

The Song of Solomon

Before I come to the explication of this book, some things must be premised concerning it. 1. That it was of Divine inspiration is so clear and certain, that, as Jewish writers note, none ever questioned it, although some doubted of some other of Solomon's writings. And the same arguments which prove the divinity of other books are found here, such as the quality of the penman, who was confessedly a man inspired by God; the excellency and usefulness of the matter; the sacred and sublime majesty of the style, and the singular efficacy of it upon the hearts of sober and serious persons, who read it with due preparation; and those other characters which are commonly known, and therefore it is needless here to enumerate. 2. The form of this book is dramatical, wherein several parts or parcels of it are uttered by or in the name of several persons, which are chiefly four, the bridegroom and the bride, and the friends or companions of the one and of the other. Nor is it declared what or when each of them speak, but that is secretly couched, and is left to the observation of the prudent reader, as is usual in writings of this nature. 3. The design of the book in general is to describe the passionate loves and happy marriage of two persons, and their mutual satisfaction therein, and the blessed fruits and effects thereof. But then it is not to be understood carnally, concerning Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter, as some have fancied, although the occasion of this love and marriage may be taken from that, or rather he makes an allusion to that; but spiritually, concerning God, or Christ, and his church and people. This is sufficiently evident from the descriptions of this bridegroom and bride, which are such as could not with any decency be used or meant concerning Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter, as when he is brought in like a country shepherd, [Song 1:7](#), and is called his bride's brother, [Song 5:2](#), and when he gives such high and excessive commendations to himself, as we shall see, and when she is made the *keeper of vineyards and of sheep*, [Song 1:6, 8](#), and is said to be smitten and abused by the watchmen, [Song 5:7](#), and said to be *terrible as an army*, [Song 6:4](#), and to be like Pharaoh's horses, and to *have a head like Carmel, a nose like a tower, eyes like fishpools, teeth like a flock of sheep, &c.*, [Song 7:4-5](#). And there are many such-like expressions and descriptions, which being applied to them, are absurd and monstrous. Hence it follows that this book is to be understood mystically or allegorically, concerning that spiritual love and marriage which is between God, or Christ, and his church, or every believing soul. And this will be more than probable to any man who shall consider the following particulars. 1. That the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament are full of mystical and allegorical passages; which being known and confessed, it is needless to prove. 2. That the doctrine of Christ, or the Messiah, and of his being the Head, and Husband, and Saviour of God's church or people, was well known, at least to the prophets, and the wise and pious Israelites, in the time of the Old Testament; whereof we have many manifest and unquestionable evidences, not only in the New Testament, but in the writings of Moses, in the Books of Psalms and Proverbs, and in the prophets, as hath been noted in part, and will, God assisting, be further observed in the proper places. 3. That God compares himself to a bridegroom, and his church to a bride, [Isa 62:5](#), and calls and owns himself the *Husband* of his people, [Isa 54:5](#); [Ho 2:16, 19-20](#). In which places, by comparing these. with many other texts of Scripture, by God, or the Lord, is meant Christ, the second person in the Godhead, who then was to come down, and since did come from heaven to earth, for the consummation of that eternal project of marriage between God and his people; which also is fully confirmed by the writings of the New Testament which were designed for the explication of the Old, in which Christ is expressly declared to be the Bridegroom or Husband of his church, an [Mt 9:15](#); [22:2](#); [Joh 3:29](#); [2Co 11:2](#); [Eph 5:23](#); [Re 19:7](#); [21:2](#); [22:17](#); [4:1-11](#). That [Ps 45:1-17](#), which is a kind of abridgement: of this book, although it had its rise from or alludes to the marriage between

Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter, was written concerning the Messias, as all interpreters, both Christian and Jewish, agree, and concerning the mystical marriage between Christ and his church; of which see my notes upon that Psalm. From these considerations, and many others which might be suggested, and which will offer themselves to our thoughts from several passages of it, it is sufficiently manifest, that the main scope and business of this book is to describe the mutual love, union, and communion which is between Christ and his church in the various conditions to which it is liable in this world, as in the state of weakness, and desertion, and persecution from foolish shepherds, and the like, [Song 1:6](#); [3:1-4](#); [5:2](#), [7](#), &c. Moreover it is to be considered, that Solomon doth here vary his speech, sometimes speaking of the church in general, as one person or body; and sometimes of the particular members of it, or of several believers, both of such as really and sincerely are so, or such as profess to be so, and of their various dispositions and conditions. And hence comes the difference of persons here mentioned, the mother or spouse, and the children or daughters of Jerusalem, sixty queens, and eighty concubines; some that are strangers to the bridegroom, and some that are well acquainted with him, &c. These things being premised will give great light to the several passages of this book.

Chapter 1

A description of the earnest longing of the church after Christ, [Song 1:1-4](#). A confession of her deformity; prayeth for direction. [Song 1:5-7](#). Christ's direction and command, [Song 1:8](#). He showeth his love to her both for her strength and comeliness, [Song 1:9-10](#), and giveth her gracious promises, [Song 1:11](#). The church's commendation of Christ both for the sweetness of fellowship with him, and the excellency of ordinances, [Song 1:12-17](#).

[Song 1:1](#)

The song of songs; the most excellent of all songs, whether composed by profane or sacred authors, by Solomon or by any other. So this Hebrew phrase is understood in other cases, as *the holy of holies* signifies the most holy; and the highest King is called *King of kings*; and there are multitudes of such instances, as hath been oft observed. And so this might well be called, whether you consider the author of it, who was a great prince, and the wisest of all mortal men, the two Adams only excepted; or the subject of it, which is not Solomon, but *a greater than Solomon*, even Christ, and his marriage with the church, as hath been noted; or the matter of it, which is most lofty and mysterious, containing in it the greatest and noblest of all the mysteries contained either in the Old or the New Testament; most pious and pathetic, breathing forth the hottest flames of love between Christ and his people; most sweet, and comfortable, and useful to all that read it with serious and Christian eyes. Nor is it the worse because profane and wanton wits abuse it, and endeavour to fasten their absurd and filthy senses upon some passages in it. The truth is, this book requires a sober and pious, not a lascivious and foolish reader; for which reason some of the ancient Hebrews advised young men to forbear the reading of it, till they were thirty years old.

Which is Solomon's; which was composed by Solomon; but whether before his fall, or after his repentance, is not easy to determine, nor necessary to be known.

[Song 1:2](#)

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. The beginning of this book is abrupt, and may seem disorderly; but is very suitable to and usual in writings of this nature, wherein things are not related in an historical and exquisite order, but that which was first done is brought in as

it were accidentally after many other passages; as we see in Homer, and Virgil, and in the Greek and Latin comedians. These are the words of the spouse, as all acknowledge, wherein she breatheth forth her passionate love to the Bridegroom, whom she doth not name, but only intimate by the pronoun relative him, which is here put without and for the antecedent, as [Ps 87:1](#); [114:2](#); [Joh 20:15](#); which manner of expression she useth, because it was needless to name him, as being so well known to the person or persons to whom she speaks, and being the only person who was continually in her thoughts and speeches. By *kisses*, which were the usual tokens of love and good will, she means nothing else but the communications and manifestations of his love and favour to her, as the following clause explains this; his graces and comforts breathed into her from the mouth and Spirit of Christ.

Thy love: this sudden change of the person is frequent, especially in such pathetic discourses. First she speaks of him as absent, and at a distance, but speedily grows into more acquaintance with him, and by ardent desire in faith embraceth him as present.

Than wine; than the most delicious meats or drinks, or than all sensual delights, this one kind being synecdochically put for all the rest, as it is [Es 5:6](#); [Job 1:13](#); [Pr 9:2](#); [Ec 2:3](#).

[Song 1:3](#)

Because of the savour of thy good ointments; because of those excellent gifts and graces of God's Spirit wherewith thou art replenished, and which flow from thee upon thy members, *Thy name*; either, 1. Thou thyself; *names* being oft put for persons, as [Ac 1:15](#); [Re 3:4](#). Or rather, 2. Thy fame or report, the very mention of thee, and all those things by which thou makest thyself known to men, thy word, and particularly thine offers and promises of pardon and salvation made to sinners, and all thy works, both ordinary and miraculous, especially that great work of redemption.

Is as ointment poured forth; most lovely, and acceptable, and refreshing.

The virgins, called *the companions* of the bride, [Ps 45:14](#), particular believers, who are called virgins, [2Co 11:2](#); [Re 14:4](#), who have their senses exercised to perceive this sweetness and fulness of Christ.

[Song 1:4](#)

Draw me; by thy grace and Holy Spirit effectually inclining my heart to come unto thee, as this phrase implies, [Jer 31:3](#); [Ho 11:4](#); [Joh 6:44-45](#). As thou hast outwardly called and invited me, so do thou inwardly move me, who am naturally averse and backward to follow thee.

We; both I thy spouse, and the virgins my companions. And this change of numbers teaches us that the spouse in this book is one great body, consisting of many members, of whom therefore he speaks sometimes in the singular, and sometimes in the plural number.

Will run after thee; will follow thee readily, and cheerfully, and swiftly; which is opposed to her former sluggishness and listlessness. We will not receive thy grace in vain, but will improve it, and co-operate with it, and stir up all our strength to serve and obey thee.

The king; Christ, my Husband and Lord, the King of his church, as he is oft called, the King of kings, &c.

Hath brought me, Heb. *hath caused me to come*, by drawing me as I desired. He hath answered my prayer.

Into his chambers, where I may most freely and familiarly converse with him, and enjoy him. He hath taken me into intimate communion with himself. These *chambers* seem to note either, 1. Those heavenly mansions into which believers are sometimes said to be brought, even in this life, as [Eph 2:6](#), because they have a lively faith, and a well-grounded hope and assurance, and some comfortable foretastes of that blessed state. Or rather, 2. Those places and conditions upon earth in which they enjoy the special favour and fellowship of God in Christ, as the public assemblies, in which Christ is in a peculiar manner present, [Mt 18:20](#), where his word and ordinances are dispensed, and where he poureth forth his Spirit and blessings, and speaks great peace, and gives forth his loves unto his people. Yea, even the private closets wherein believers enjoy much of Christ, by prayer, and praise, and reading, and meditation, are such chambers also; for it is not the place, but the state, or privilege, which is here signified, and which is considerable.

In thee; or, for thee; in or for thy love and favour to us, which is the principal cause of our joy.

Remember, or commemorate, or celebrate. This shall be the matter of our thoughts and discourses.

The upright; those chaste and sincere virgins mentioned [Song 1:3](#), who are here opposed to hypocritical professors.

[Song 1:5](#)

I am black. It might be objected, Who art thou, that thou shouldst have or pretend to such a royal Bridegroom, and such honours and favours? To this the church answers, I confess, as to myself and outward appearance in the eyes of the world, I have not that pomp and beauty which men admire, but am black, contemptible and deformed, both for my own infirmities and disorders, and for the scandals of some of my own members, and for the reproaches and persecutions of worldly men. She alludes to the complexion of Pharaoh's daughter, who was black.

But comely; yet I am glorious within, [Ps 45:13](#), and comely, through the beauty which my Husband hath put upon me, by his graces and blessings conferred upon me, such as justification and sanctification, &c.

Daughters of Jerusalem; by which she understands particular believers, whose *mother* Jerusalem is called, [Ga 4:26](#), who had joined themselves to her, especially young converts and weak Christians, who were startled and offended at the contemplation of her blackness.

Of Kedar, i.e. of the wild Arabians, the posterity of Kedar, [Ge 25:13](#), who dwelt in tents, which were black and uncomely, both in themselves, and by the injuries of the weather, to which they were constantly exposed.

As the curtains of Solomon; as the hangings wherewith Solomon's house was furnished, which none can doubt that they were most beautiful and glorious. So these two last clauses answer to the two first, and that in the same order in which they lie.

[Song 1:6](#)

Look not upon me, with wonder and disdain, because of my blackness, as it follows.

Because the sun hath looked upon me: my blackness is not essential, and inseparable, but chiefly caused by the scorching beams of the sun, i.e. of sore persecutions and tribulations, which by God's permission have befallen me, which are represented by the sun, [Mt 13:6](#), [21](#).

My mother's children; false brethren, who pretend that the church is their mother, with their actions demonstrate that God, the Husband of the church, is not their Father; hypocritical professors, who are, and ever were, the keenest enemies to the true church and people of God, [Isa 66:5](#); [Ga 4:29](#); false teachers, and their followers, who, by their corrupt doctrines, and divisions, and contentions which they raise, bring great mischief to the church. See [2Co 11:26](#); [Ga 2:4](#).

Were angry with me; or, fought against me, as the ancients render it, and so marred my beauty.

They made me keeper of the vineyards, i.e. of their vineyards, for to these she opposeth her own, in the next clause. Having prevailed against me, they used me like a slave, putting me upon the most dishonourable and troublesome services, such as the keeping of the vineyards was esteemed, [2Ki 25:12](#); [Isa 61:5](#); [Mt 20:1-7](#).

