding nourishing to both.
  - 4.** Like the honey which Jonathan eat of, it enlightens the eyes: when the Spirit of God introduces it into a sinner's heart, it gives light there, as the psalmist says, <sup><B391C></sup>Psalm 119:130.' The entrance of thy words giveth light; it gives light into a man's self, into his lost and miserable state by nature; it gives light into the impurity of his heart, and the imperfection of his obedience; it gives light into the person, grace and righteousness of Christ; and is an instrument, in the Spirit's hands, 'to guide his feet in the way of peace.'
  - 5.** It is like the honey the Israelites sucked out of the rock in the wilderness: the rock is Christ, from whence the honey of the gospel flows; he is the author, and he is the subject of it. Or,
  - 6.** It is like the honey Samson found in the carcase of the lion: Christ is the 'lion of the tribe of Judah; in whose slain body and precious blood, the honey of gospel-grace is to be found by poor sinners, who feed upon it.
- 2dly,** As the gospel may be compared to honey, so likewise to milk; it is called the 'sincere milk of the word;' which is not mixed and blended with

human doctrines, but is free from such adulterations; and so is exceeding profitable, and no ways hurtful to the souls of men.

**1.** it may be compared to milk, because it is easy of digestion, and therefore proper food for new-born babes: hence the apostle fed the Corinthians with the milk of the word, and not with the strong meat thereof; because they were not as yet able to bear it, could not digest it; but the plainer and more easy truths of the gospel are like milk, easy of digestion to souls that are horn again; though even these to a natural man are hard sayings, which he cannot bear.

**2.** Like milk, it is very nourishing; Christ's new-born babes grow hereby, being 'nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine.

**3.** Milk is of a cooling nature, and useful in abating the violence of inflammations; <sup>f541</sup> so the gospel, being applied by the Spirit to a poor sinner, who has been under a work of the law, represses the violence of those inflammations raised in his conscience, by a fiery law's working wrath there; which is wonderfully allayed by the milk of the gospel, and the application of the exceeding great and precious promises of it, which lead the soul to the person, blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

**4.** Milk is esteemed useful to persons in consumptions, and therefore a milky diet is usually recommended to them; sin is a wasting and consuming distemper, which is only cured by bringing the milk of the gospel; which, when powerfully applied by the Spirit of God, is 'the savor of life unto life;' and will not only recover a person that is far gone, and in the most declining condition, but also restore him from death itself.

Now when these are said to be under her tongue, it intends either,

**(1.)** That they were in her heart; so ~~<9667>~~ Psalm 66:17: 'he was exalted with my tongue,' or he was exalted under my tongue, that is, in my heart; it was in my heart to exalt him, I purposed and designed it: so here, 'honey and milk are under thy tongue,' that is, they are in thy heart; it is one thing to have a notion of the gospel in our heads, and another thing to have it in our hearts by a comfortable experience.

**(2.)** It supposes that she tasted the sweetness of those truths; she rolled them as a sweet morsel under her tongue, as ~~<8012>~~ Job 20:12, resolving to have all the pleasure and satisfaction which might arise from thence.

(3.) That these were the constant subject of her meditation, <sup><9107></sup>Psalm 10:7, having tasted a sweetness in them, which drew her affections to them, her thoughts were always employed about them.

(4.) That she was always ready to speak of them at suitable times, and on proper occasions, having them under her tongue.

(5.) This shews the difference there is between a carnal, Christless sinner, and a true believer; the one has ‘the poison of asps under his lips,’ <sup><4183></sup>Romans 3:13, and the other ‘honey and milk under his tongue;’ the speech of the one is poisonous and infectious, and the language of the other sweet and edifying; so that as by their words they shall be justified, by their words also they may be known; their speech bewrays them, and declares to what company they belong.

**II.** The second thing commended in her, is the smell of her garments; the ancients used to scent their garments; Calypso gave to Ulysses sweet-smelling garments; <sup>f542</sup> ‘and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon:’ in Lebanon grew many odoriferous trees, which did emit a fragrant smell to passers by, hence called ‘sweet-smelling Lebanon;’ <sup>f543</sup> so the graces of God’s people are said to smell as Lebanon, <sup><3146></sup>Hosea 14:6. By her garments here, may be meant,

**1.** The ‘garments of salvation, and the robe of Christ’s righteousness: Christ’s garments are said to ‘smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia; now these very garments are put upon the believer, so that it is no wonder his garments smell like Lebanon; in these believers appear before God, as Jacob did before his father, in the garments of his elder brother Esau, and are in his nostrils a sweet-smelling savor; for the smell of their raiment to him is like ‘the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed;’ he is exceeding well pleased with it, and with them in it; Christ smells a sweet odor, even in those garments which he himself has wrought out, and clothed his people with. Or else,

**2.** By them we may understand the outward conversation.garments of, the saints; which are wholesome and savory, and not like the conversation of the wicked, filthy, of an ill smell, nauseous and infectious: when works go along with words, and practice with profession; when with lips dropping like the honey-comb, the sweet-smelling garment of a gospel conversation is joined, how does it adorn a Christian, and render him lovely and acceptable, and causes his smelt, to be as that of Lebanon? Some Jewish

writers <sup>f544</sup> refer these garments to the sacerdotal garments of the priests; which were certainly typical of those, which Christ, as our high-priest, wears, and with which he clothes his people.

**END OF VOLUME FIRST.**

# FOOTNOTES

<sup>ft1</sup> Prefat. in Nat. Hist.

<sup>ft2</sup> Preface to third edition.

<sup>ft3</sup> Hieron. Praefat. in Ezekiel. Origen. Prolog. Cant. Cantic.

<sup>ft4</sup> Seder Olam Rabba, p. 41.

<sup>ft5</sup> In Exodus fol. 59. col. 3 Edit. Sultzbac.

<sup>ft6</sup> Vide T. Bib. Megillah. fol. 7. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Abot Hatumaot, c. 9. sect. 6.

<sup>ft7</sup> Vide Vorit. not in Maimon. Yesode Hattorah, c. 6: sect 12.

<sup>ft8</sup> Tract Vadaim, c. 3. sect. 5.

<sup>ft9</sup> Ecclesiastes Hist. 1. 6. c. 25.

<sup>ft10</sup> Ibid. lib. 4. c. 26.

<sup>ft11</sup> Euseb. Eccl. Hist. 1. 6. c. 22. 32.

<sup>ft12</sup> Contra Marcellum, 50:1. c. 2,

<sup>ft13</sup> Synopf. S. Script. 1. 16.

<sup>ft14</sup> Mr Whiston's supplement to his essay toward restoring the text of the Old Testament, p. 11. 12.

<sup>ft15</sup> Durham, Clay. Cant. p. 5.

<sup>ft16</sup> Contr. Apion. I. 17

<sup>ft17</sup> Buxtorf. Tiberias, c. 11.

<sup>ft18</sup> Connection of the history, of the Old and New Testament, part 1. book 5. p. 332. 8vo.

<sup>ft19</sup> Vide Carranzae Summ. Concil. Conc. Constantinop. 6. Can. 2.

<sup>ft20</sup> Since I wrote this, I have met with an answer to these arguments of Mr Whiston by the very learned Carpzovius, Professor of Divinity in the University of Leipsick, published in his critics Sacra, par. 3. which was printed in the year 1728, the same year my Exposition of this Book first came out. In the year 1729 was published a translation of the Critica Sacra into English, so far as it is concerned with Mr Whiston, by Moses Marcus, a converted jew.