Mine own vineyard have I not kept; they gave me such a full and constant employment in their drudging work about their vineyards, that they left me no time to mind my own; they hindered me from doing my own duty, and from minding my own concerns; and therefore it is no wonder if in this posture and condition I be uncomely, and scorched by the sun. But because churches or societies of professors of religion, whether good or bad, are oft called *vineyards*, as [De 32:32](#); [Ps 80:8](#); [Isa 5:1-2](#), [7](#), this and the foregoing clause may be thus understood, that they endeavored to seduce and corrupt the church with false doctrines, and superstitious or idolatrous worship, and to oblige her to countenance and maintain them, and thereby disturbed and hindered her from her proper work, which was the propagation and advancement of the true doctrine and worship in particular assemblies and persons belonging, or to be brought in, to her.

[Song 1:7](#)

Whom my soul loveth, notwithstanding all these discouragements mid afflictions which I suffer for thy sake, and for my love to thee. Being reproached and persecuted by others, I flee to thee, O my only refuge and joy, and I beg direction and help from thee.

Where thou feedest, understand, thy flock, as [Ge 29:7](#); [37:16](#). Seeing false teachers and churches bear thy name, [Mr 13:21-22](#), and thy true church sometimes lies hid, [Re 12:14](#), discover to me which is thy true church, and which are those assemblies and people where thou art present, and where thine ordinances are dispensed in purity and power, and where thou dost and wilt *command the blessing, even life for evermore*, as it is expressed, [Ps 133:3](#), that I may join myself to them. This is the request of particular believers. For it must be minded, as that which will be useful to explain really difficulties in this book, that the church in this book is sometimes considered, and speaketh, or is spoken of, as one entire body, and sometimes with respect unto and in the name of her particular members, and that

promiscuously; and in which of these capacities each place is to be understood is left to the prudent and diligent reader to gather out of the words and context.

At noon; in the heat of the day, when the shepherds in those hot countries used to carry their flocks into shady places; whereby he means the time of hot persecution, when it is hard to find and discover the true church, partly because she is deformed by it, and partly because she is obscured and driven into the wilderness, as is said, [Re 12:14](#).

Be as one, i.e. be really one, the particle *as* being here a note of truth, as it is in many other places. Why wilt thou by withdrawing thyself from me, and denying thy direction to me, suffer me, or give occasion to me, to be such a one?

One that turneth aside; or, *a wanderer*, or *vagabond*, like a neglected and forlorn creature, exposed both to censure and danger, from both which it belongs to thee, my Husband, to protect and save me. *By*, or *about*, or *towards*, as this particle is elsewhere used, the flocks of thy companions; the assemblies of corrupt and false teachers and worshippers, by which I am like to be insnared, if thou dost forsake me. These he calls Christ's *companions*, partly because they profess the name of Christ, and their conjunction with him in God's worship; and partly because they set themselves up in Christ's stead, and usurp his power in delivering and imposing their own laws and doctrines upon men's consciences, and behave themselves like his equals or companions, not as becometh his subjects.

[Song 1:8](#)

If thou know not, to wit, where I feed my sheep. For this is Christ's answer to his spouse or people.

O thou fairest among women; though thou art black in thine own and others' eyes, yet thou art very beautiful and amiable to me, as being washed white in my blood, and beautified with my gifts and graces.

Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock; observe and follow the paths which my sheep had trodden before thee, of my faithful servants, Abraham and others, whose examples are propounded for our imitation, [Ro 4:12](#); [Heb 6:12](#). For the church in all ages is one and the same, and there is but one way for the substance in which all the saints from the beginning to the end of the world do walk, *Christ being yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever*, [Heb 13:8](#), and *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, [Re 13:8](#).

Feed thy kids; take care for the feeding or teaching of all, and especially of young and weak Christians, who do and shall associate themselves to thee, whom the Holy Ghost calls *lambs*, [Joh 21:15-16](#), as here *kids*. For although grown and wanton goats are commonly used in Scripture in a bad sense, yet the kids of the goats do sometimes note believers, as [Isa 11:6](#), and *kids* were among those sacrifices which represented Christ, [Heb 9:12-14](#). *Beside the shepherds' tents*; under the conduct, and according to the instruction, of my faithful shepherds, or pastors; first and chiefly those who have gone before thee, the prophets and apostles, and after, and in subordination to them, and to their writings, others whom I shall raise from time to time to feed my people with wisdom and understanding.

[Song 1:9](#)

I have compared thee, Heb. *I have made thee like*; which may be understood either, 1. Verbally, by comparing. Or, 2. Really, by making a real resemblance in quality or condition. *To a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots*; either, 1. For comeliness; for a horse is a very stately and beautiful creature, and the Egyptian horses were preferred before others, [1Ki 10:28](#); [Isa 31:1](#), and Pharaoh's own chariot horses were doubtless the best of their kind. Or, 2. For excellent order and usefulness, as those horses did equally and orderly draw the chariot, and carried Pharaoh with ease and speed whither he designed to go. Or rather, 3. For strength and courage, to overcome all thine enemies. For horses are famous for that property, [Job 39:21](#), &c. And the strength of the battle was then thought to consist very much in horses, [Pr 21:31](#), and chariots, and especially in a company or multitude of them. And the church in this book is represented not only as fair and beautiful, but also as terrible to her enemies, [Song 6:10](#). Compare [Re 19:11](#), [14](#).

[Song 1:10](#)

Rows of jewels; which being fastened to the heads of brides, used to hang down upon and to adorn their cheeks, according to the manner in those times. He mentions the cheeks as the chief seat of beauty; and he intimates that the church's beauty is not natural, nor from herself, but from the jewels wherewith Christ adorns her.

Thy neck; which is mentioned as another visible part and seat of beauty, [Ho 10:11](#). But to accommodate every part and ornament named in this book to some particular thing in the church, seems to have more of curiosity and artifice than of solidity and use.

Chains of gold; whereby, as well as by the rows of jewels, he may seem to design all those persons and things wherewith the church is made beautiful in the eyes of God and of men; such as excellent ministers, and saints, righteous laws, holy ordinances, and the gifts and graces of God's Spirit, all which are given by God to the church, and are her best ornaments.

[Song 1:11](#)

We; I thy Bridegroom, with the cooperation of my Father, and of the Holy Spirit. Such plural expressions are sometimes used in Scripture concerning one God, to note the plurality of persons in one Divine essence, as hath been noted upon [Ge 1:26](#), and elsewhere.

Borders of gold with studs of silver; beautiful and honourable ornaments, such as those [Song 1:10](#). Variety of expressions are used to signify the various kinds and improvements of the gifts and graces which are bestowed by Christ upon the church. The phrase here used may be compared with that of *apples of gold in pictures of silver*, [Pr 25:11](#).

[Song 1:12](#)

The King, my royal Husband, *sitteth at his table*; either, 1. With the spirits of just men and blessed angels in heavenly glory, to which Christ was advanced after his sufferings, and from which he poureth down his Spirit upon his people. Or rather, 2. With me in his gospel and ordinances, in which Christ entertaineth his people, and is in a special, and gracious, and glorious manner present with them, [Mt 18:20](#); [28:20](#), which also is oft represented in

Scripture under the motion of a feast or banquet, of which see [Pr 9:1-3, 5](#); [Isa 25:6](#); [Mt 8:11; 22:2](#); [1Co 10:21](#).

My spikenard; the graces of his Spirit conferred upon me, and drawn forth by his powerful presence, which is here compared to those sweet ointments which the master of the feast caused to be poured out upon the beads of the guests, of which see [Mr 14:3](#); [Lu 7:38](#), in which ointments spikenard was a chief ingredient, [Joh 12:2-3](#).

Sendeth forth the smell thereof; which notes the exercise and manifestation of her graces, which is a sweet-smelling savour in the nostrils of her Husband, and of her companions.

[Song 1:13](#)

A bundle of myrrh; or, *a bag of myrrh*; in which there was a considerable quantity of the gum which droppeth from the myrrh tree. Myrrh is bitter to the taste, but sweet to the smell, and therefore was ever reckoned amongst the best perfumes. See [Ex 30:23](#); [Ps 45:8](#); [Joh 19:39](#).

Is my Beloved unto me; he is most precious and comfortable to me, and the author of my sweet smell last mentioned.

Betwixt my breasts; in the place where bundles or bags of myrrh or other perfumes hang down, being fastened about their necks, which yet were taken away and laid aside by night. But the church intimates that she will not part with Christ, neither day nor night. Or this phrase may note the church's intimate union with and hearty affection unto Christ.

[Song 1:14](#)

Camphire; or, *cypress*, as others render it. It was an odoriferous plant growing in vineyards, and some think that it was a most pleasant kind of vine, like that which bears muscatel grapes; yea, some very learned men understand it of that plant which dropped balm, which grew in or near the place here specified, as is affirmed not only by the Jews, but also by pagan writers, as Diodorus and Trogus. Nor are we concerned to know which or what it was; it being confessed and evident, that it was some pleasant and grateful plant, and that it sets forth that great delight which the church hath in the enjoyment of Christ.

En-gedi; a pleasant and well-watered place in the tribe of Judah, [Jos 15:62](#); [Eze 47:10](#), where there were many pleasant plants, whence it was called Hazazontamar, [2Ch 20:2](#).

[Song 1:15](#)

Behold, thou art fair: this is the speech of Christ. The words are doubled, partly to note the certainty of the thing, notwithstanding her mean and modest opinion of herself; and partly to manifest his high esteem and fervent affection for her, and to assure her that, notwithstanding all her infirmities, he was very well pleased with her.

Thou hast doves' eyes; which are, 1. Comely and pleasant. 2. Modest and humble, not lofty, as the looks of some other creatures are. 3. Mild and harmless, not fierce and fiery, not looking and watching for prey, as the eyes of ravenous birds are. 4. Chaste and faithful, looking only to their mates; so that *if any of them cast a lustful eye upon another, her companions are enraged against her, and quickly tear her in pieces*; as some natural

historians write. And such are the church's eyes said to be. And by *the eyes* he seems to design partly her looks and outward behaviour or conversation, and partly and chiefly the inward disposition of her mind, which is commonly discovered, and in Scripture is oft signified, by the eye; in which sense we read of an evil eye, [Pr 23:6](#); [Mt 6:23](#), of a bountiful eye, [Pr 22:9](#), of a single eye, [Lu 11:34](#), of a proud or lofty look, all which signify such tempers of men's minds.

[Song 1:16](#)

Behold, thou art fair, my beloved. The church here again speaks, and retorts Christ's words upon himself: If I am fair, it is only by thy grace and favourable acceptance; thou, and thou only, art fair indeed, thy beauty is exquisite and perfect.

Pleasant; as thou art beautiful in thyself, so thou art amiable and pleasant in thy condescension to me, and converse with me, in communicating thy blessed counsels, and graces, and comforts to me. *Our bed*; either, 1. Upon which we sit at meat, as the manner then was, [Es 1:5-6](#); [Eze 23:41](#). Or rather, 2. Upon which we lie, our nuptial bed; for the union and communion between Christ and his church is here represented under the notion of marriage. And accordingly the bed seems to denote the place or places where the church enjoyeth sweet fellowship with Christ, by his Spirit accompanying his ordinances, and imparting his merits, and graces, and comforts to her.

Is green; is pleasant, as that colour is to the eye; is prepared for us, being adorned with green garlands, or boughs and herbs, as the manner seems to have been with country brides, such as the spouse in this book is represented to be. Or, as others, both ancient and later interpreters, render it, *is flourishing*, i.e. fruitful. So it is a happy presage, that the church should not be barren, but bring forth many children to Christ; of which see [Isa 54:1](#), &c. By these and the following words the church invites Christ to her bed and house, where she may freely and fully enjoy spiritual communion with him.

[Song 1:17](#)

The beams of our house are cedar; not only strong and incorruptible, but also fragrant and delightful. Though I am in myself but a mean and rustic person, yet the house to which I invite thee, and where thou and I shall dwell together, is, by thy favour, built with cedar; whereby is here signified the stability of God's church upon earth, which is called *God's house*, [1Ti 3:15](#), and the firmness and sureness of God's word and promises.

Rafters; the lesser beams. Or, as it is rendered in our margin, and by others, *galleries*, wherein we may walk.

Of fir; or, as the ancients and others render it, *of cypress*, which was used in buildings, which also was strong and fragrant, and therefore suits well with cedars.

Chapter 2

The excellency of the majesty of Christ, [Song 2:1](#), and of his church, [Song 2:2](#). The benefits which the church receives from him, [Song 2:3](#). Christ's love to his church, [Song 2:4](#). The church sick of love; her prayer for help, [Song 2:5](#). His ears for her in this condition, [Song 2:6](#). The hope and calling of the church, [Song 2:10-13](#). Christ's care of the church, [Song 2:14-15](#). The profession of the church; her faith and hope, [Song 2:16-17](#).

[Song 2:1](#)

These are the words either, 1. Of the spouse, continuing her discourse. Or rather, 2. Of the bridegroom, drawing forth the church's affections to him. He compares himself to the rose and lily, for fragrantcy and beauty. Nor is it in the least degree indecent that Christ should thus commend himself, partly because his excellency is so transcendently great, that he is free from all suspicion of vanity and self-flattery; and partly because it is suitable to the style of such writings, and to the present design of recommending himself to the affection of his spouse. He mentions the rose of Sharon, which was a very fruitful place, as is evident from [1Ch 27:29](#); [Isa 33:9](#); [65:10](#), and famous for roses, as may seem probable from [Isa 35:1-2](#). Or, as others translate it, *the rose of the field*, which may note that Christ is not only pleasant and beautiful, but free and communicative, offering himself to all that come to him. The *lily* is a beautiful and glorious creature, [Mt 6:29](#), especially to one who beholds it through a magnifying glass. He saith, *the lily of the valleys*, because they grew and flourished best in such low and waterish grounds.

[Song 2:2](#)

As the lily among thorns; compared with thorns, which it unspeakably exceeds in glory and beauty; *so is my love among the daughters*; so far, and much more, doth my church or people excel all other assemblies or people. The title of *daughter* is oft given to whole nations; whence we read of the *daughter of Babylon*, and of *Egypt*, and of *Edom*, &c., [Isa 47:1](#); [Jer 46:11](#); [La 4:21](#). These are Christ's words, to which the spouse makes the following reply. And it is observable here, that as Christ is here represented as a shepherd, and the spouse as a country virgin, so the similitudes here used are agreeable to that estate.

[Song 2:3](#)

As the apple tree, whose fruit is very pleasant and wholesome, *among the trees of the wood*, which are either barren, or bear ungrateful and worthless fruit.

I sat down under his shadow; being weary and heavy laden with manifold sins and troubles, inward and outward, I confidently reposed myself under his protection, (which is commonly signified by a shadow, as [Isa 4:6](#); [25:4](#), &c.) and by him was defended from the scorching heat of God's wrath and from the curse of his fiery law, and from the mischief or hurt of all sorts of distresses. *His fruit*; the benefits which I received by him, the clear, and full, and certain knowledge of God's will, and the way of salvation, adoption, and remission of sins, faith and repentance, and all manner of grace, and assurance of glory. Thus he was to me both *a sun and a shield*, as is said, [Ps 84:11](#).

[Song 2:4](#)

Banqueting-house, Heb. *house of wine*, or, by a common synecdoche, of feasting. By which he understands the places in which, or the means and instruments by which, believers receive the graces and blessings of Christ, to wit, the Holy Scriptures, ministers, and public assemblies, and all Christ's institutions.

His banner over me; or, *to or towards me*; by the lifting up or displaying whereof I was invited and encouraged to come in to him, and to list myself under him, as soldiers are by the lifting up of a banner or ensign, of which see [Isa 11:10](#); [49:22](#).

Was love; the love of Christ crucified, which, like a banner, is displayed in the gospel, whereby sinners are drawn and engaged to come to Christ: see [Joh 3:14](#); [12:32](#); [2Co 5:14](#). The motto or device of Christ's banner was not like those of other great generals, a lion, or leopard, or eagle, but love, by which alone Christ made all his conquests.

[Song 2:5](#)

Stay me; or, *support me*; keep me from sinking or fainting. The spouse speaks this to her bridemaids, *the daughters of Jerusalem*, as it is expressed, [Song 2:7](#), or to the servants or friends of the Bridegroom there waiting, and to the Bridegroom himself; as a person ready to faint cries to any or all that are near to him or her for help.

With flagons; with wine, which is a good cordial, [Ps 104:15](#); [Pr 31:6-7](#), and which was there present, [Song 2:4](#). *Flagons* are here, and [1Ch 16:3](#), put for *flagons of wine*, as it is fully expressed, [Ho 3:1](#), or for the wine contained in them, as the cup is put for wine, [Lu 22:20](#), by a common metonymy.

Comfort me with apples; with odoriferous apples, such as pomegranates, or the like, the smell whereof was grateful and useful to persons ready to faint. By these metaphors understand the application of the promises, and the comfortable and quickening influences of the Spirit.

I am sick of love; either, 1. With transports of joy, which sometimes causes a fainting of the spirits, as [Ge 45:26](#); [1Ki 10:5](#). Or, 2. With grief for his departure from her, of which we read [Song 3:1-2](#), or for fear of it. Or rather, 3. With ardent desire of a stricter union, and clearer discoveries of his love, and perfect and uninterrupted communion with him in glory. That sickness is sometimes the effect of love hath been oft observed by physicians.

[Song 2:6](#)

Is under my head, as a pillow for me to rest upon. No sooner did I cry out for help, but he was at hand to succour me, and did manifest his tender care and dear love to me.

[Song 2:7](#)

This verse is spoken either, 1. By the Bridegroom, who having reposed the sick church in his arms, chargeth them not to disturb her *till she please*, as the last clause in this case must be rendered. Or rather, 2. By the bride, as may be gathered, 1. From the connexion, because both the foregoing and following words are hers. 2. Because it was more decent for the bride than for the Bridegroom to give this charge to the bridemaids, *the daughters of Jerusalem*; and therefore in all places in this book where they are mentioned the person speaking to them is the bride, and not the Bridegroom, and particularly [Song 3:5](#); [8:4](#), where this verse is repeated, and is confessedly and evidently spoken by the spouse. *Daughters of Jerusalem*; my bridemaids, friends, and members, over whom I have authority.

By the hinds; either, 1. By the kindness you have to those pretty and amiable creatures, as you would not injure nor disturb them, nor drive them away, but please yourselves with the sight of them, as shepherds and country damsels commonly do. Or, 2. By the example of those creatures, which are pleasant and loving in their carriage towards one another. *Of the field*; which have their usual abode in the fields. *That ye stir not up, nor awake*; that you do not disturb nor offend him by your miscarriages, but permit him and me to enjoy a quiet repose.

Do nothing to grieve him, or molest me. *My love*; my dearly beloved, called *love* emphatically, to express her great passion for him. So love is used [Song 7:6](#), and in other authors. *Till he please*, i.e. never, as this word *until*, in such like phrases, is commonly used, as [Ge 28:15](#); [2Sa 6:23](#); [Isa 22:14](#). For neither can sin ever please him, nor can the church bear it that Christ should ever be offended, or that her sweet fellowship with him should be interrupted.

[Song 2:8](#)

The voice of my Beloved! methinks I hear his voice. The spouse being now refreshed and revived with Christ's presence, awakes out of sleep, and breaks forth into this joyful exclamation. Christ's voice is nothing else but the word of grace revealed outwardly in the gospel, or the evangelical passages of the Old Testament, and inwardly to the heart of the spouse by the Spirit of God.

Behold, he cometh; either, 1. He is coming, or will shortly come, into the world; which Solomon and the rest of the Old Testament prophets and saints did earnestly desire and confidently expect. Or, 2. He is coming to me for my support and comfort.

Leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills; he saith *leaping and skipping*, to note that Christ came readily and swiftly, with great desire and pleasure; and he adds, *upon the mountains and hills*, either with respect to Mount Zion or Jerusalem, in and from which Christ first discovered himself; or to signify Christ's fixed resolution to come, in spite of all discouragements and difficulties which stood in his way; or to show that his coming was manifest and visible to the eye of her faith. Or in this phrase he may have a respect to the roes and harts here following.

[Song 2:9](#)

Like a roe or a young hart; either, 1. In loveliness. Or rather, 2. In swiftness, by comparing this verse with the former. The swiftness of roes is noted [2Sa 2:18](#); [1Ch 12:8](#). He is coming to me with all speed, and will not tarry a moment beyond the appointed and proper season.

He standeth behind our wall; and whilst he doth for wise and just reasons forbear to come, he is not far from us. Though he be not yet come into the door of our house, yet he stands behind the wall of our house, and is always at hand, to give me that succour and comfort which I do or may need or desire. Both this and the following phrases seem to note the obscure and imperfect manner and degree of Christ's manifesting himself to his people, either, 1. Under the law, in comparison of his discoveries in the gospel. Or, 2. In this life, in comparison of what he will do in the future life.

He looketh forth, from his high and heavenly palace, towards me, to watch over me, and refresh me with the prospect of his favour.

At the window: this phrase, and that, *through the lattice*, intimate that the church doth indeed see Christ, but, *as through a glass, darkly*, as it is said even of gospel revelations, [1Co 13:12](#), and was much more true of legal administrations.

[Song 2:10](#)

My Beloved spake; invited and called me outwardly by his word, and inwardly by his Spirit.

Rise up; shake off sloth and security, and disentangle thyself more fully from all the snares of this world, and of thy own lusts, that thou mayst be more ready to come to me, and more fit for my embraces.

Come away unto me, and with me; follow me fully, serve me more perfectly, labour for a nearer union and more satisfying communion with me.

[Song 2:11](#)

The winter; which made the ways in some sort unpassable, and so might seem to hinder or affright thee from coming to me. This *winter*, and the following *rain*, may be understood either, 1. Of worldly tribulations, which he intimates to be past and gone, to wit, so far that they shall not destroy nor hurt the church, but, on the contrary, do her much good, both by multiplying her members, and increasing her graces; and promoting her eternal happiness. Or rather, 2. Of spiritual troubles arising in the minds and consciences of sinners, from a deep sense of the guilt of sin, the justice and wrath of God, the sentence and curse of the law; all which made them afraid to come unto God, and desirous, if possible, to run away from him. But, saith Christ, I have removed this great impediment, God is ready to be reconciled, and therefore cast off all discouragements and excuses, and come unto me.

[Song 2:12](#)

The flowers appear on the earth: this and the following clauses are here alleged as evidences of the spring time, which in the mystical and principal sense seems to signify the day of grace, or the glad tidings of salvation proposed to sinners in the time of the law, by types, and shadows, and promises, but much more clearly and fully in the gospel, and all the discoveries and communications of God's grace to mankind in holy ordinances, in the gifts, and graces, and comforts of the Holy Spirit, vouchsafed unto and appearing in believers, as buds and blossoms do in the spring time.

The time of the singing of birds; when birds sing most freely and sweetly, as they do in the spring. Or, as the ancient translator's render it, of *cutting* or *cropping*, not trees, which agrees not with that season, but the flowers, last mentioned, for nosegays, or other uses.

The turtle; which changeth its place according to the season, as is observed. [Jer 8:7](#), and by all other writers, who affirm that it disappears in winter, and appears in the spring, as some other birds also do; but this seems particularly to be mentioned, because it doth not only give notice of the spring, but also doth aptly represent the Spirit of God, which even the Chaldee paraphrast understands by this *turtle*, which appeared in the shape of a dove, and which worketh a dove-like meekness, and chastity, and faithfulness in believers.

In our land; in *Immanuel's land*, as Canaan is called, [Isa 8:8](#), in the church.

[Song 2:13](#)

Green figs; which it shooteth forth as soon as it doth leaves, in the spring time, [Mt 24:32](#).

A good smell; which, though not strong, is pleasant and grateful, and given by it in the progress of the spring.

Come away: these words are here repeated, to show both the church's infirmity and indisposition, which needs so many calls and arguments to press so necessary and advantageous a duty; and Christ's tender compassion to her weakness, and fervent desire of converse with her.

[Song 2:14](#)

My dove; so the church is called, partly for her dove-like temper and disposition, because she is chaste, and mild, and harmless, &c.; and partly for her dove-like condition, because she is weak, and exposed to persecution, and given to mourning, as doves are, [Isa 38:14](#); [59:11](#); [Eze 7:16](#), and subject to many fears, and therefore forced to hide herself in rocks, as it follows, *in the clefts of the rock*; where she hid herself, either, 1. For fear of her enemies, whom to avoid she puts herself into the protection of the Almighty. Or, 2. Out of modesty, and a humble sense of her own deformities and, infirmities, which makes her endeavour to hide herself even from her Beloved, as ashamed to appear, in his presence, which is frequently the case of God's people, especially after falls into sin. And this sense seems to be favoured by the following words, in which Christ relieveth her against such discouraging thoughts.

In the secret places of the stairs; in the holes of craggy and broken rocks, which resemble stairs. So the same thing is here repeated in other words.

Let me see thy countenance; be not afraid nor ashamed to appear before me; come boldly into my presence, and acquaint thyself with me.

Thy voice; thy prayers and praises.

Sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely; thy person and services are accepted by me, and are amiable in my sight.

[Song 2:15](#)

The Bridegroom gives this charge to his bridemen or friends, whose office it is to attend upon him, and to observe his commands; by whom he understands those magistrates and ministers to whom, under Christ, the custody of the vineyards, to wit, the churches, principally belong. These he commands to take the *foxes*, i.e. to restrain them from doing this mischief.