- ft21 In Clav. Cant. p. 5.
- ft22 Dr Kennicot, Dissert. 1. p. 20 etc.
- ft23 T. Bab. Beracot. fol. 30. 1.
- ft24 In Genesis fol, 114. 3.
- ft25 Heath, Comment. on ~~<1850>~~ Job 15:30.
- ft26 Preface, ibid. p. 11.
- ft27 R. Azarias, imre Binah, c. 57. fol. 175. z.
- ft28 Vide Lowth. de Sacr. Poes. Hob. Praelct. 30. p. 393, 394. & Not. Michael, in ibid. p. 156-159.
- ft29 In Exod fol, 59, col. 3.
- ft30 **hml** **çl** de Solomone Cocceius so Midrash in loc.
- ft31 See his works, vol. 1. p. 76.
- ft32 In Seder Olam Rabba, c. 15. p. 41 to Shir Hashirim. fol. 3. 3.
- ft33 Midrash, Targum, R. Sol. Jarchi, and K. Aben Ezra, in loc.
- ft34 **whyp** **twqyçnm** uno tantum, vel altero de osculis oris fui, Michaelis. So Gusset. Comment. Hebrews p. 446.
- ft35 Salmuth in Pancirol. Memorab. Rer. par. 1. tit. 46. p. 215.
- ft36 **zydwd** amore tri, Pagnius Mentanus, Junius and Tremellius, Piscator, etc.
- ft37 Vide Godwin's Moses and Aaron, 1. 1: c 9.
- ft38 Sympos. 1. 7. p. 702
- ft39 Tarquin in Song of Solomon 8. 2. and Zohar in Genesis fol. 81, 4.
- ft40 Non to illius anguentorum odor, non vini anhelitus, etc, Cicero. Orat. 28. c. 7.
- ft41 Misn. Menachot, c. g. f. 3.
- ft42a Athenaei Deipnosophist, 1, 15. c.,II, p, 688, 689. Clement, Alex, Pedagog 1. 2 p. 183.
- ft42 Abundant vino, unguentorum fragentia. Valer. Maxim. 1. 9. c. 1. extern. 1.
- ft43 Nam omnium auguentium odos prae tua natura est. Plauti carculio 2c fc. 2. v. 5.

- ft44 *Vide* Buxtorf. Talm. Lex. p. 1268, 1269, etc.
- ft45 *Nomen nectari dulcius beato.* Martial. Epigr. 1. 9. cp. 9.
- ft46 R. Sol. Jarchi in loc. So *Lyra*. *Vide* Targum in loc.
- ft47 **Ειλκυσάν δε** etc. Sic legunt Origen. Theodor & Ambros, in Sanct in loc.
- ft48 **hxwrn** occurramus, so some in Marckius.
- ft49 **Εισαγαετω με**, Symmachus; introducat me, Marckius.
- ft50 So the Cabalistic Doctors interpret the King, when put alone, of Tiphareth, the bridegroom, Lexic. Cab, p 536.
- ft51 Brightman and Cotton, in loc.
- ft52 *Vide* Bishop Patrick, in loc.
- ft53 So Theodoret, and Tres Patres, in loc.
- ft54 *Vide* Targum in Cant. 3, 4. and Tract. Sabbat. in Misnah, c. 1, § 4.
- ft55 **ybaybj** me venire tecit.
- ft56 *Vide* Bishop Patrick in loc.
- ft57 **myrçym ἐνθύτης** Sept. Rectitudines, Ar. Mont.
- ft58 Quicunque rectissime diligunt te, Jun.
- ft59 Nigra per naturam, formosa per gratiam, Aug. de Tempore, Serm. 201, p. 354. tom. 10. Fuses per culpam, decora per gratiam, Ambros. in Psalm 118. octon. col. 881. tom. 2.
- ft60 R. Sol. Jarchi and R. Aben Ezra, in loc.
- ft61 In Exodus fol. 6. 1. and in Leviticus fol 25. 1.
- ft62 **ytbl h ddq** atratus pergo, Jun.
- ft63 **hwag** optabilis, Pagninus, Montanus, Tig. Verf. Mercer. So Aben Ezra.
- ft64 Mercer. in loc.
- ft65 Travels, p. 222. ed. 2.
- ft66 *Vide* K. Sol. Jarchi, and R. Aben Ezra in loc.
- ft67 Nomadas, inestatoresque Chaldaeorum, Scenitae claudunt, et ipsi vagi, sed a tabernaculis cognominati, quae ciliciis metantur, ubi libuit, Plin. 1. 6. c. 28. Arabes nobiles monte Casio, qui Scenitae causam nominis inducunt, quod tentoriis succedunt, nec alias domos habent; ipsa autem

tentoria cilicina sunt; its nuncupant velamenta e caprarum pills texta.  
Solin. Polyhist. c. 46.

<sup>ft68</sup> This Gilbert Foliot was bishop of London, and lived in the 12th century, in the reign of King Henry II. whose Exposition, together with the Compendium of Alcuin, his countryman were published by Patricius Junius, in 1638.

<sup>ft69</sup> similis sim, Scenitis Kedarenis, at similis sum inhabitantibus, aulaea Schelomonis. *Vide* Joseph. Antiq. 1. 8. c. 2.

<sup>ft70</sup> *Vide* Alshech in loc.

<sup>ft71</sup> **tdj rj ç μεμελανομήνη**, Sept. Subnigra, Jnn. and Tremell, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius; paululum denigrata, Pagninus; so Ainsworth and Aben Ezra.

<sup>ft72</sup> Valde fusca, Bochart. prorsus vel valde et tota nigra, Marckius, Michaelis.

<sup>ft73</sup> De Isaac. c. 4.

<sup>ft74</sup> Foliot and Cocceius in loc,

<sup>ft75</sup> Perusta solibus Pernicis uxor, Horat. Epod. Ode 2. 5:41, 42.  
**Αλεοκαυσαν** Theocrit. Idyll. 10. 5:27.

<sup>ft76</sup> So Horace calls his own works Vineta, Epist. 1. 2. epist. 1. 5:220.

<sup>ft77</sup> A. Gell. Noct. Attic. 1. 4. c. 12.

<sup>ft78</sup> **h[r t hky**a quomodo pascas, Tig. Vers. So the Syriac Vers. and Jarchi. *Vid.* Ainsworth in loc.

<sup>ft79</sup> Inde, ubi quarta sitim coeli collegerit hora, Georgic. 1. 3. 5:327.

<sup>ft80</sup> Plato in Phaedro, p. 1230.

<sup>ft81</sup> Hieron. et Bernard. in Sanct. et Diodat, in loc.

<sup>ft82</sup> *Fide* Targam et R. Sol. Jarchi in loc. So Lyra.

<sup>ft83</sup> *Vide* Aben Ezram in loc.

<sup>ft84</sup> **j yf [k óς περιζαλλομήνη**, Sept. duet amicta vel operta, Michaelis; quasi operieus se, Piscator; ut obnubens, Coeceius; sicut obvelans se, Marckius. So Zohar, in Leviticus fol. 7.3.

<sup>ft85</sup> So Mercer in loc.

<sup>ft86</sup> *Vide* Yalkut and R. Sol. Jarchium in loc.



- ft87 Targum in loc. R. David Kimchi in lib. Shorash. rad. **Hf** [ .
- ft88 Sanct. in loc. and Psellus in ibid.
- ft89 **dl y[dt al μα** ἐὰν μὴ γνῶς σεαυτήν Sept. nisi cognoveris te, Ar. Montan.
- ft90 Foliot & Alcuin in loc.
- ft91 Egredere a vestigiis illis gregis; but then it should have been **ybq** [ m and not **ybq** [ b.
- ft92 De Vita Mossis, 1. 1. p. 610.
- ft93 Antiq. 1. 2. c. 11. s. 2.
- ft94 Vide R. Sol. Jarchium, Junium & Ainsworth in loc.
- ft95 Juxta, V. L. Piscator. Michaelis; apud, Mercerus, Cocceius.
- ft96 Targum in loc. and Zohar in Leviticus fol. 7. 3, and in Numbers fol. 69. 4. and 80. 1.
- ft97 Hoedi petulci, Virgil Georgic. 1. 4. 5:10. lasciva capella, Bucolic. eclog. 2. 5:64. Horat. Carmin. 1. 2. ode 15. v, 12. olet Gorgonius hircum, Horat. Satyr, 1. 1, sat. 2. 5:27,
- ft98 **yty** [ r amica mea, Pagninus, Montanus, Tig. Vers. Mercerus, Michaelis
- ft99 **dytymd** sin ilem to judico, Tig. Vers.
- ft100 **ytssl τη ιππω μου**, Sept. equae meae, Pag. Mont Gusset. p. 581. So Ahen Ezra, Syr. & Ar. equabus, Piscator.
- ft101 Theocrit. Idyll. 18. 5:29. Theognis Sentent. 5:257. Plato in Hippias Major, p. 1250. Horat. Carmin. I. 3. odc 11. 5. 9.
- ft102 Frantz. hist. animal, sacr. par. 1. c. 12.
- ft103 Vide Mercer, Brightman, and Ainsworth in loc.
- ft104 Vide R. David Kimchium in lib. Shorath. rad. **dwt** .
- ft105 These *rows*, are interpreted by the Jews of their written and moral law, and of the laws of burnt sacrifices, meat offerings, etc. in Pefikta apud Yalkut in loc.
- ft106 R. Sol. Jarchi in loc. and R. David Kimchi in lib. Shorath. rad. **z dj** .
- ft107 Virgil. AEneid. 1. 5:650. pendebant tereti gemmata monilia collo, Ovid, Metamorph. 1, 10. fab. 3.

- ft108 Homer. Odyss, 18. 5:295.
- ft109 So Isidore in loc.
- ft110 **Ομιώματα χρυσίου**, Set Muraenulas aureas, Vulg. Lat.
- ft111 **yrwt** ordines, Marckius, Michaelis.
- ft113 **wbsmb** in circuitu suo, Montanus, Piscator, Michaelis.
- ft114 Plin. 1. 12. C. 12.
- ft115 Plin. 1. 12. c. 12.
- ft116 Matthiolus in Dioscorid. 1. 1. c. 6.
- ft117 T.B. Sabbat. fol. 88. 2. & Gittin. fol. 36. 2. Targum & Sol. Jarchi in loc. and Zohar in Exodus fol. 7. 2, 3.
- ft118 Fernel. method, med. 1. 5. c. 22.
- ft119 Ibid. & 1, 4. c. 7.
- ft120 *Vide R. David Kimchium in lib. Shorash. rad. **drn**,*
- ft121 Tosephot T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 42. 1.
- ft122 Homer Odyss. 8. 5:69. Athenei Deipnosophist. 1. I. p. 4.
- ft123 Tacit. de Mor. German. c. 22
- ft124 *Vide Cupcri Observ. 1. 1. c. 2. p. 13.*
- ft125 Sanctius in loc.
- ft126 Madidas nardo comas, Martial. 1. 3. ep. 56. tinge caput nardi, folio ib. Assyrioque nardo potemus uncti, Horat. Carmin. 1. 1. ode 11. 5:16, 17. *Vide Tibull. eleg. 1. 2. ek 2. 5:7. & 1. 3. cl. 7. 5:31. & Ovid de Arte Amandi, 1. 3.*
- ft127 Athenae Deipnosophist 1. 15. c. 13. p. 692.
- ft128 Tu mihi stacte, tu cinnamomum, etc. Plauti Curculio, act, 1. so. 2. v 6.
- ft129 **Αδελφιδός** nepos ex fratre vel sorore.
- ft130 Selin. polyhist. c. 46.
- ft131 **rwdx** folliculus, Cocceius; sacculum, Marckius; fasciculus vel sacculus, Michaelis.
- ft132 In lib. Shorash, rad. **rwm**
- ft133 So the cabalistic Doctors interpret it of Tiphereth, the bridegroom, Lexic. Cabal. p. 669.

- ft134 Lib. 12. c. 16.
- ft135 Fernel. method, med. 1. 6. c. 14, 15.
- ft136 *Vide* Yalcut in loc.
- ft137 Nat. hist. 1. 14. c. 1.
- ft138 *Vide* Yalcut in loc.
- ft139 Mimah, Sotah, c. 9, f. 9-
- ft140 *Vide* T. Bab. Temurah, fol. 15, 2. R. Sol. Jarchium & Ez. Chayim in Misnam, *ibid*.
- ft141 Pliny 1. 12. c. 24.
- ft142 Sheviith, c. 7. f. 6.
- ft143 In *ibid*.
- ft144 Travels, p. 113. 114. ed. 2.
- ft145 See Origen. in Cant. Homil. 2. fol. 87. E.F. & Comment. in Matthew p. 463, 464. & Huet. Nor. in *ibid*. p. 79
- ft146 Plutarch. Sympos. 1. 3 p. 647.
- ft147 Plin. 50:12. c. 24.
- ft148 *Ibid*.
- ft149 *Ibid*. 1. 23. c. 4.
- ft150 Plin. 1. 12. c. 24. & 1. 13. c. 2.
- ft151 Vid. Cocceium and Bishop Patrick in loc.
- ft152 Lib. 5. c. 17.
- ft153 Plin. 1. 13. c. 4.
- ft154 *Ibid*. 1. 12. c. 25.
- ft155 Josephus Antiq. 1. 9. c. 1. f. 2.
- ft156 Homil. 2. in Cant. fol. 87. E.
- ft157 In T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 26. l.
- ft158 Plin. 1. 12. c. 25.
- ft159 Justin. Hist. 1. 36. c. 3. So Foliot in loc. *Vide* Jerom. de loc. Hebrews in voce Engaddi.
- ft160 Fernel. method, med. 1. 5. c. 17. & 1. 6. c. 1.
- ft161 In loc.

ft162 T. Bab, Sabbat. fol. 88. 2. Yalkut in loc.

ft163 **μynwy dnyy** [ oculi tui velut columbarum, Pagninus, Munster, so Ben Melech.

ft164 So Juno, Minerva and Chryseus, are described by their eyes in Homer, Iliad. 1. verse 99, 206, 551.

ft165 Vid. Barthii animadv, in Claudian. in nupt. Honor, od. 4. 5:21.

ft166 Frantz. hist. animal sacra, par. 2. c. 15.

ft167 Yalkut ia loc,

ft168 Plin. 1. 10. c. 34. AElia. Hist. animal.1. 3 c. 5. 444

ft169 Frantz. Hist. animal facr. par. 2. c. 15.

ft170 In loc.

ft171 Isidor. Originum,1. 20. c. 1.

ft172 Vid. Alstorph. de lectis veterum, c. 1. p. 1, 8-10. Graminei tori, Val. Flac. 1. 8. 5:255. Viridante toro confederat herbae, Virgil AEneid 5. 5:388. In medio torus est de mollibus ulvis impositus lecto, Ovid. Metamorph. 8. 5:685.

ft173 So Cocceius in loc.

ft174 **wnyt b** domorum nostrarum, V. L, Pagninaus, Montanus, etc. aedium nostrarum, Marckius.

ft175 Foliot. in loc.

ft176 So Isidore, Alcain, and others in loc.

because they are 'planted by rivers of water;' where, being re-

ft177 Lib. 13. c. 5, 13. & l. 16. c. 40.

ft178 Et cedro digna locutus, pers. satyr, 1. 5:42.

ft179 Plin.1. 13. c. 5. Odoratam stabulis accendere cedrum Virg. Georg,1. 3. 5:414.

ft180 Pliny l. 16. c. 21.

ft181 R. Aben Ezra in loc. R. Jonah in R. David Kimeh;, lib. shorash, rad.

**fhr** Vid. David de Pomis Lex. Hebrews rad. **fhr** and so the Tigurine version renders it.

ft182 **rnyfhrw** canales nostri, Tigurine version, so some in Vatablus; impluvium nostrum, Hiller. de Keri & Kethib. p. 84.

- ft183 *Vid.* Elias Levit. Methurgeman, rad, **fhr**.
- ft184 In lib. shorash rad, **fhr**.
- ft185 As quoted by R. Sol. Jarchi in loc.
- ft186 In R. David Kimchi, lib. shorash. rad. **fhr**
- ft187 *Vid.* R. Aben Ezram in loc. R. David Kimchium in lib. shoraah. rad. **trb** & Elias Levit. Methurgeman.
- ft188 Lib. 16. c. 42.
- ft189 *Pliny* 1, 16. c. 10.
- ft190 *Ibid.*
- ft191 *Pliny* 1. 16. c. 21.
- ft192 *Ibid.* c. 40, 42. Hence monuments to perpetuate the memory of things were made of it, Plato de leg. 'L 5. p. 848.
- ft193 *Pliny* 1. 16. c. 33' **Ευωδες κυπαρισσω**, Theocrit. epigram, 4. 5:7.
- ft194 Lib. 12. c. 17.
- ft195 Targum, R. Aben Ezra, and Yalkut in loc. so it is interpreted of malcuth or the bride, by the Cabalistic Doctors, in Lexic. Cab. p. 333. and in Zohar. in Leviticus fol. 46. 2.
- ft196 Tres Patres, Lyra, Ainsworth, Brightman, Vatablus, Cocceius Michaelis.
- ft197 **Το ροδον καλον εσι**, Theocrit. Idyll 24. **Ροδης τε καλον ανθος**, Antilochus apud Athen. Deipnosophiat. 1. 2. c. 12. *Vid.* 1. 15. c 3. P. 670.
- ft198 *Museus de Hero.* 5:59. *Vid* Barth. *Animadv. ad Claudian de nupt Honor.* 5:247.
- ft199 *AElian.* *Vat. Hist.* 1. 12. c. 1.
- ft200 *Theocrit.* *Idyll.* 18.
- ft201 The rose by the Arcadians was called **ενομφαλον**, that is, sweet-smelling, Timach ides apud Athenaei *Deiphosophiat.* 1. 15. c. 8. p. 682.
- ft202 *Rosa locis apricis gaudet, estque odoratior*, Junius in loc.
- ft203 *Curtins, Hift.* 1. 3. c. 3. *Hiller.* *Onomaftic.* p. 632.
- ft204 *Lilia non domina fuit magis alba mea*, *Propertius*, I. 2. so Venus is compared to a lily by *Anacreon*.