Us, Heb. *for us*, i.e. at our instance, and for our common good, as this spoiling of the vines was injurious and grievous to them both.

The foxes; the disturbers of the vineyard, or the church; seducers or false teachers, who are fitly compared to *foxes* here, and [Eze 13:4](#), partly to distinguish them from great tyrants and persecutors, who are compared to *wild boars*, or other *wild beasts*, [Ps 80:13](#), as to *lions*, [2Ti 4:17](#); and partly for their fox-like qualities and actions, because they are very crafty and deceitful, [2Co 11:13-14](#); [Eph 4:14](#), and very mischievous also, [Eze 34:2-3](#); [2Ti 4:17](#); [Tit 1:10-11](#); [2Pe 2:2](#). He mentions *foxes*, because these abounded in that country, as is manifest from [Jdg 15:4](#); [Ps 63:10](#); [La 5:18](#), &c., but under them he comprehends all noxious creatures, upon the same reason.

The little foxes: this he adds, not as if the great foxes were excused or exempted, but for more abundant caution, to teach the church to prevent errors and heresies in the beginnings of them, before they spread and grow strong and incurable.

That spoil the vines, which foxes do many ways, as those who write of them have observed, by gnawing and breaking the little branches and leaves, and the bark, by digging holes in the vineyards, and so spoiling the roots, by eating the grapes, and other ways.

Have tender grapes; which gives us hopes of a good vintage, and which are easily spoiled, if great care be not used to prevent it.

[Song 2:16](#)

My Beloved is mine, and I am his: these are the words of the bride, who having come to him upon his gracious invitation, now maketh her boast of him, and of that intimate union and communion which was between them.

He feedeth among the lilies; either, 1. He feedeth his flock in sweet and lovely pastures, where there is not only herbage to feed them, but lilies to delight them. Or rather, 2. He feedeth himself, i.e. he abideth and refresheth himself amongst his faithful people, which are compared to lilies, above, [Song 2:2](#), and [Ho 14:5](#), as Christ also is here, [Song 2:1](#).

[Song 2:17](#)

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away; until the morning of that great and blessed day of the general resurrection and judgment, when all the shadows, not only of ignorance, and sin, and calamity, but even of all ordinances and outward administrations, shall cease, and make way for the immediate enjoyment of my Beloved. And this clause may be joined either, 1. With the foregoing words; and so the sense is, Christ doth and will abide with his church as long as this life and world lasts; which agrees with Christ's promises of being with his church to the end of the world, [Mt 28:20](#). But neither that nor this place imply that Christ will then forsake his people, but only secures God's people against that which was the chief, if not only, matter of their fear, to wit, lest Christ should leave them, and cast them off in this life, which, if he did not, they were assured that hereafter they should be *ever with the Lord*, [1Th 4:17](#). For it is well known, and hath been oft observed already, that the word *until* doth not always exclude the time to come. Or, 2. With the following words, *Turn thou, my Beloved, until the day break, &c.*

Turn; return to me. For although Christ had come to her, and she had gladly received and embraced him, yet he was gone again, as is here implied, and evidently appears from the next following verse; which sudden change is very agreeable both to the nature and method of such dramatical writings and amatorious transactions, and to the state of God's people in this world, where they are subject to frequent changes and vicissitudes of Christ's withdrawing from them, and returning to them again.

Like a roe or a young hart, in swiftness; make haste to help me, for I am ready to faint.

Bether; a place in the Land of Promise, possibly the same called *Bithron*, [2Sa 2:29](#), where it seems those creatures were in great abundance, or where they were commonly hunted, and so being pursued, they made all possible haste to escape.

Chapter 3

The church seeking Christ, [Song 3:1-3](#). Her great joy; she findeth him, [Song 3:4](#). Her charge to the daughters of Jerusalem not to awake her Beloved, [Song 3:5](#). The manner of Christ's coming out of the wilderness, [Song 3:6](#). His bed, guard, and chariot, [Song 3:7-9](#). Its maker, matter, and furniture, [Song 3:10](#). An invitation of the faithful to the kingdom of glory, [Song 3:11](#).

[Song 3:1](#)

By night on my bed; either, 1. In a time of tribulation, which is commonly signified by the night, and sometimes by a bed, as [Re 2:22](#). Or, 2. When I expected to find him; for the husband who by his occasions is oft forced to be absent from his wife in the day time, but at night returns to her, and beds with her. Or, 3. When others compose themselves to rest and sleep, my thoughts were troubled and my affections were working towards him, and I was very desirous to enjoy him.

I sought him; I sought for Christ's gracious and powerful presence, in and by the word, and prayer, and meditation. *I sought him:* this repetition notes her perseverance and unweariedness in seeking him.

But I found him not; for he had withdrawn himself and the manifestations of his love from me, either because I had not sought him diligently, or because I had abused his favour, or to try and exercise my faith, and patience, and love, and other graces.

[Song 3:2](#)

I will rise now; I will immediately apply myself to seek him, without whom my bed can give me no rest nor comfort.

The city; the city of God, the church, in which Christ resides.

In the streets, and in the broad ways: not finding him in private prayer and meditation, I sought him in the places of public assemblies and ordinances; for the people frequently met together in the streets, not only for civil, but for religious ends, [2Ch 32:6](#); [Ne 8:1](#), [3](#), [16](#); [Pr 1:20-21](#); [Lu 13:26](#).

I found him not; he saw fit still to delay the discoveries of his grace, partly, to chastise my former folly; partly, to try my sincerity and constancy; and partly, that he might be more welcome when he came to me.

[Song 3:3](#)

The watchmen; the ministers of Christ, and rulers of the church, who are oft called watchmen, as [Isa 62:6](#); [Eze 3:17](#), and elsewhere.

That go about the city, to prevent disorders and dangers by night.

Found me, whilst they walked round about the city, according to their duty.

To whom I said, without either fear or shame, as being transported and wholly swallowed up with love, *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?* she doth not name him, because she thought it needless, as supposing that a person of such transcendent excellency could not be unknown to men in that public capacity. Their answer is not mentioned, either because they gave her no answer, at least no satisfactory answer, or because by their silence she gathered that they were unable or unwilling to inform her; and being eager in the pursuit of her Beloved, she would not lose time in impertinent discourses with them.

[Song 3:4](#)

I found him; Christ met me, and manifested his love to me, according to his promise made to those that seek him constantly and diligently, [Pr 8:17](#); [Mt 7:7](#), &c.

I held him, and would not let him go, being taught by my late experience how doleful a thing it was to lose him, and how hard it was to find and recover him when he was lost.

Until I had brought him into my mother's house, that there I might entertain and embrace him, and gain my mother's consent, and so proceed to the consummation of the marriage. She saith her *mother's* rather than her *father's* house, because the men and the women had several and separated apartments in the house. For the mystical meaning, which is the principal sense intended in this book, as the spouse here, and in many other places of this book, signifies particular believers, so her mother is the universal church, or the true Jerusalem, which hath its rise from above, *which is the mother of us all*, [Ga 4:26](#), in which Christ and believers are united, and have sweet communion together in holy ordinances, into which believers are said to bring Christ by faith and prayer, and the preparation of their hearts for him, whereby they invite and in some sort engage Christ to go with them into the public assemblies, and there to give them his loves, although otherwise it is Christ who properly brings believers into the church. But all particulars in allegorical scriptures are not to be strictly urged, as all learned interpreters agree, many being added only for the decency of the allegory.

Her that conceived me; Christ is as it were the father that begets, and the church the mother that conceiveth and bringeth forth, believers.

[Song 3:5](#)

This verse is repeated from [Song 2:7](#), where it is explained. The spouse exhorts herself and all her fellow members to be very circumspect, lest by any unkind or provoking carriage they should give Christ any cause to depart from them. He is supposed to allude to the custom of awakening the bridegroom and bride by songs and musical instruments.

[Song 3:6](#)

Who is this? the persons speaking seem to be the daughters of Jerusalem, who, upon occasion of the bride's speech to them, make this reply; or the friends of the Bridegroom. The person spoken of is the spouse or bride.

That cometh out of the wilderness; from the country, which, in comparison of cities, is oft called a wilderness, as [Isa 42:11](#); [Lu 1:80](#); [3:2](#), and elsewhere, from whence we little expected to see so beautiful and glorious a bride to come, such persons being usually bred in courts or noble cities. This phrase implies that believers were, and were to be, called out of the world,

which for its barrenness, and disorder, and replenishment with wild beasts, may fitly be compared to a wilderness; and not only out of the Holy Land, which was as the garden of God, but also out of the Gentile world, which in prophetic writings is frequently described under the notion of a *wilderness*, as [Isa 35:1](#); [43:19-20](#). Withal he seems to allude to the people of Israel, which to the wonder and astonishment of all those parts came up out of the wilderness into Canaan.

Pillars of smoke; to which the church may not unfitly be compared, partly for its excellent order and comely proportions; partly, for its direct and constant motion towards heaven; and partly, to imply that though she was really and inwardly glorious, yet she was outwardly obscure and despicable in the eyes of the world. Possibly the words may be rendered thus, *as with* (which particle is very frequently understood, as hath been showed in divers foregoing texts) *pillars*, or *a pillar*, (for the plural number is oft put for the singular,) *of smoke*. And so the sense may be either, 1. Being conducted out of the wilderness as by a pillar of smoke going before them, as the Israelites were led through the wilderness to Canaan by *a pillar of cloud and fire*, [Ex 13:21](#), [22](#). Or rather, 2. Attended with many prayers and praises, and other holy performances, which are perpetually ascending from her and offered by her unto God. So he alludes to those pillars of smoke which all the day long ascended from those numerous sacrifices which were offered in the temple, which also was a type of the prayers of the saints offered by Christ unto his Father, as may be gathered from [Re 8:3-5](#). But this I only propose.

Perfumed: this doth not belong to the *pillars*, as appears by the difference of the numbers in the Hebrew words, *the pillars* being plural, and this word singular; but to the person, to wit, the spouse, who is said to be thus perfumed, partly, for her good name or renown, which is compared to perfumes, [Ec 7:1](#); partly, for her excellent virtues and religious services, which are pleasant and acceptable to God, and to angels, and to men; and partly, for the merits and graces of Christ, which are a sweet savour to God, [Eph 5:2](#), and wherewith she is enriched and beautified.

Powders of the merchant; which are fetched by the merchants from Arabia, or other remote parts of the world, for the use of perfuming.

[Song 3:7](#)

Behold his bed: these are the words either, 1. Of the bridemen, who spake [Song 3:6](#), and here continue their speech, and from the admiration of the bride proceed to the admiration of the Bridegroom. Or, 2. Of the spouse, who being admired by the bridemen, turns their eyes and thoughts to the Bridegroom, and directs them to the study of his excellencies, and intimates that all her comfort and safety is from him. The *bed*, the place of rest and conjugal converse, seems to denote the church, which is comely through Christ's beauty, and safe by his protection, in which Christ is glorified, and believers enjoy sweet fellowship with him, both here in the church militant, and especially hereafter in the church triumphant.

Which is Solomon's; which is the bed, not of an ordinary man, but of a great King, whom Solomon represents or typifies, and who is greater than Solomon. Nor is it hard to understand the Messiah under the name of Solomon, his type and progenitor, seeing he is, upon the same reason, called David, [Jer 30:9](#); [Eze 34:23](#), and elsewhere, especially considering that this whole book is by the confession both of Jewish and Christian interpreters to be mystically understood.

Threescore, i.e. very many, the certain number being put for an uncertain, as is frequent.

The valiant of Israel; he alludes to Solomon's guard, or watchmen, whereby he designs all those creatures, whether angels, princes, ministers, or others, whose ministry God useth for the protection of his church.

[Song 3:8](#)

Hath his sword upon his thigh; is prepared and ready to fight, as this phrase notes, [Ex 32:27](#); [Ps 45:3](#). *Because of fear in the night*; to prevent those dangers and mischiefs which are most frequent and most dreadful in the night season.

The night may note either, 1. The time of tribulation, temptation, or desertion. Or, 2. The whole time of this life, which may well be called night, in respect of that ignorance, and error, and other kinds of darkness wherewith it is attended, as the future life is compared to a day, this life being the only time wherein such a guard is necessary.

[Song 3:9](#)

A chariot, in which the royal Bridegroom and bride might ride together in state, as the manner was in the nuptial solemnities of such persons. By this *chariot* he seems to understand the word of Christ dispensed by his ministers in the church, whereby both Christ is exalted and rides triumphantly in the world, conquering his enemies, and subduing the world to the obedience of the gospel, and all believers are carried with safety and comfort through this present evil world, into those blessed mansions of heavenly glory.

Of the wood of Lebanon, i.e. of cedars, for which Lebanon was famous; which wood, being incorruptible, doth fitly signify *the word of the gospel, which endureth forever*, [1Pe 1:25](#), and is called the everlasting gospel, [Re 14:6](#), in opposition to the legal institutions, which were to continue only until the time of reformation, as we read [Heb 9:10](#).