- ft205 So the lily is interpreted of Malcuth, the bride, the church, by the Cabalists, Lexic. Cab. p. 708, 709.
- ft206 Lib. 21:c. 5.
- ft207 Lib. 21:c. 5. Toto candidior puella cycno, argento, nive, lilio, ligustre, Martial1. 1:Lilia tu vincis, 1. 8. c. 28.
- ft208 Lib. 21. c. 5.
- ft209 Ibid. Lilia fumma merit, Ovid, Fasti, 1. 2. prope finem.
- ft210 Ut supra.
- ft211 Roscis convallibus AETnae, Claudian. de rapt. proserp. 1. 3. 5:85.
- ft212 Durham in loc.
- ft213 Misn. Kilaim, c. 5. f. 8. & Maimon. in lb.
- ft214 Pindar. Isthm. ode 4,
- ft215 Mea rosa, Plauti 'Asinaria, act. 3. ac. 3. 5:74. Bachides, sc. 1. 5:50. Tu rosa, Curculio, act. 1. sc. 2. 5:6.
- ft216 Pausan. Elias 2. sive 1. 6. p. 391.
- ft217 Sappho spud Plutarch. sympos. 1. 3. P. 641. Theocrat. epigr. 1. 5:1, 2.
- ft218 Fernel method, med. 1. 5. c. 3. and 1. 6. c. 2.
- ft219 T. Hieros. Shevlith, fol. 38. 4.
- ft220 Apud De Dieu in Act. 9:35.
- ft221 Nicander apud Athen. Deipnosoph.1. 13. c. 9. p. 683.
- ft222 Pliny nat. hist.1. 21. c. 4.
- ft223 Misa. Maaserot, c. 2. s. 5.
- ft224 Comment. Ebr. p. 239.
- ft225 Diar, Ital. c, 7. p. 108
- ft226 Lib. 21. c. 4
- ft227 In Misna Sotah, c. 8. 3. and R. Sol. Jarchi, Mai-mon. & Bartenora in idem.
- ft228 T. Hiero. Soth, fol. 23. 1.
- ft229 Vide R. Aben Ezram in loc.
- ft230 Croceum florem — foliis medium cingentibus albis Ovid. Metamorph. 1. 3. fab. 6.

- ft231 Pro purpurco narrisso, Virg. Bucol. col. 5. 5:28. Aut suave rubens narcissus, *ibid.* Cyris.
- ft232 Nat. hist. l. 21. c. 5.
- ft233 *Ibid.* c. 19.
- ft234 *Ibid.* c. 5.
- ft235 Sophocles apud Plutarch. sympos.1. 3. P. 641.
- ft236 **Καλα ναρκισσος**, Theocrat. Idyll. 10:1. **Ναρκισσον ευπνοον**, Idyll. 19.
- ft237 vide R. Aben Ezram and Brightman in loc.
- ft238 In Genesis fol. 82. 2, 3. and in Exodus fol. 74. 3. but in Leviticus fol. 16. 2. it is explained of the pome citron-tree.
- ft239 Vide Mercr. in 5, 1.
- ft240 Lib 27 c. 12.
- ft241 Durham in loc,
- ft242 In Zohar in Genesis fol. 67, 4.
- ft243 The lily is called ambrosia; and is said to be the delight.of Venus, because of its pleasing color, Nicander apud Athenaeum, 1. 15, c. 8. p. 683. and of Juno, Clement Alex. paedagog. 1, 2. p. 181.
- ft244 Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi, Virgil. Bucolic. eclog, 1. v. 26. Lenta salix, etc. eclog. 5. 5:16t
- ft245 Solin. Polyhist. c 59.
- ft246 *Ibid.*
- ft247 lib. 12. c. 3.
- ft248 Solin & Pliny in locis citatis.
- ft249 Solin. & Pliny 1: *ibid.* & Fernel. method, med. 1. 5. c. 21
- ft250 Pliny 1. 11. c. 53, &1. 12. c. 3. Athen. Deipnosophist. 1. 3. c. 7. P. 83.
- ft251 T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 88. 1.
- ft252 In Leviticus fol. 3p. 4.
- ft253 Lexic. Cabal. p. 138.
- ft254 In Exodus fol. 59. 5:& in Numbers fol. 53 3.
- ft255 P. 147. apud agensad. Tela Ignea.

- ft256 The apple was sacred to love, Scholiast. in Aristoph. Nubes, p. 180. the statue of Venus had an apple in one hand, and a poppy in the other, Pausan, Corinth. sive 1. 2. p. 103.
- ft257 Ambrose in Psalm 118 octou. 5. col. 928.
- ft258 Sanct. in loc. and so R. Simeon Ben Jochai seems to understand it in Exodus vol. 43. 1.
- ft259 Lib. 17. c. 12. Juniperi gravis umbra, nocent et frugibus umbrae. Virgil. Bucol. eclog 10; in fine.
- ft260 Arboribus certis gravis umbra tributa est, Lucret. 1. 6. 5:783.
- ft261 — Ubi mollis amaracus illum floribus et dulci aspirans complectitur umbre, Virg. Aeneid. 1. 1. prope finem. Opportuna sua blanditur populas umbra, Ovid. Metam. 1. 10.
- ft262 **ytbçyw ytdmj** concupivi et fedi, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Marckius.
- ft263 **zyyh tyb** domum vini, Pagninus, Montanus, etc.
- ft264 Cellam vinariam, V. L. Tigurine version; **εις τον οινωνα** Symmachus.
- ft265 Locum convivii, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft266 **l a** in, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius. Piscator, Marckius, Michaelis.
- ft267 Ad prandium me adduxit, Plautus.
- ft268 Vexillum proponendum, quod erat insigne quum ad arma concurreretur, Caesar. de Bello Gallic. 1. 2. c. 20.
- ft269 Sueton. Vita Vespasian. c. 6.
- ft270 **Τερωμήμη ἀγάπης**, Sept. amore languero, V.L. so Michaelis; aegrotus is used in this sense in Terent. Heautont. L. I. The Tigurine version renders the words thus, Quia infirma sum dilectione, because I am weak in love; and under stands it in the same sense as when persons are said to be weak in faith, and therefore need support.
- ft271 Symposium,; 118;
- ft272 **Στερίσατέ με ἐν μύροις**, Sept.
- ft273 R. SoL Jarchi & R. Abn Ezra in loc. R. David Kimchi in lib. shorash. rad. **צָצָא**.
- ft274 Vino sulcire venas cadentes, Seneca, ep. 95.
- ft275 Fernel. method. medend. 1. 5. c. 6, 21.



- ft276 Polyhist. c. 61.
- ft277 **ynrdpr** sternite ante me, so some in Vatablus; substernite mihi, Tigurine version, Piscator.
- ft278 Melo Galatea petit. Virgil. Bucol. eclog. 3. verse 64. Vid. Theocrit. Idyll 3. 5:10, 40, 41. & Idyll. 6. 5:6. 7. & Suidam in voce **Μηλον**.
- ft279 So Isidore in loc.
- ft280 Tigurine version, some in Mercer. Ainsworth, Marckius.
- ft281 V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft282 So the Cabalistic doctors interpret the word of malcuth, or the bride Lexic. Cabal. p. 43, 44.
- ft283 So lovers are frequently called amor & amores, Love and loves; vid. Theocrit. Idyll. 2. & Ovid. Briseis Achilli, 5:12. Plaurt Curculio, act. 2. sc. 3. 5:78. Miles, act. 4. sc. 8. 5:67. Mostel. Arg. 5:5 Perea: Arg 5:4 Poenulus, act. 5, sc. 3. 5:42.
- ft284 Cerva silvicultrix, Catullus, 5:64, 72.
- ft285 Virginibus Tyriis mos est gestare pharetram, Virgil. AEneid, 1. 1.
- ft286 — .Pavldos formidlnne cervos terret, Ovid. Fasti, 1. 3. 5:173. Formidantes cervos, Ovid. Metamorph, 1. 15. fab. 43. Timidi damae, Virgil. Bucol. eclog. 8. 5:28. & Georgic. 1. 3. prope finem. Pavidae damae, Horat. Carmin. 1. 1. ode?- v. 11, hence **κραδιη ελκφοιο**, cor cervi, Homer, Iliad, 1. 1. v 225
- ft287 Persikta in Yalkcut in loc.
- ft288 Vid. Dionys. Prieg. p. 843, 844.
- ft289 **Νεβροϋ αλοιτο**, etc. Theocrit, Idyll. 8, prope finem.
- ft290 The hart is said to leap sixty feet at a leap, Bochart-Hicrozoic. par. 1. 1. 3. 5:17. col 882.
- ft291 Cervi veloces, Virgil AEneid. 1. 5. 5:253. Cerva aeripes, swift as the air, Ibid. 1. 6. prope finem.
- ft292 Pliny 1. 8. c. 32. AElian. de animal. 1. 2. c. 9. Solin. Polyhist. c. 21. So Theodoret. in loc.
- ft293 Hence the hart has the name of **ελαφοϋ** according to Plutarch. de Solert. Animal p. 976.
- ft294 Frantz. Hist. animal. sacr. par. 1. c. 15.

- ft295 Frantz. *ibid.*
- ft296 *Ibid.*
- ft297 Pliny 1. 3. c. 32. Solin. c. 31. Vid. Pausan. Arcad. sive 1. 8. p. 472..  
Hence cervina senectus, Juvenal, satyr. 14. 5:251.
- ft298 So Isidore in loc.
- ft299 So R. Alshech in loc.
- ft300 Nat. Hist. 1. 28. c. 11.
- ft301 **Απο του οζυ δορκειν**, Origen in loc. so Theodoret. in loc.
- ft302 R. Sol. Jarchi, and R. Aben Ezra in loc. and so Lyra.
- ft303 Efflorescens, Junius; so Ainsworth, Piscator, and Michaelis. **ʿyyam** proprie de plantis dicitur, quumq̄d proferunt, quod florem praecedat, Mercer, in loc.
- ft304 **hg[** respondit, Montanus, Vatablus. Marckius, Michaelis,
- ft305 Targum, R. Sol. Jarchi. and R. Aben Ezra in loc.
- ft306 **dl ykl w dl ymwq** surge tibi & abi tibi, Montanus, Cocceius, Ainsworth, Vatablus, Marckius.
- ft307 Hyems imbrifera,. Sil. Ital.1. 31. 5:197- Pinivosa hyems, Pliny Nat. Hist. 1. 18. c. 25.
- ft308 Emissamque hyemem sensit Neptunus, Virgil AEneid.1. 1. 5:129. Miseranda rogabo unam hyemem, Statii Achill. 1. 1. 5:50. 51. Vid. Val. Flacc.1. 1.v. 197.
- ft309 **Νιφας πολεμοιοχειμεριον ζοφον**, Pindar. Isthm. ode 4.
- ft310 Ante adventum Christi' hyems erat, venit Christus, fecit aestatem, Ambros. Eaarrat. in Psalm 118 octon. 7. p. 921. Vid. Isidor. in loc.
- ft311 Targum, R. Sol. Jarchi, and R. Aben Ezra in loc. and so Lyre.
- ft312 Brightman and Cotton in loc.
- ft313 **rts** quod legitur quasi **wyts** scriberetur, alibi in scriptura non invenitur, est autem vox Chaldaica **arts** pro Hebraea **rdj** hyems, Mercer in loc. Vid. Vitringam in Jes. 4, 6.
- ft314 Vere gaudet Venus, Ovid.
- ft315 Vere florifero, Senecae Oedipus, 5:649. Vet praebet flores, Ovid. de Remed. Amor. 1. 1. 5:188. Omnia tum florent, Ovid. Metamorph. 1.15.

fab. 3. Vernus fequitur color, omnis in herbas turget humus, Claudian. de Rapt. Proferp. 1. 2. 5:90. So flowers are called **τεκνα εαρος**, the children of the spring, in Athenaei Deipnosophist. 1. 13. c. 9. p. 608. Whatever was flowery, used to be called spring, because of the nature of it, Orpheus apud Clement. Alex. Stromat. 1. 5. p. 571.

<sup>ft316</sup> Cum rosam viderit, tunc incipere, ver arbitrabatur, Cicero. in Verrem, erat. 7. Rosa verna, Propert. 1. 3. eleg. 5. 5:22. So it is represented by Anacreon as a spring-flower; and by Pancrates, apud Athen. Deipnos. 1. 15. c. 6. p. 677. So Seneca calls the lily, florem vernum, a spring-flower, epist. 122. Spring-flowers are various; some grow in fields, meadows, vales, hills, and banks of rivers; some in gardens, as the violet, crocus, hyacinth, narcissus, rose and lily, vide Athen. Deipnosophist. 1. 15. c. 8. p. 681, 682. of which the violet, rose and lily, were preferred for their beauty and smell, Theocrit, Idyll. 24. 5:29-31.

<sup>ft317</sup> Senecaea Medea, 5:713.

<sup>ft318</sup> Plerique in Sanct. in loc. Vide R. .Aben Ezra in loc.

<sup>ft319</sup> **Καιρός τῆς τομῆς ἐφθακε**, Sept. Tempus putationis advenit, V. L. Pagninus, so the Syriac, Arabic and Ethiopic versions.

<sup>ft320</sup> *Pliny* 1. 17. c. 22. Hence says the poet; **ἔαρος νεόν ἰσαμένοιο, τὴν φθάμενος, δῖνας περιταμνόμεν, ὧς ἄμεινον**, Hesiod. Opera & Dies, 1. 2.

<sup>ft321</sup> Greg. Nysen. & Pselius in Sanct. in loc.

<sup>ft322</sup> Sanct. in loc.

<sup>ft323</sup> R. Sol. Jarchi, R. Aben Ezra, & R. Sol. Ben Melech in loc. Zohar. in Genesis fol. 29. 2. and 65. 2. and 121. 3 .though the other sense of cutting or pruning seems to be intended, in Zohar in Genesis fol. 3- 4. and in Leviticus fol. 2. 1.

<sup>ft324</sup> Thus one part of rural pleasure is described by the poet **ἄειδον κόρυδοι κὶ ἀκανθιδες ἔξενε τρυγῶν** Theocrit. Idyll. 7.

<sup>ft325</sup> *Pliny* 1. 10. c. 24. & 18. 28.

<sup>ft326</sup> Myndius apud Athen. Deipnosophist. 1. 9. c. 11. p. 394. So *Pliny*, Hyeme mutis, vere vocalibus, 1. 10. c. 35. The turtle appears in summer, in winter it disappears, Aristot. Hist. Animal. 1. 8. c. 3.

<sup>ft327</sup> Pselius & Tres Patres in loc.