[Song 3:10](#)

The pillars thereof; whereby the chariot is either supported or adorned; which may signify either, 1. Ministers, who are called *pillars*, [Ga 2:9](#), and that of silver, because they are, or should be, pure and precious, like silver. Or, 2. The firmness and certainty of Christ's word, both of his doctrines and promises, which also are *pure as silver*, [Ps 12:6](#). Although there is no necessity that either this or the following particulars should be distinctly applied to several things in or about the gospel; but this in the general may suffice, that as all these particulars are added to show the perfection and beauty of the chariot, so they do imply that Christ's word is every way amiable, and perfect, and able to make the man of God perfect. *The bottom*; either, 1. The couch or seat, which was made of or covered with cloth of gold. Or, 2. The under and lower part, which was at least covered with pure gold. Whereby he may seem to understand the foundation of the word and promises, which is either God's covenant, or Christ's mediation, in whom all the promises are yea and amen.

The covering; either, 1. The curtains, whereby persons in the chariot are covered or hid from the sight of the people. Or rather, 2. The uppermost part of it, either in the outside or the inside of it. Some render the word, *the seat or seats*. *Of purple*; which represents Christ's blood, which is our propitiatory or covering to shelter us from God's wrath.

The midst; the inward parts, especially those between the upper and lower parts, which have been already mentioned.

Paved, covered and adorned, *with love*; with beautiful and lovely ornaments, such as curious embroidery, enriched with gold and precious stones; *love* being here put for lovely objects, as fear is oft put for terrible things, as hath been oft noted. Whereby we may understand the love of Christ to the sons of men, or his lovely life, and death, and resurrection, &c.; which is the most amiable part and matter of the word or gospel.

For the daughters of Jerusalem; for their delight and comfort, who are all concerned and bear a part in this marriage.

[Song 3:11](#)

Go forth; the bride, to wit, the church, bids particular believers *go forth* to see this sight; whereby is implied that Christians must go out of the world, to wit, in affection, and out of themselves, by denying themselves, and putting off the old man, their corrupt nature, if they desire to see and enjoy Christ.

Daughters of Zion; the same with daughters of Jerusalem; for Zion and Jerusalem are oftentimes promiscuously used in Scripture.

Behold king Solomon; looking in and through him upon the Messiah, who is the *King of peace*, and of whom Solomon was an illustrious type.

The crown wherewith his mother crowned him; which being applied to Solomon, may design either, 1. The crown royal, wherewith his mother, Bathsheba, is said to have *crowned him*, because Solomon was crowned by David's order upon her suggestion, and by virtue of his promise confirmed by an oath to her, [1Ki 1:16](#), &c. Or, 2. That garland or crown which was usually worn in nuptial solemnities, as may be gathered from [Eze 16:12](#), and is expressly affirmed by divers ancient writers. But being applied to Christ, it notes that honour and glory which was given to him, which though principally done by his Father, yet is here ascribed to his mother, i.e. to the universal church, or congregation of believers, which in respect of his humanity may be called his mother, partly because he was born in and of her, and one of her members, and therefore was subject to her institutions, whence she is represented as a woman in travail, bringing forth a man child, to wit, Christ, [Re 12:1-5](#); and partly because in a spiritual sense she is said to conceive and bring forth Christ in particular believers, [Ga 4:19](#). And this mother may be said to crown Christ, both because it is the great design and business of the church to advance Christ's honour in the world, and because she brings forth believers, whom Christ esteems as his *crown and glory*, as God calls them, [Isa 62:3](#). *In the day of his espousals*; when the church is betrothed or married to him, [Jer 2:2](#); [Ho 2:19](#); [2Co 11:2](#); which is done when the covenant is made or confirmed between them, or when faithful persons are converted and united to Christ, and more completely when they are received by Christ into his more full and immediate fellowship in the kingdom of glory.

In the day of the gladness of his heart; when he rejoineth over his bride, as the phrase is used, [Isa 62:5](#). So this is the same thing expressed in other words. The conversion and salvation of sinners is the joy of Christ, as appears from [Isa 53:11](#); [Lu 15:32](#), and many other places of Scripture.

Chapter 4

Christ commendeth his church for her beauty, [Song 4:1-7](#). He calleth her to go with him, [Song 4:8](#), manifesting his love and affection for her, [Song 4:9](#). A further commendation of her, [Song 4:10-15](#). She prayeth for the effectual operation of his Holy Spirit on her to make her fruitful, [Song 4:16](#).

Song 4:1

These and the following words are evidently spoken by the Bridegroom to and concerning his spouse.

Thou art fair, not in thyself, but by my beauty, being clothed with my righteousness, and adorned with all the graces of my Spirit, which I acknowledge to be in thee.

Thou art fair; he repeats it, both to confirm the truth of his assertion, and to show the sincerity and fervency of his affection to her.

Thou hast dove's eyes; thou art harmless, chaste, &c., as appears by thine eyes, which commonly discover the temper of the mind or person. See more of this phrase [Song 1:15](#). And whereas the beauty of the spouse is here described in her several parts, we need not labour much about the application of each particular to some distinct member or grace of the church, this being the chief design of this description of a bride which is beautiful in all points, to show that completeness and absolute perfection which the church hath in part received, and shall more fully receive from Christ in the future life. Yet because the church is a body, consisting of divers members, and enriched with variety of gifts and graces, I know no reason but the several parts of this description may have a more special regard to one or other of them. And so her *eyes* may here note, either, 1. Her teachers, who are *instead of eyes* to her, as the phrase is, [Nu 10:31](#), whence they are called seers and guides, &c. Or, 2. The disposition of her mind or heart, which is compared to the eye, [Mt 6:22-23](#), and is oft discerned in the eye.

Within thy locks; which being decently composed, make the eyes appear more amiable: withal this intimates the modesty of her looks; her eyes are not wanton, and wandering, or lofty, but sober, and humble, and confined within their proper bounds, looking directly upon her husband, not looking asquint upon other lovers, nor minding other Gods or Christs. If the *eyes* signify teachers, the *locks* may note the people assembled together to hear their teachers, to whom they are a great ornament when they thrive by his teaching.

Thy hair; the hair of thine head, which is a great ornament to the female sex, [1Co 11:15](#). This *hair* may signify either, 1. The inward thoughts and meditations; Or rather, 2. The outward conversation and visible fruits of holiness, which do greatly adorn the professors and profession of religion, as hair doth the head, as is implied, [1Ti 2:9-10](#); [1Pe 3:3-5](#).

As a flock of goats; which are comely and orderly in going, [Pr 30:29](#), [31](#), and afford a goodly prospect. Or rather, *as* the hair (which word is here to be understood, as appears both from the comparison itself, and from divers places where goats are put for goats' hair, as it is in the Hebrew text, [Ex 25:4](#); [26:7](#); [35:26](#)) of a *flock of goats*, which in these parts was of extraordinary length, and thickness, and softness, and comeliness, and much more like to the hair of a man or woman than the hair of our goats is, as is evident both from Scripture, as [Ge 27:16](#); [1Sa 19:13](#); and from the testimony of other ancient writers, as Apulcius, Martial, &c.

That appear from Mount Gilead; that feeding there, or coming down thence, or going up thither, show themselves evidently to those who stand below it, or near them. Or, as it is rendered in our margin, and by others, *that eat, or graze of, or upon.* He mentions it as a very fruitful place, and fit for the breeding of all sorts of cattle, as is manifest from [Nu 32:1](#); [Jer 1:1-19](#); [19:1-15](#); [Mic 7:14](#); and especially of goats, partly because it was a hilly and woody, country, and partly because it abounded with resinous, and oily, and gummy trees, as appears from [Ge 37:25](#); [Jer 8:22](#); [46:11](#), wherewith the goats are much delighted, as Dioscorides observes. And some affirm that the hair of these goats was commonly of a yellow colour, as may seem probable from [1Sa 19:13](#), [16](#), compared with [1Sa 16:12](#), and from [Song 7:5](#); which also was in ancient times esteemed a beauty in men or women, as the learned know.

[Song 4:2](#)

Thy teeth are like a flock, numerous, and placed in due order, of sheep; which is here fitly supplied out of [Song 6:6](#), where it is expressed.

Even shorn; smooth and even, as also clean and white, whereas unshorn sheep retain much filth in their wool, even after their washing.

Every one bear twins; which seems to note the two rows of teeth, like twins, one directly answering to the other; which is a great part of the beauty or comeliness belonging to the teeth. Nor let any wonder to hear of sheep bearing twins; for that there were many such in the Eastern countries is apparent, not only from Holy Scripture, but also from the express testimony of Aristotle, and other ancient writers.

None is barren among them; not one tooth is lacking. By the teeth some understand the teachers, which may be compared to teeth, because they prepare, and as it were chew, spiritual food for the people, and to such teeth as are here described for their great number and excellent order, and for that purity and fruitfulness which is required of them. Others understand some gracious qualification or action of the faithful, either their faith, which is compared to eating, [Joh 6:41](#), &c., and elsewhere; which also purifies the heart and life, and produceth good works in abundance; or their meditation or study of God, and of his word, whereby, like the clean beasts under the law, they chew the cud; which also much promotes their purity and fertility. But, as I said on the first verse, there is no need of a distinct application of every particular, as it is in parables, where many things are added for decency, which belong not to the main scope, and therefore are neglected in the interpretation of them. The scope of this place is only to set forth the church's perfection and beauty by the resemblance of a beautiful woman, and one part of beauty consists in the colour and order of the teeth.

[Song 4:3](#)

Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet; fine, and smooth, and soft, and round, and red, in which the beauty of the lips consisteth. *Thy speech is comely;* which is added, partly as another ingredient of an amiable person, and partly to explain the foregoing metaphor. The communication or discourse of believers is edifying, and comfortable, and acceptable to God and to serious men. Compare [Ps 45:2](#); [Col 4:6](#). *Thy temples;* under which doubtless he comprehends the cheeks, which are joined to them, and in which a great part of beauty lies, which therefore would not have been omitted in this description.

Like a piece of a pomegranate; in which there is a lovely mixture of red and white. This may note both the church's beauty and her modesty, which showeth itself by blushes in those parts when she hath fallen into any sin, as the highest believers in this world sometimes do.

Within thy locks; a further evidence both of beauty and modesty. See on [Song 4:1](#).

[Song 4:4](#)

Thy neck: this may seem to represent the grace of faith, by which we are united to Christ, as the body is to the head by the neck, and through which Christians receive their spiritual food, and consequently their strength and ability for action.

Is like the tower of David; round, and smooth, and white, long, and straight, and upright, firm, and strong; and moreover, adorned with chains of gold or pearl, or the like ornaments; all which things, as they set forth the beauty of the neck, so they may signify the various excellencies and uses of faith. By this *tower* he understands either, 1. The strong hold of Zion, of which see [2Sa 5:7](#). Or rather, 2. Some other tower built by David, when he repaired, and enlarged, and fortified his royal city, [1Ch 11:8](#), and used by him as an armoury. See [Ne 3:19](#), [25-27](#).

A thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men; either, 1. Such as are fit and reserved for the use of mighty men. Or, 2. Such as had been used either by themselves, or by their enemies, from whom they took them by force, and were hung up there as trophies or monuments of victory; which is added, to show that the church is not only beautiful and glorious, but also strong and victorious over all her enemies, and to intimate the great power and exploits of faith, of which read [Heb 11:1-40](#), and which is compared to a shield, [Eph 6:16](#).

A thousand is here put indefinitely for a great number.

[Song 4:5](#)

Thy two breasts; another part in which beauty consists, [Eze 16:7](#). By which some understand the two testaments, or the two sacraments; but these are rather Christ's than the church's breasts. Others, the church's fervent love to Christ, and to all the saints, for the breasts signify love, [Pr 5:9](#); [Song 1:13](#). Others, her fruitfulness, both in good works, and in bringing up children unto Christ, like a nurse with her breasts. But the following similitude seemeth not to respect the use of the breasts, or the love which is signified or manifested by them, but their comeliness. And therefore this is generally to be understood of the church's beauty in all parts, as hath been said.

Among the lilies, i.e. in the fields where lilies grew, as is evident, both from [Mt 6:28](#), where they are called the lilies of the field, and from other scriptures, and from the testimony of other writers. The *lilies* being white and swelling, and the roes of a reddish colour, and their bodies being hid from sight by the lilies, their heads only appearing above them, bear some resemblance to the red nipples appearing in the top of the lily white breasts. But we must remember that this book is a sacred pastoral, and the Bridegroom is represented as a shepherd, and the bride as a country maid; and therefore such similitudes are used as are agreeable to persons of that quality, and such are usual in profane writers of this kind, as the learned have observed. They are compared to *roes* for their loveliness, of which see [Pr 5:19](#);

to *young* ones for their smallness, which in breasts is a beauty; to twins for their exact likeness.