- ft328 Pesikta in Yalkut in toc.
- ft329 So Isidore in loc.
- ft330 In Zohar in Genesis fol. 121. 3.
- ft331 Apud Athcn. ut supra, 1. 3. c. 4. P. 77.
- ft332 **Θριους εαρινοις** de Defectu Oracul. p. 410.
- ft333 Solin. Polyhistor. c. 45.
- ft334 Pliny Nat. Hist.1. 16. c. 26.
- ft335 Lib. 13, c. 7. Vid. Solin. ib.
- ft336 Pliny Ibid.
- ft337 Vid. Pliny 1. 17. c. 23.
- ft338 Hipponax apud Athcn. Deipnosophist. 1. 3. c, 4. p. 78.
- ft339 Vites claviculis adminicula tanquam manibus apprehendunt, atque ita se erigunt ut anirnantes, Cicero de Natura Deorum, 1. 2. c. 47.
- ft339a *Pliny*1. 14. c. 1,
- ft340 In ~~2386~~ Isaiah 18:5.
- ft341 Tract. Orlah, ch. 1. § 7.
- ft342 R. Aben Ezra, R. Sol. Jarchi, and R. Sol. Ben Melech in loc. R. David Kimchi in lib. shorash, rad. **rdms** David de Pomis in Lexic. p. 111 col. 3. and Ez. Chayim in Tract. Orlah, 1. 7. Misnah, Gittin, c. 3. § 8. T. Hieros. Nazir, fol. 55. 1. T. Bab Kiddushin fol. 51. 2.
- ft343 Lib. 16. c. 25 and 17. 22. Sibene floruerit vinca, etc. Ovid. Fasti. 1. 5. so Horat. Epod. ode 16. 5:44.
- ft344 Danaeusin ~~2347~~ Hosea 14:7. Levin. Lemnii Herb. Bibl. Explic. c 2.
- ft345 **rdms οινανθη**, Symmachus; in slore constitutae: vites, Mercerus, Michaelis; vitis pars florens, Munster; vineae florentes, Tigurine version: nihil gratius floreneis odoevitis, Ambros. Hexaameron, 1. 3. c. 12.
- ft346 In Zohar in Exodus fol. 50. 1,
- ft347 Odit verus amor, nec patitur moras, Senecae Hercul. Fur. 5:587.
- ft348 Mea columba, Plauti Casina, act. 1. sc. 1. 5:50. Doves being loving creatures, the chariots of Venus were drawn by them, Chartar. de

Imag. Deorum, p.218. vid. Apulei Metamorph. 1. 6. and were sacred to Venus, Plutarch. de Isid. & Osir. p. 379. Aelian. de Animal 1. 4. c. 2.

ft349 Frantz. Hist. Sacr. Animal. par. 2., c. 15. num. 3-

ft350 Pliny 1. 10. c. 34. Aelian, de Animal, 1. 3. c. 45.

ft351 Grapaldus in Sanct, in loc.'

ft352 Arist. de Goner. Animal.1. 3. c.x.

ft353 Var. Hist. 1. 1. c. 15.

ft354 Accipiter trepidas agitat columbas, ovid. Metamorph. 1. 5.

ft355 Frantz. Hist. Sacr. animal, par. 2. c. I ,.

ft356 Qualis spelunca subito commota columba, cui domus & dulces latebroso in pumice nidi. Virgil. AEncid. 5, 5:213.

ft357 Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 171 a.

ft358 Iliad. 21. 5:493, 494.

ft359 Targum, Yalkut, R. Sol. Jarchi, and R. Aben Ezra in loc.

ft360 So Foliot, Alcuin, and not. Tigur. in loc.

ft361 In tegimento petrae, 1:e. tuta praesidio passionis meae fidei munimento, Ambros. de Isaac, c. 4. p. 281. in vulneribus quae pro salute sponsae sponsus ac-cepit, Isidor, in loc.

ft362 in Zohar. in Genesis fol. 59. 1.

ft363 Euterpe, save1. 2. c. 35.

ft364 Ωκαλλιπροσωπε χαριτοφωνε, vid. Athen. Deipnosoph.1. 13. c. 2. p. 564.

ft365 Frantz. Hist. Sacr. Animal. par. 1. c. 17.

ft366 Ibid.

ft367 Ibid, Aristol. Hist Animal. 1. 9. c. 1. Plutarch de Solert. Anin al. p. 981

ft368 Vid Isidor. Origin.1. 12. c. 2.

ft369 Aelian. de Animal. 1. 4. c. 39. and 1. 6. c. 24, 64, and 1. 13. c. 11. Olans Magnus, Hist. Septent.1. 18. c. 31. and Frantz. Hist. Sacr. Animal. par. 1. c. 17.

ft370 Olaus Magnus in loc. supracit.

ft371 Vid. Theodoret et in loc.

- ft372 Vid. Theocrit. Idyll. 1. 5:48; 49. and Idyll. 3. 5:112, 113. So soldiers are compared to foxes, because they eat the grapes in the countries they come into, Aristoph. Equites, act, 3. sc. 1. p. 350.
- ft373 Tuccius apud Soto Major in loc.
- ft374 Fortunat. Schac. Eleochrysm. Sacr.1. 1. c. 28. p. 137.
- ft375 Theophrast. apud Athen. Deipnosophist.1. 15. c. 7. P. 679.
- ft376 So R. Sol. Jorchi in loc.
- ft377 Vid. Sanct. in loc.
- ft378 **bs** circui, Montanus, Sanctius; circumito, some in Michaelis.
- ft379 **rtb yrh I [** in montibus divisionis, Vatablus, Piscator; scissionis, Cocceius; dissectionis, Marckius; sectionis vel separationis, Michaelis.
- ft380 **hwpyç d[ διαπνευση**, Sept. donec, vel dum spiret, Merceras, Coccarius; aspiret, Marckius; spiraverit. Michaelis.
- ft381 Pliny Nat. Hist. 1. 7. c. 47. Senecae Nat. Quaest.1. 5. c. 8.
- ft382 *Pliny* 1. 2. c. 47. Aristot. Problems. 25, c. 4. Adspirant aerae in noctem, Virg. Aeneid, 7. 5:8.
- ft383 Tanchuma in Yalcut in loc.
- ft384 Greg. Nyssen. in Cant. Homil. 6.
- ft385 **twl yl b, εν νυξιν**, Sept. per noctes, V.L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; in noctibus, Pagninus, Montanus Tigurine version, Marckius, Michaelis.
- ft386 Audacem faciebat amor, Ovid. Metamorph.1. 4- fab. 4.
- ft387 Vid. Sanct. in loc. and Ambros. in ibid.
- ft388 Alcuin in loc.
- ft389 **Πολις ευρυαγυια**, Homer. Iliad. z. 5:29, 66, 141, 329. and 14. 5:88. Odys. 2. 5:230.
- ft390 Ibid. Odys 7. 5:80.
- ft391 Foliot & Sanct. in loc.
- ft392 Diodat. in loc.
- ft393 Mercer. in verse 4. R.
- ft394 Targum. Sol. Jarchi, and R. Aben Ezra in loc. So Lyra.
- ft395 Bishop Patrick in loc.

- ft396 Alcuin and Diodat, in loc.
- ft397 Targum and R. Sol Jarchi in loc, and Zohar. in Genesis fol. 100. 4. and 101 1.
- ft398 Cotton in loc.
- ft399 Isidore and Alcain in loc.
- ft400 Merces in loc.
- ft401 Diodat in loc.
- ft402 Jus. in loc.
- ft403 **twrmyt** elationes, columnae, ad formam palmae assurgentes, Buxtoff. ut palmae, Mercerus, Cocceius; inatar palmarum, Tigurine version, Michaelis. Vid. R. Aben Ezram & Sol. Jarchium in loc.& R. David Kimchium in lib. shorash rad. **dmh**.
- ft404 In Pirke Abot, c. 5. f. 5.
- ft405 So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt.
- ft406 **l kwr** negotiator, mercator, aromatarium, Buxtorf. **Μυρεψδν** Sept. pigmentarii, V. L. Montanus; pharmacoplae, Tigur. version; insitoris, sea seplasiarii, Mercerus. Cocceius: aromatarii, Junius & Tremellius, Marckius.'
- ft407 Foliot, Sanctius, & Soto Major in loc.
- ft408 Junius, Durham, etc,
- ft409 Targum, R. Aben Ezra. R. David Kimchi, R. Sol. Jarchi, Miclol Yolphi, & R. Abendana in not, in Miclol Yolphi in loc.
- ft410 Cotton and Brightman in loc.
- ft411 Greg. Nynen, in Cant. Homil. 6. and Ainsworth in loc.
- ft412 Ambros. de Isaac, c. 5.
- ft413 Apponius in Sanct. in loc.
- ft414 Beda in Sanc. in loc. and Foliot. in loc.
- ft415 Theodoret in loc.
- ft416 So the Cahalistic doctors interpret it of malcuth, the congregation of Israel, the bride, the church, Lexic. Cab. p. 527.
- ft417 So R. Alshech in loc.
- ft418 Isidore in loc.