[Song 4:6](#)

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away: these words are uttered by the bride, [Song 2:17](#), and here returned by the Bridegroom, as an answer to that request. And this place may be understood either, 1. Of the day of the gospel, when all legal shadows shall vanish; Or, 2. Of the day of glory, or of the general resurrection, when all manner of shadows and ordinances shall cease; till which time either the spouse feeds among lilies, as was now said, [Song 2:5](#), or the Bridegroom gets him to the mountains, &c., as it follows. For the words are by most joined with the foregoing, and by some with the following clause.

To the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense; either, 1. To the temple at Jerusalem, which is oft and fitly expressed by the name of a mountain or hill, because it was built upon a mountain, and which may be called a mountain of myrrh and frankincense, because of the abundance of myrrh and frankincense which was there used and offered; in which place the church was to feed, and Christ would continue his presence, until the dawning of the gospel day. Or, 2. To my church upon earth, which was typified by the mountain of Moriah, and the temple upon it, and which in prophetic writings is called a mountain, as [Isa 2:2-3](#); [Mic 4:1-2](#), and elsewhere; and which may well be called *a mountain of myrrh and frankincense*, both for the acceptable services which are there offered to God, and for the precious gifts, and graces, and comforts of the Holy Spirit, which are of a sweet-smelling savour to God and men, and which there, and there only, are poured forth. Thus Christ directs his bride, to wit, particular believers, where they may find and enjoy him, namely, in his church and ordinances.

[Song 4:7](#)

Thou art all fair; it is needless to mention the several beauties of all thy parts, for, in one word, thou art wholly beautiful; and it may be said more truly of thee than it was of Absalom, [2Sa 14:25](#), that from the sole of thy foot to the crown of thy head there is no blemish in thee.

There is no spot in thee; which is not to be understood simply and absolutely, as if the people of God were really perfect, and free from all sin; but either, 1. Comparatively, no such spot or blemish as is in wicked men, or as is inconsistent with true grace, of which Moses speaks, [De 32:5](#). Or, 2. In regard of God's gracious acceptance, in which respect he is said *not to behold iniquity in Jacob*, [Nu 23:21](#). God doth not look upon them with a severe eye, as they are in themselves, but in and through Christ, in whom he accepts them as if they were perfect, partly because it is their chief design, desire, and endeavour to be so, and partly because Christ hath undertaken to make them so, [Eph 5:25, 27](#), and they shall one day be such.

[Song 4:8](#)

Come with me unto the mountains of myrrh, &c., mentioned [Song 4:6](#), *from Lebanon*, a known mountain in the north of Canaan, which is sometimes mentioned as a pleasant and glorious place, as [Song 5:15](#); [Isa 35:2](#); [Ho 14:6](#), &c., in regard of its goodly cedars; and sometimes as a barren wilderness, as [Isa 29:17](#), and seat of wild beasts, as [2Ki 14:9](#), &c. Which latter sense seems more agreeable, both to the opposition which is here tacitly made between this mountain and the mountain of myrrh, and to the quality of the other mountains

here joined with Lebanon, and to the last clause of the verse. *My spouse*; this is the first time that Christ gives her this name, which he now doth, both to encourage and oblige her to go with him. *Look* to the place to which I invite thee to go, which from those high mountains thou mayst easily behold, the sight of which will certainly inflame thee with desire to go thither. He alludes to Moses's beholding the Promised Land from Mount Pisgah.

Amana; not that Amana which divided Syria from Cilicia, which was too remote from these parts, but another of that name, not far from Lebanon.

Shenir and *Hermon* may be the names of two tops of the same mountain, as Horeb and Sinai seem to have been. Or, *Shenir* or (the copulative *and* being put disjunctively for *or*, as it is in many places, which have been observed before) *Hermon*, for this mountain is called both *Shenir* and *Hermon*, [De 3:9](#), and the latter name, *Hermon*, may be added to the former, as being better known to the Israelites.

From the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards; from these or other such-like mountains, which are inhabited by lions and leopards; which seems to be added as an argument to move the spouse to go with him, because the places where now she was were not only barren, but also dangerous, as being the habitations of tyrants and persecutors, and wild or savage people, who are oft described by the names of wild beasts, whose natures they have, and whose practices they imitate.

[Song 4:9](#)

Thou hast ravished my heart; I am overcome with thy beauty, and therefore am so desirous of thy company.

My sister; so he calls her, partly because both he and she had one and the same father, to wit, God, yea, and mother too, being both at this time born in and of the commonwealth and church of Israel; and partly to show the greatness of his love to her, which is such, as cannot be sufficiently expressed by any one relation, but must borrow the perfections and affections of all to describe it.

With one of thine eyes; with one glance of one of thine eyes: by which phrase he intimates the modesty and humility of the church, which was ashamed or afraid to look fully and directly upon the Bridegroom with both her eyes; and withal alludes to the ancient custom of virgins, who used to cover their faces with a veil, and to look out only with one of their eyes for the direction of their steps. By this *one* eye he seems to mean that fundamental grace of faith, by which Christians look upon Christ, and discern his beauty, and which is precious in the sight of God and of Christ.

With one chain of thy neck; with one of those other graces and perfections wherewith thou art adorned. How then should I be ravished if thou didst discover both thine eyes, and thy whole countenance, and all thy excellent gifts and graces!

[Song 4:10](#)

How fair, how amiable and acceptable to me, is thy love! I do not disdain thy love, as I might do, but take it kindly, and prize it highly.

How much better is thy love than wine! of which [See Comment on Song 1:2](#), [See Comment on Song 1:4](#).

Of thine ointments; of the gifts and graces of God's Spirit, wherewith thou art anointed. Compare [Isa 61:1](#); [1Jo 2:20](#), [27](#).

Song 4:11

Thy lips drop as the honey-comb; thy speeches both to me in prayer and praises, and to men for their edification, are highly acceptable to me.

Honey and milk; words more sweet and comfortable than honey or milk.

Under thy tongue; by which phrase he may possibly intimate that her words were not uttered in hypocrisy, or with evil design, as many fair and smooth speeches are, but proceed from her very heart, which is under her tongue, as mischief is said to be under his tongue, [Ps 10:7](#), who devised it in his heart. The smell of thy garments; of that righteousness wherewith I have clothed and adorned thee. Christ and the graces of the Spirit are oft, compared to garments, as [Ro 13:14](#); [Eph 4:24](#); [1Pe 5:5](#).

The smell of Lebanon; which is also mentioned and commended [Ho 14:6](#), which must needs be very sweet and grateful in regard of the great numbers of sweet-smelling spices and trees which grew in that mountain.

Song 4:12

A garden, for order and beauty, for pleasant walks, and flowers, and fruits.

Enclosed; either, 1. Defended by the care of my providence; Or, 2. Reserved for my proper use. She will not admit of other lovers, either false teachers or worldly lusts, but keeps herself close for me. She is chaste, and pure, and modest, as virgins are or should be.

A spring; either, 1. For others, sending forth the wholesome streams of saving doctrine, for the refreshing, and healing, and cleansing of those who receive it. Or, 2. Within herself, being well watered, i.e. replenished with spiritual graces and blessings, which are frequently compared to waters, both in the Old and New Testament, as [Isa 44:3](#); [Joh 4:10](#); [7:38](#), for which the church is compared to *a watered garden*, or *a spring of water*, [Isa 58:11](#).

Shut up; either, 1. To preserve it from all pollution or injury; Or, 2. To reserve it for the use and service of its owner, for which reason springs were shut up in those countries where water was scarce and precious, as [Ge 29:3](#).

A fountain sealed; the same thing is here repeated in other words.

Song 4:13

Thy plants, the plants of thy garden, believers which are planted in thee, *are an orchard;* are like the plants or fruits of an orchard, which are pleasant to the eye, and delicious to the taste or smell, such as are here mentioned in the following words; whereby he signifies the variety and excellency of gifts and graces in the several members of the church.

Spikenard; which he mentions both here with *camphire* or *cypress*, and in the next verse with *saffron*, because it is mixed with both these, and being so mixed, yieldeth the more grateful smell.

[Song 4:14](#)

Trees of frankincense; such trees as produce frankincense. Or, as others, both ancient and modern, render it, *trees of Lebanon*; such sweet-smelling trees and plants as grew in Lebanon, of which [See Comment on Song 4:11](#).

[Song 4:15](#)

These are the words either, 1. Of the bride, who returns this answer to the Bridegroom. Thou callest me a fountain, but in truth thou only art that fountain from whence I derive all my streams of comfort; Or rather, 2. Of the Bridegroom, who hath hitherto been speaking to and of the church, and still continues his speech. He seems to add this by way of correction to or exposition of what he said, [Song 1:12](#). Though my spouse be in some sort a fountain shut up or sealed, yet that is not so to be understood as if she kept her waters to herself, for she is like a fountain or well of living or running water, which floweth into gardens, and maketh the flowers and plants to grow and flourish. The church conveyeth those waters of life which she receiveth from Christ unto particular believers and congregations.

Streams from Lebanon; like those sweet and refreshing rivers which flow down from Mount Lebanon, of which Jordan is one.

[Song 4:16](#)

Awake; or, *arise*; either, 1. To be gone, as being commonly hurtful to plants and gardens; Or rather, 2. To come, as the next clause explains it. For both the north wind and the south wind have their several uses in gardens; the former to purge and cool the air, and to bring fair weather; the latter to warm and moisten the earth, and cherish the plants. And these winds may signify the several dispensations either of God's providence, or rather of his Spirit, which is compared to the wind, [Joh 3:8](#), whereby the following effects are produced.

My garden: this verse is spoken; by the spouse, as appears from the last clause of it. And she calls the garden both *hers* and *his*, because of that oneness which is between them, [Song 2:16](#), whereby they have a common interest one in another's person and concerns.

That the spices thereof may flow out; that my graces may be exercised to thy glory, the edification of others, and my own comfort.

Let my Beloved come into his garden, let Christ afford his gracious presence more and more to his church, and eat his pleasant fruit; and let him delight himself in that service and glory which is given to him, both by the religious worship and by the holy conversations of his people.

Chapter 5

Christ answereth the church's invitation, and showeth her the delight he took in her fruit, [Song 5:1](#). She acknowledges her negligence to Christ in not opening the door, [Song 5:2-6](#). Of

the harsh usage she met with, [Song 5:7](#). She tells the daughters of Jerusalem she is sick of love to Christ. [Song 5:8](#). Their question concerning him, [Song 5:9](#). A description of Christ by his graces, [Song 5:10-15](#), in whom she boasteth, [Song 5:16](#).

[Song 5:1](#)

I am come into my garden: this is the Bridegroom's answer to her request, delivered in the next foregoing words.

I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey; I have drunk my wine, with my milk; I have eaten of my pleasant fruits, as thou didst desire. I have taken notice of, and delight in, the service and obedience of my people.

Friends; the friends of the Bridegroom; whereby he understands either, 1. The holy angels and glorified saints, who in a sublime and spiritual sense may be said to eat and drink in heaven, the happiness whereof is frequently represented under the name and notion of a feast. Or rather, 2. Believers or members of the church militant upon earth, who by the argument of Christ's gracious presence with them, and acceptance of their works signified in the last words, are here invited and encouraged with great freedom and cheerfulness to eat and drink their spiritual food, to feed upon God's holy word and sacraments, to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, who here gives them a hearty welcome to this feast.

[Song 5:2](#)

I sleep, Heb. *I was asleep*, i.e. I was dull, and sluggish, and insensible of his kind expressions and offers of grace.

But my heart waketh; yet in my very sleep my thoughts were running upon my Beloved, as is not unusual in such cases, which at last awakened me. Thus she implies the conflict which was between the flesh and the Spirit, and the Spirit's victory in the combat.

It is the voice of my Beloved; between sleeping and waking I fancied that I heard his voice.

That knocketh, by his word, and providence, and Spirit, at the door of mine heart, desirous that I would receive him by faith and love. Compare [Re 3:20](#). Saying, *Open to me;* inviting me to accept of his gracious offers, and to let him in to my soul.

My sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: this heap of kind appellations signifies Christ's sincere and fervent affection to his people, notwithstanding her manifold imperfections and infirmities. The title of *dove* signifies her chastity and constant faithfulness to her Husband, for which doves are famous. How she is undefiled, [See Comment on Song 4:7](#).

My head is filled with dew, whilst I wait without thy door. He alludes to the custom of lovers, which oft and willingly suffer such inconveniences for their hopes and desires of enjoying their beloved, and signifies his sufferings for the church's good.

The drops of the night; the dew which falls in the end of the night, or towards the morning, whence it is called *morning dew*, [Ho 6:4](#).

[Song 5:3](#)

I have put off my coat, my day clothes, as persons use to do when they go to rest.

How shall I put it on? it is inconvenient and troublesome to do it at this time. Thus she tacitly reflects upon the Bridegroom for coming to her so unseasonably, and giving her such disturbance, and puts him off to another time, and excuseth her non-admission of him by her present indisposition, and the difficulty of the thing required of her.

I have washed my feet; which the Eastern people commonly did when they went to bed, partly to cool their feet, and partly to cleanse them from that dust and sweat which they had contracted in the day time by labour and travel, as being used to go barefoot.

[Song 5:4](#)

My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door; he assayed to open the door. When his word would not prevail, his Spirit, which is called the finger of God, [Lu 11:20](#), compared with [Mt 12:28](#), wrought inwardly upon my conscience, and affected mine heart. My bowels were moved for him, with compassion for him and his sufferings, and with affection to him; for both these ways is this phrase off used, as [Job 37:1](#); [Php 2:1-2](#), &c.

[Song 5:5](#)

I rose up to open to my Beloved; I repented of my former drowsiness and neglect, and went forth to receive him.

My hands dropped with myrrh, i.e. with oil or ointment made of myrrh, which either, 1. She had taken out of her own stock to prepare herself for the entertainment of the Bridegroom; Or rather, 2. Dropped from the Bridegroom's hand upon the door in great abundance, when he put it into the hole of the door, [Song 5:4](#), and consequently upon her hands and fingers when she touched the door to open it. By which she signifies that Christ, though he withdrew himself from her, yet left a sweet savour behind him, infusing into her, and stirring up in her, the graces of the Spirit, such as repentance, which is bitter as myrrh, earnest desire after Christ, &c.

With sweet-smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock, Heb. *with myrrh passing or flowing upon the handles of the lock,* which place the Bridegroom had touched when he attempted to open it.

[Song 5:6](#)

Withdrawn himself; denied me his gracious and comfortable presence, as a just punishment for my former neglect and folly.

And was gone; either she repeats the same thing to show how deeply she was affected with it; or this is added to imply that he had not only stepped aside, but was quite gone away.

My soul failed, Heb. *went out of me.* I fainted and was ready to die away through excessive passion, as this phrase is used, [Ge 35:18](#); [42:28](#), and elsewhere.

When he spake; or, for what he spoke; for those endearing expressions related [Song 5:2](#), which then I did not heed, but this sad occasion brings them to my remembrance; as oftentimes that word which is ineffectual when it is preached, is afterwards brought to a man's mind, and, produceth blessed effects.

I sought him by diligent inquiry and importunate prayer. He gave me no answer; that so he might both chastise her folly, and quicken her desires, and prepare the way for a more hearty welcome, and his longer abode with her.

[Song 5:7](#)

The watchmen that went about the city; the governors of the church, as [Song 3:3](#), who, though by their place and office they be obliged, to comfort and protect the faithful, do frequently discourage and oppress them, as they manifestly did both in the days of Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and the other holy prophets, and in the time of Christ and his apostles, and in divers other ages.

They wounded me with bitter calumnies and persecutions.

The keepers of the walls; the same with the watchmen, whose office is to keep the gates and walls of the city.

Took away my veil; which was an ornament of her sex, [Isa 3:23](#), and a badge of her modesty, [Ge 24:65](#), or an ensign of her relation and subjection to Christ, [Ge 20:16](#); [1Co 11:5](#). And so the taking of this veil away signifies their contemptuous and injurious usage of her, their endeavours to blast her reputation, and to represent and treat her as a common and impudent prostitute, and as one that had no relation to Christ.

[Song 5:8](#)

Daughters of Jerusalem; of whom [See Comment on Song 1:5](#), [See Comment on Song 2:7](#). The church having passed the watchmen, and patiently borne, and in a manner forgotten, their injuries, proceeds in the pursuit of her Beloved, and inquires of every particular believer or professor whom she meets concerning him.

That I am sick of love; that I am ready to faint for want of his presence, and the tokens of his favour. Use all your interest and importunity with him on my behalf.

[Song 5:9](#)

What is thy Beloved more than another beloved? wherein doth he excel them? which professors of religion might ask, because they were ignorant of Christ's excellency; and true believers might ask it, that they might be more fully informed of it, and might give the spouse occasion to discourse of that subject which was very grateful to them.

O thou fairest among women; whose beauty may command the respects and affections of the most worthy persons; and therefore we conclude it must be some person of transcendent excellency with whom thou art so highly enamoured.

[Song 5:10](#)

White and ruddy; which two colours rightly mixed together make a face beautiful. Or the *white* may note his pure and spotless innocency, and the brightness of his glory and majesty, and the ruddy colour may intimate his bloody passion, which made him amiable both to God and men.

The chiefest, Heb. *the standard-bearer*; for such are usually persons of great eminency, both for stature, and courage, and dignity.

Among ten thousand; among all persons, angels or men. A certain number is put for an uncertain. There are other kings, and priests, and prophets, but none to be compared with him.

[Song 5:11](#)

His head is as the most fine gold; it shines like gold, not in respect of the hair, which is black, as it followeth, but by reason of his crown of pure gold upon his head, [Re 14:14](#); whereby she implies that her Bridegroom was a King, which she declared above, [Song 5:11](#).

His locks; in which a part of man's beauty consists. I shall not trouble my reader with a distinct application of this and the following particulars unto some special part or excellency of Christ, because such things are mere conjectures without any solid grounds, and the only design of this description seems to be this, to set forth the beauty of Christ under the notion of a most complete and amiable person, in whom there is no defect nor blemish, from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet.

Black as a raven; which is mentioned, partly because this was esteemed a beauty, and partly because it was an evidence of his youth and rigour, as grey hairs are characters of age and infirmity, [Ho 7:9](#).

[Song 5:12](#)

His eyes are as the eyes of doves, lovely and pleasant, chaste and innocent.

By the rivers of waters; where they delight to abide, and wherewith they bathe themselves, and wash their eyes; where also their eyes are most lively and beautiful, both by the reflection of the waters, and from that pleasure which they take in such places.

Washed with milk; which may belong either, 1. To the eyes, which are supposed to be washed with water, as white and pure as milk; Or, 2. To the doves, which are intimated to be of a milk-white colour, which in those parts was most esteemed, which colour also made the eyes appear more lovely.

Fitly set; neither sinking into the head, nor standing out too much, but in a moderate and comely situation. Heb. *sitting in fulness*; which may note a full and competently large eye, which is esteemed one beauty of the eye.

[Song 5:13](#)

His cheeks; his face or countenance, an eminent part whereof is the cheeks, in which the beauty or deformity of a face doth much consist.

As a bed; which being higher than other parts of the garden, fitly represents the cheeks, which are higher than other parts of the face.

Of spices; not of dry spices, for they are not in beds; but of aromatical flowers, which delight both the eye with a pleasant prospect, and the smell with their fragrantcy. This may also signify the down or hair upon the Bridegroom's cheeks, which is the evidence of his mature and vigorous age, and may denote that Christ's sweetness and gentleness is accompanied with majesty, and gravity, and just severity.

Sweet flowers: this may be added to explain the former phrase. Or, *towers of perfumes*, i.e. boxes in which perfumes were put, which by their height or form had some resemblance to a turret.

His lips like lilies; beautiful and pleasant. Or this is meant of that sort of lilies which were of a red or purple colour, as ancient writers affirm, and so signify the grateful colour of the lips. This may note that grace which was poured into Christ's lips, and which flowed from them in sweet and excellent discourses.

Dropping sweet smelling myrrh; not only graceful to the eye, as lilies are, but also fragrant to the smell.

[Song 5:14](#)

His hands; the instruments of action and of distribution, which may design the actions of Christ, and particularly his distributing gifts and graces to his members.

As gold rings set with the beryl; beautiful and precious, and richly adorned, as it were with gold rings set with precious stones.

His belly; which seems to be here used, either, 1. Metonymically for the bowels, which are contained in the belly. Or rather, 2. Synecdochically, for the whole body, reaching from the neck, to the bottom of the belly, which is distinguished from the face and the joints, which are described in the other clauses. For he speaks here of those parts which are visible to the eye. And thus here is a complete description of Christ's beauty in all parts, from his head to his feet.

As bright ivory overlaid with sapphires; of a pure and bright white colour, intermixed with blue veins; for some sapphires are of a bright blue colour.

[Song 5:15](#)

His legs; the instruments of local motion, and the supporters of the body.

As pillars of marble; white, and straight, and well shaped, and strong; which may note the firmness and stability of Christ's kingdom in spite of all opposition.

Set upon sockets of fine gold; which add both beauty and strength to them. These may note his feet compared to gold, either for their great price and worth, or for their singular brightness, for which they are compared to *fine brass*, [Re 1:15](#); or, as others, for his golden shoes, wherewith they were covered or adorned, as the spouse is commended from her shoes, [Song 7:1](#).

His countenance, Heb. *his aspect or appearance*; his form or person, as this Hebrew word is elsewhere used.

As Lebanon, in respect of its cedars, as the next words explain it, to wit, tall, and upright, and stately, and withal pleasant to the eye.

[Song 5:16](#)

His mouth is most sweet, which was said before in other words, [Song 5:13](#), and is here justly repeated, because it was a principal part of Christ's beauty, and the chief instrument of the spouse's comfort and happiness, which wholly depends upon his sweet and excellent speeches, his holy precepts and gracious offers and promises contained in the gospel. He is altogether lovely; not to run out into more particulars, in one word, there is no part of him which is not exquisitely beautiful.

This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O daughters of Jerusalem, and therefore you have no cause to wonder or to blame me if I am transported with love to so excellent a personage.

Chapter 6

An inquiry after Christ, [Song 6:1](#). The church's answer, [Song 5:2](#). The church confesseth her faith in Christ, [Song 6:3](#). Christ showeth the graces of his church, [Song 6:4](#), and the beauty of several parts, [Song 6:5-10](#). He acquaints her where he had been, and what he had been doing, [Song 6:11](#); and discovers his affection to her, [Song 6:12](#); with an invitation of her to return to him again, [Song 6:13](#).

[Song 6:1](#)

These are the words of the daughters of Jerusalem, last mentioned, whom this full and pathetic description of the Bridegroom's excellency had inflamed with love to him.

Whither is thy Beloved turned aside, to wit, from thee, as thy words imply, [Song 6:6](#), [8](#); where dost thou use to look for him, and to find him, when thou hast lost him? O thou who art well acquainted with all the places both of his usual abode, and of his diversion, inform us who are ignorant of them. That we may seek him with thee; we ask not with any evil design, but only because we desire an interest in him.

[Song 6:2](#)

The spouse had hitherto been at a loss for her Beloved, but having diligently sought him, and inflamed both her own and others' affections with love to him by her just commendations, now at last she meets with a gracious answer from God, directing her where to find him, which also comes very seasonably, not only for her own relief and comfort, but also for the benefit of others, who inquired after him. The *garden* seems to signify the church catholic,

and *the gardens*, as it follows here, as also the beds, may note the particular assemblies of the faithful, in which Christ affordeth his presence and his blessing.

Beds of spices; in which the gifts and graces of God's Spirit, which are fitly compared to spices or aromatical flowers, do appear and grow.

To feed; to refresh and delight himself, or to gather the flowers and fruits of it, as men use to do in their gardens.

To gather lilies; which may note either, 1. Particular believers, whom Christ gathereth to himself in his church, who are compared to lilies, [Song 2:2](#). Or, 2. The prayers and praises tendered to him by his people in the public congregations, and all their gracious dispositions and actions.

[Song 6:3-4](#)

Thou art beautiful, O my love: these are the words of Christ, who had now again manifested himself to his church; whereby he declares, that though he had for a season hid his face from her, yet still he retained a sincere and fervent affection to her, and that, notwithstanding her manifold infirmities, she was yet beautiful in his eyes.

Tirzah; a very pleasant city, as its very name signifies, and therefore made the royal seat of the kings of Israel; of which see [1Ki 14:17](#); [15:31](#); [16:6](#), &c.

Comely as Jerusalem; which was beautiful, both for its situation, [Ps 48:2](#), and for its goodly buildings, especially the temple. See [La 2:15](#).

Terrible; either, 1. To strangers, whom by her grave and, majestic looks and carriage she affrights from rude or bold attempts, whereas some women invite others to familiarity with them by their loose and wanton carriage. Or, 2. To her enemies, whom God will certainly destroy.

[Song 6:5](#)

Turn away thine eyes from me, for I can scarce bear the lustre of them. It is a poetical and amatorious expression, signifying how beautiful the church was in Christ's eyes, and how passionately he loved her.

Thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead: this clause, and the whole following verse, are repeated from [Song 4:1-2](#). And this repetition is not vain nor absurd, but very agreeable to the nature of a pastoral and song of love, as being an effect and testimony of vehement affection, and besides it confirms what was said before, and showeth that the church's miscarriages, and Christ's desertion of her upon it, had not made him change his opinion of her, or affection to her.