- ft419 **brj yzj a κατέχότες ῥομφάϊαν**, Sept. tenentes gladium, Cocceius; stringentes gladium, Junius & Tremellius; prehensi gladio Mercerus; apprehend gladio, Montanus; capti sunt gladio, Tigurine version.
- ft420 Gemara, Bab. Sanhed. cap. 1. fol. 7. 2. Yebamot, fol, 109. 2. & Yalkut. in loc.
- ft421 In lib. shoran, rad. **hrp**
- ft422 Massech. Sotah, c. 9. s. 14.
- ft423 Cocceius and Heunischius in loc. Vid. Cohen De Lara. Ir. David, p.19.
- ft424 Vid Buxtorf. Epist. Hebrews 1. 2. ep. 7. P. 235, 237.
- ft425 Vid. Suidam in voce **Ζευγος**.
- ft426 Agreement of Customs between the East-Indians and Jews, art. 17. P. 68.
- ft427 The Cabalistic doctors interpret it of malcuth, or the bride, the congregation of Isreal, Lexic, Cabal. p. 144.
- ft428 **Μεγάλης βουλής ἄγτελος**. Sept. in <sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 9:6.
- ft429 Vid. Yalkut in loc.
- ft430 **āwxr** succensum, Montanus, Marckius; accensum, sive exustum, some in Vatablus, so Aben Ezra **j pxr** is used to signify a live coal, in <sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 6:6. vial. Mercer. in loc. so inflammatus amore conjugis, is used by Virgil, AEneid.1. 3. 5:330,
- ft431 Cujus media pars strata fuit amore foeminarum Jerusalem, Tigurine version; amorce filiarum, Vatablus, Mercerus.
- ft432 Purpura. sanguis Christi, ut autem operimentum, sive coelum lecti tegit eo qui in lecto sunt, ita & sanguis Christi nos tegit, Not. Tig. in loc.
- ft433 T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 26. 2. Targum in loc. Zohar in Genesis fol. 15. 3. and in Exod fol. 24. 3.
- ft434 So Lyra, who frequently follows Jarchi.
- ft435 Dicitur vero a matre coronatus, quia ipsa precibus obtinuit, ut filius regnaret, quod moraliter coronare est, sanct. in loc.
- ft436 Vid. Sanct. and Bishop Patrick in loc.
- ft437 Vid. Paschal. de Coronis, 1. 2. c. I6, 17. p. 126. Barthii & Animadv. ad. Claudian. de Rapt. Proserpin. 1. 2. 5:140. Magnisque corenis conjugium sit. Claudian. laus Serenae, 5:189, 190. Such a crown is



called **σεφος γαμηλιον**, Bion. Idyll. prope finem. Vid. Plauti Casin. act. 4, 2. sc. 2. 5:17. Coronant & nuptiae sponso, ideo non nubimus Ethenicis, etc. Tertull. de Corona Militis, c. 13

ft438 Misnah Sotah, c. 9. s. 14. & Wagenseil. in ibid.

ft439 Isidore in loc. Beda, S. Thom. and Bernard in Sanct. in loc. and not. Tigrur. in loc.

ft440 Theodoret & Tres Patres apud Ibid.

ft441 Durham on verse 9.

ft442 Vid. Yalkut in loc.

ft443 **dtmxi** intra ligamina tua, some in Vatablus; vittam tuam, Cocceius; con-strictam comam tuam. Michaelis, so Jarchi; vid. Horat. Carmin. 1. 2. ode 11. 5:23, 24. Crines connexi. Propert. 1. 2. eleg. 5. 5:23.

ft444 Aelian. de Animal. 1. 16. c. 30.

ft445 Metamorph. 1. 2.

ft446 Virgil Aeneid. 4. prope finem; aurea caesaries, Aeneid. 8. 5:659. Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian, de Rapt. Proserp. 1. 3. c 86.

ft447 Quae crine vincit Boetici gregis vellus, Martial, 1. 5. epigr. 38.

ft448 Hoedina tibi pelle, Ibid. 1. 12. ep. 38.

ft449 Theocrit. Idyll 3. 5:1, 2.

ft450 Animadv. in loc.

ft451 Hierozoic. par. 1. 1. 2. c. 5. col. 628.

ft451a So Tres Patres apud Theodoret in loc.

ft452 In Salazer apud Marckium in loc.

ft453 Candidati dentes, venustis oculis, color suavis, Citer. Tuscul. Quaest. 1. 5. c. 16.

ft454 Theocrit. Idyll. 6. 5:37-38.

ft455 So Psellus and Isidore in loc.

ft456 Vid. Yalkut in loc.

ft457 **Ορθοτομούντα**, <sup><σπς></sup> 2 Timothy 2:15

ft458 Aristot. Hist. Animal. 1. 8. c. 28. Pliny 1. 3. c. 50.

ft459 Aelian de Animal. 1. 16. c. 30.

- ft460 **twbwxq** caesae, vel dedolatae, Bochart. Hierozoic par. 1. 1. 2. c. 43. col. 483. aequarum, Junius & Tremellius; statura aequalium Coccina; vid. Aben Ezram in loc. & Kimchium in lib. shorah. rad. **kxq**
- ft461 Isidore, Foliot, Alcuin, and Cotton in loc.
- ft462 Aristot. de Animal 1. 6. c. 19.
- ft463 Yoma, C. 6. s, 8. in Mishap.
- ft464 Talmud Yoma, fol. 39. 2.
- ft465 AElian. Var. Hist. 1. 12. c. 1.
- ft466 **Χειλεα πυρρα**, Theocrit. Idyll. 15. Purpureis labellis, Ovid. Amor. 1. 3. c. leg. 13. Labiasque modicas purpurantes, Apul, Metamorph. 1. 10. Labella rosea, Catullus.
- ft467 **dtqr** tenuis faciei pars, Marckius; tenuior, Michaelis; vid. R. David Kimchium. in lib. shorash; rad. **qqr**
- ft468 **Παρά τὸ κροτεῖν τὴν ἀφήν**,
- ft469 **zwm rh j l nk άς λέπυρον ῥοάς**, Sept. sicut fragmen mali punici, Vulg. Lat. & Montanus.
- ft470 T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 88. 2. & Gloss. in ibid.
- ft471 So the Jewish writers interpret the words of the Israelites, as full of good works, as the pomegranate is of kernels, T. Bab. Eruvin, fol. 19. 1. and T. Bab. Chagigah, fol. 26. 1. Targum and R. Sol. Jarchi in loc.
- ft472 Fernel. Method. Medend. 1. 5. c. 3.
- ft473 Pliny Nat. Hist. 1. 23. c. 6.
- ft474 Pliny Nat. Hist. 1. 23. c. 6.
- ft475 Vid. Michaelis Not. in Lowth. Praelection. 31. p. 165.
- ft476 **Μῆλόν σου**, Sept. gena tua, Pagninus; genae tuae, Vulg. Lat. & Cocceius.
- ft477 Purpureas genas, Ovid Amor. 1. 1. eleg. 4. Statii Thebaid, L 1. 5:538. Ausonii Parental 23. 5:16. Purpurissatas genas, Apuleii Apolog. p. 239.
- ft478 **Ροδενη παρεινη** etc. Museus de Hero. etc. 5:194, 195.
- ft479 Boeotica, sive 1. 9, P. 578.
- ft480 Vid. Zohar. in Genesis fol. 114. 3. and Yalkut in loc.

<sup>ft481</sup> Turris David. Munita & excelsa valde, quae in duarum voraginum angulo, in praeruptae rupis colie ex quadris lapidibus, ferro & plumbo indissolubiliter cormpagnatis, a Davide rege edificata erat. Cujus singularis fortitudo & egregia pulchritudo ad commendationem sponae Christi, quae est ecclesia, a Solomone producitur, cum ait, Sicut turris David, collum tuum, etc. Adrichom. Theatrubs Terrae Sanctae, p. 168. b.

<sup>ft482</sup> Travels, p. 139.

<sup>ft483</sup> The Hebrew word **twyp| t** is only used in this place, and is left untranslated by the Septuagint. Jewish writers differ about the sense and derivation of it. Some, as R. Aben Ezra observes, take it to be a compound word, of **hl t** to hang, and **twyp** mouths or edges, that is, of swords; and so suppose this tower to be built to hang up swords in; which agrees well enough with our translation, and with Junius and Tremellius's version. who render the word, ad armaria. Others think, that it is compounded of **l t** an heap, and **twyp** mouths, edges, or corners; and so intends an heap of stones, built up very high and strong, cut in various forms and corners; so Kimchi, in lib. Shorash. rad. **l l t** which are no other than the pinnacles or battlements of towers: accordingly Arias Montanus renders the words, celsa aeutnina; and Cocceius translates it, in molem pinnarum. Others derive it from **āl a** to teach; and suppose it to intend some very beautiful structure, which might serve as a pattern, and be very instructive to artificers; so Jarchi in loc. though R. Jonah in Kimchi, lib. Shorash. rad. **āl a** thinks, that it was designed to shew travelers their way: accordingly Pagnine reads it, ad docendum transeuntes: and the Tigurine version, ad usum durigendi homines; in which sense it may easily be applied to the ministers of the gospel, whose business is to shew men the way of salvation; and to the word of God, which is a light to our feet, and a lanthorn to our paths.

<sup>ft484</sup> Papillae sororiabant, Plauti Frivolarla, Fragn.1. 7. Mammis sororiantes, Pliny 1. 31. c. 6.

<sup>ft485</sup> De Liberis Educand. vol. 2. p. 5.

<sup>ft486</sup> Aristol. de Animal.1. 6. c. 29.

<sup>ft487</sup> R. Sol. Jarchi, Alahech, and Yalkut in loc.

- ft488 En aspicias ilium, candida qui medius cubat inter lilia, cervum?  
Calphurnius apud Bochart. Hiorozoic par. 1.1. 3. c. 24. col. 924.
- ft489 R. Aben Ezra in loc.
- ft490 R. Solom. Jarchi in loc. so in Yallentin loc.
- ft491 Bernard & Carpath. in Sanct. in loc.
- ft492 Vid. Ainsworth & Sanct. in loc.
- ft493 Shilte Hagibborim, c. 88. fol. 95. 4.
- ft494 Florus de Gest Roman. 1. 3. c. 5.
- ft495 Vid. Gabriel Sionit. de Orient. Urb. c. 6. p. 14.
- ft496 Targum, R. Aben Ezra, & R. Sol. Jarchi in loc. & Zohar in Genesis fol. 75-1, Alihech interprets it of mount Sinai, and the day-break of the captivity of Egypt.
- ft497 So the Cabalistic doctors by these understand malcuth, the congregation of Israel, or the church: Lexic. Cabal. p. 229, 277.
- ft498 R. Aben Ezra in loc.
- ft499 Vid. Yalcut in loc.
- ft500 Brightman and Cotton in loc.
- ft501 **Κατηλέυοντες**, cauponantes sermonem Dei; metaphora sumpta est ab hospitibus & cauponantibus, quibus in more est vinum aqua corrumpere, Aretius in <sup><4027></sup>2 Corinthians 2:17.
- ft502 Vide, inquit, ut invicem se diligant, Tertull. apolog, c. 39. Sic mutuo, quod doletis, amore diliginius, quoniam odisse non novimus. Sic nos, quod invidetis, fratres vocamus, ut unius Dei parentis homines, ut consortes sidei, ut apei cohaeredes, Minut. Felix Octav. p. (mihi) 35.
- ft503 **yarbt** venies, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft504 See Lightfoot's Works, vol. 1. p 76. and Bedford's Scripture Chronology, p. 607.
- ft505 Targum and R. Aben Ezra in loc.
- ft506 R. Abendanae not. in Midol Yophi, R. Sol. Jarchi in <sup><3100></sup>Zechariah 11:1.
- ft507 Talmud Yoma, fol. 39-2.
- ft508 Pliny 1. 5. c. 22. Pompon Mela, 1. 1. e. 12, & Solin. c. 51.
- ft509 So Talmud. Hieros. Challah, fol. 60. 1 & Sheviith, fol. 37. 4.

- ft510 In ~~<002>~~ Numbers 20:22, 25, 27 and 34:7, 8; ~~<1620>~~ Deuteronomy 32:50.
- ft511 Antiq.1. 1. c 6. s. 1.
- ft512 De Animil.1. 5. c. 56.
- ft513 Vid. Aristot. Hist. Animal. 1. 6, c. 3. Pliny1. 8. c. 16. & Brocard in Cocceii Lexic. p. 123.
- ft514 Geograph. 1. 14. p. 465. & 1. 16. p. 517.
- ft515 Ad. Attic. 1. 5. ep. 20.
- ft516 In Vita Ciceron. p. 879.
- ft517 Mons leopardorum rotundus & altus est, qui contra aquilonem a Tripoli duabus, versus austrum a civitate Arcas tribus, a Libano autem uno miliario distat, Adrichomii Theatrum Terrae sanctae, p. 186 I.
- ft518 De Animal 1. 5. c. 40.
- ft519 Solin. c. 27. Frantzii Hist. Animal. par. 1. c. 8.
- ft520 Sive tibi conjux sive futura soror, Tibullas.
- ft521 Durham in loc.
- ft522 **ynj bkl** vendicasti tibi cor meum, Tigurine version; occupasti, Lutherus, Marckius.
- ft523 Gloss. in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 53. 2. & 88. 2.
- ft524 In Sabbat, fol. 5. 2. & Avoda Zara, fol. 2. 2. in Misnah. Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Hebrews in rad. **bbi** & Lex. Talmud. p. 116. Co. copulasti mihi, uxtorf. Hottinger, Smegma, p. 162.
- ft525 In lib. Shorash, rad **bbi**
- ft526 Saguiseri amores, Statii Sylva, 1. 3. ode 3. 5:131.
- ft527 **Τὰς πόντες ἐπ ὄμμασιν ἡμεροὶ ἐντι** Theocrit. Idyll. 18. Perque tuos oculos qui rapuere meos, Ovid. Amor. 1. 3. eleg. 10. Vid. 5:6. Barthii not. ad Claudian. de Nupt. Honor.
- ft528 **Αἰπὰρα παρ ἀρχενα σείετ εθειρα**, Theocrit. Idyll. 5. Caesariem effusa nitidam per candida colia, Virgil. Georgic.1. 4. 5:337. Comae per levia colla fluentes. Propert.1. 2. eleg. 3. 5:13,
- ft529 Durham in loc.
- ft530 **dwd** amores tui, Pagninus, Motanus, etc.
- ft531 Vid. Theocrit. Idyll. 21, 5:26, 27. Homer, Iliad. 10:5:249.

- ft532 Plaut. *Asinaria*, act. 3. c. 3. 5:24,
- ft533 Vid. Cohen de Lara, *Ir David*, p. 52. the word is used in T. Hieros. Challab, fol. 57- 4.
- ft534 Atben. *Deipnosophist*.1. 1. c.8. p. 9. &1. 14. c. 13. p. 644. Suidas in vote **Κανδυλος**. Aristoph. *Pax*. & Florent. Christian. in *Ib*. p. 632.
- ft535 *Lib. de Bono Sapore*, c. 4.
- ft536 *Lactant. de Fals. Relig*.1. 1. c. 22.
- ft537 *Nemea*, ode 3. d. 10, 11.
- ft538 *Truculent*, act. 1. sc. 2. 5:75, 76.
- ft539 *Nec pigeat tritum nivee cum lacte papaver*, etc, *Ovid Fasti*.1. 4. 5:149. 150.
- ft540 Vid. T. Bab. *Chagigah*. fol. 13. 1.
- ft541 *Fernel. Method. Medend*.1. 5. c. 27.
- ft542 **Ειματα δωδεα**, *Homer. Odyss*. 5. 5:264. & 21. 5:52. **Τηε μυρων εμπνος αμπεχονη**, *Posidippus apud Athen. Deipnosophist*.1. 13. c. 7. P. 596.
- ft543 **Λεβανου θυοεντος**, *Museus de Hero*. etc. 5:48.
- ft544 Vid. *Targum & R. Sol. Jarchium* in loc. & *Midrash* in *Mercer*. in foe.