[Song 6:6-8](#)

Threescore queens, and fourscore concubines; a certain number for an uncertain. The sense seems to be this, There are many beautiful queens and concubines in the world, in the courts of princes, and particularly in Solomon's court; but none of them is to be compared with my

spouse, and my heart is set upon none of them, but only upon my spouse, as the following verse declareth. Or *the queens and concubines* may note the particular congregations which are called by Christ's name, and the virgins may signify the particular believers or professors; all which do make up one catholic church, as it follows. [See Comment on Ps 45:10](#), [See Comment on Ps 45:14](#), [See Comment on Ps 45:15](#). *Virgins*; either, 1. Which wait upon the queens and concubines. Or, 2. Which were reserved as a nursery, out of which queens and concubines were to be taken.

[Song 6:9](#)

Is but one; the only beloved of my soul, my only spouse, in comparison of whom I despise all others.

She is the only one of her mother; of Jerusalem above, which is the mother of us all, [Ga 4:26](#). Or if this seem to confound the mother and daughter, the words may be thus rendered, *she is the only one of her mother*, i.e. she is as dear and as precious to me as only children use to be to their parents, and especially to their mothers. So there is only a defect of the note of similitude, which is frequently understood, as hath been formerly noted and proved by undeniable instances.

Daughters, called *virgins*, [Song 6:8](#).

They praised her; as more beautiful and worthy than themselves, which was so evident that they were forced to confess it.

[Song 6:10](#)

These are the words, either, 1. Of the Bridegroom; Or, 2. of the queens and concubines last mentioned, as praising of her. And they are either words of inquiry, or rather of admiration and commendation: *Who*, i.e. what manner of person, is this? how excellent and glorious! and so this pronoun who is understood [Ps 24:8](#); [Mr 4:41](#), compared with [Mt 8:27](#).

As the morning; as the morning light, which coming after the darkness of the night is very pleasant and amiable, which also suddenly spreadeth itself from the east to the west.

Fair as the moon, to wit, when it is full and *walking in brightness*, as the phrase is, [Job 31:26](#). But withal he seems to intimate that the church, like the moon, may have her eclipse, and be in darkness for a time.

Clear as the sun; without any such spots or dark specks as are in the moon; which is to be understood in the same sense that she is said to be without spot, or wrinkle, or blemish, [Eph 5:27](#), which she is partly by God's gracious acceptation of her as such in Christ, and through his righteousness; and partly because she shall be such in the future life.

Terrible as an army with banners: see [Song 6:4](#).

[Song 6:11](#)

I went down, to wit, when I went away from thee. So this is an account of the reason of his former departure from her. Or, *I am come down to visit thee, my garden,* [Song 4:12](#). Either way these are the words of the Bridegroom.

Into the garden of nuts; in which nuts and other fruits are planted. By *nuts* may be meant, either, 1. Ordinary nuts; and so this is supposed to intimate the mean and contemptible condition of the church in her outward estate, and that her sweetness is all inward and spiritual. Or, 2. Aromatical nuts, to wit, nutmegs; and so this notes how acceptable the church and her productions are to Christ.

The valley; which being low, and well watered, is most fruitful.

To see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded; what beginnings or appearances there were of good fruits or works among believers; whether their practices answered their professions.

[Song 6:12](#)

Or ever I was aware; I was surprised with a sudden and vehement desire of enjoying my spouse; which is to be understood figuratively, and so as to agree with the majesty and omniscency of Christ.

My soul made me; I made myself; which may signify Christ's activity in stirring up his affections to the church: or, I was made; for the active phrase is oft understood passively, and the soul is commonly put for the person.

Like the chariots of Ammi-nadib; eager in my desire and swift in my motion towards the church. Ammi-nadib is supposed to be some eminent charioteer then well known, and famous for his speed in driving chariots. But this clause with the former is otherwise rendered, both in the margin and by others, and that very agreeably to the Hebrew words, *my soul set me on the chariots of my willing* (or, as others, *noble or princely*) *people*, i.e. which mine and the bride's friends had prepared to bring me to the bride with more expedition, into which I ascended with all my soul, as longing to come to my bride.

[Song 6:13](#)

Return: Christ recalls his spouse, who as when Christ was gone she pursued after him, so now when Christ was coming or come to her, she was ready to wander and go astray from him, according to the common and corrupt disposition and custom of mankind; and therefore he seeks to stop or to reclaim her, and to oblige her to return to her first love, and to repent more thoroughly than she had yet done. *Return:* this word is here repeated four times, to signify both Christ's passionate love to her, and earnest desire of her return, and her backwardness to it, which made so many calls necessary.

Shulamite: this title signifies either, 1. One born in or belonging to Jerusalem, called also Salem, [Ps 76:2](#). Or, 2. The wife of Solomon, thus called after her husband's name: see [Isa 4:1](#). And as Christ is called by the name of Solomon, [Song 3:7, 9, 11](#), so the church is fitly described by the title of Solomon's wife.

That we may look upon thee; that I and my companions and friends may contemplate thy beauty.

What will ye see? but what do you my friends expect to discover in her? Christ proposeth the question, that he may give the following answer, and that they should take special notice of this as a very remarkable thing in her.

The company, whereby he intimates that this one and only spouse was made up of the whole multitude of believers, of two armies; either, 1. Opposite one against the other; and so this may note the conflict between the flesh and Spirit which is in all the faithful in this life. Or, 2. Confederate together; and so this may signify either, 1. The re-collection and union of Jews and Gentiles which shall one day be under Christ as their common Head, [Eph 2:15](#). Or, 2. The safety and strength of the church, which is compared to an army with banners, above, [Song 6:4, 10](#), and here to a numerous host distributed into two armies; wherein also there may be an allusion to that story, [Ge 32:1](#), where this very word, here rendered two armies, is used.

Chapter 7

A further description of the church's graces, [Song 7:1-7](#). This design to visit the church, with the blessed effect thereof, [Song 7:8-9](#). She professeth her faith and desire, [Song 7:10](#). She inviteth him to communion with her, [Song 7:11](#). The end thereof, [Song 7:12-13](#).

[Song 7:1](#)

The Bridegroom, who spake the last words, here continueth his speech, and breaks forth into an elegant and particular description and commendation of the spouse, partly from the parts of her body, and partly from her ornaments; in which the same thing is to be observed which was noted concerning her description of the Bridegroom, that there is no necessity of a distinct application of every parcel of it, the design being only this, to describe the beauty and glory of the church under the representation of a beautiful and noble woman. This also is observable, that in the description of Christ she begins at the head, and so goeth downward, [Song 5:11](#), &c., but Christ in the description of the spouse proceedeth from the feet upwards.

Feet being the chief instrument of our motion from place to place, is oft used metonymically for the motion itself, and so may here signify either the inward motions, the workings of the affections, or the outward motions, the steps or actions of the life, both which are right and amiable in believers.

Shoes were anciently evidences of a free and comfortable state, whereas slaves and mourners use to go barefoot, [2Sa 15:30](#); [Isa 20:4](#), which also in women of high quality were adorned with gold and other ornaments; of which see [Isa 3:18](#). These may also signify that the feet of believers should be *shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*, [Eph 6:15](#). *Prince's daughter*, both by birth, being born of God, and by disposition and deportment agreeable to that quality.

The joints of thy thighs; either, 1. The hollow place in which the hip or thigh-bone moveth and turneth itself; Or rather, 2. The hip or thighbone which moveth there; for this is more fitly compared to a jewel well set. Some understand this of some ornaments worn by women upon those parts; for the word rendered *joints* may signify *girdles*, or any ornament which encompasseth any part of the body, and the same words which signify *thighs* are both in

Hebrew and other languages sometimes used concerning the *legs*; which being admitted, this might seem to be understood of the bride's garters, about her legs, which not unfitly follows the shoes upon her feet last mentioned. But this sense seems not to suit so well with the following comparison as the former doth.

Like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman; like jewels orderly and excellently set by a skillful artist. So this signifies the uprightness and decency of her going, which depends very much upon the right situation of the hip or thigh-bone, which when it is dislocated or disordered causeth a lameness or uncomeliness in going; whereby he understands the orderliness and amiableness of her conversation.

[Song 7:2](#)

Thy navel is like a round goblet, to which it is not unfitly compared, because it is of a round form, and hollow, and hath windings and circlings in it, *which wanteth not liquor*; thy navel is not only comely, but fruitful. For the navel is the proper instrument of nourishing the child or children which are in the womb. And so this seems to signify the church's fruitfulness, partly in herself, in cherishing and improving all the graces and good motions of God's Spirit within her; and principally in reference to those many children which she bears and feeds in her womb with the wholesome liquor of God's ordinances. Thy belly, in which thy children are for a time contained and fed, is like a heap of wheat, i.e. of wheat corn, round and swelling, as it is in women with child, and full of nourishment, not only of liquor, as was last said, but also of meat, which may note the various provisions which Christ hath laid up in his church according to the several capacities of her children, milk for babes, and stronger meat for those who are grown up. Set about with lilies; not for defence, which the church doth not need, having the strong God for her Protector, but for ornament and beauty; whereby is implied that she is not only fruitful, but beautiful, and that her children are not only numerous and well fed, but also comely and delightful to the eye, as lilies are, and withal pure and innocent, in which respect both Christ and the church are compared to lilies, [Song 2:1-2](#).

[Song 7:3-4](#)

Thy neck, of which [See Comment on Song 4:4](#), *is as a tower of ivory*, clear, and smooth, and long, and straight, and erected.

Thine eyes, [See Comment on Song 1:15](#); [See Comment on Song 4:1](#), *like the fishpools*, full, and clear, and quiet, and pleasant. Possibly here were two fish-pools, which being conveniently seated in a large field, might bear some resemblance to the eyes placed in the head.

Heshbon; a pleasant and well-watered city, beyond Jordan, as we may guess from [Nu 32:1-42](#), where doubtless there were some eminent and well-known fish-pools, as further appears by the exact description of the particular place here following, in which they were.

Thy nose; the instrument of smelling, and discerning between pleasant and loathsome things; which may signify the church's sagacity in discerning between good and evil; *is as the tower of Lebanon*; which though it be not elsewhere mentioned, was in all probability built by Solomon in the mountain of Lebanon, which was the northern border of the land of Israel towards Damascus, and therefore a very fit place for a watch-tower. To this tower her nose is

compared, not for its greatness, but for its comely and convenient proportions, and beautiful aspect, which doubtless were in this as well as in the rest of Solomon's buildings.

Which looketh toward Damascus; which words seem to be added to distinguish this from another tower or building in or near to Jerusalem, which was called the house of the forest of Lebanon, [1Ki 7:2](#).

[Song 7:5](#)

Thine head, which may signify the church's mind or understanding, which is seated in the head, *upon thee,* which is upon thee, or above the rest of thy body, *is like Carmel,* eminent and pleasant to the eye, and fruitful as Mount Carmel was, as hath been formerly noted; which may note that her mind was adorned and replenished with knowledge and other excellent gifts of the Holy Ghost. Or, as others render it, *like crimson* or *purple,* which is called *Carmel,* [2Ch 2:7](#); [3:14](#), because those fishes out of which they had their purple were taken in the sea bordering upon Mount Carmel. And so the same thing is repeated in the next clause in other words.

Like purple; which colour was anciently much esteemed and commended, as by sacred, so also by profane writers.

The king is held in the galleries; in which he walketh, and having once espied thee, is captivated by thee, and unable or unwilling either to depart or to take off his eyes from thee, as if he were fast bound and chained to thee. The *galleries* may note either the ordinances, or rather the churches, in which Christ walketh, [Re 2:1](#), in which Christ and believers converse together.

[Song 7:6](#)

How fair and how pleasant art thou? it were infinite to reckon up all the particulars of thy beauty; in one word, thou art universally amiable beyond expression.

For delights; for those various lovely features which are in thee, and for the great and manifold delights which are or may be enjoyed in conversing with thee.

[Song 7:7](#)

Like to a palm tree, tall and straight, or upright, as a tree. And he seems to mention the palm tree rather than any other, partly because it grows more directly upward than other trees; and partly because it is constantly green and flourishing, and groweth upward in spite of all pressures, and therefore was used in festival solemnities, [Lev 23:40](#); [Joh 12:13](#), and was a symbol of victory, [Re 7:9](#); in all which respects it fitly represents the state of believers.

Clusters, large, and round, and full of juice. [See Comment on Song 7:3](#). This particular is added as an evidence of her maturity and married estate, and of her fruitfulness.

Grapes; which word may easily be supplied out of the next verse. Although the fruit of the palm tree also is said to grow in clusters.

[Song 7:8](#)

I said within myself, I resolved, I will go up to the palm tree; I will climb up, that so I may take hold, as it follows, of the boughs, which do not grow out of the sides, as in other trees, but only at the top of it.

I will take hold of the boughs thereof, partly to prune and dress them, and partly to gather the fruit; whereby is signified Christ's care of his church, and his delight in her.

Of thy nose; of thy breath; which is oft called the breath of or in a man's nostrils, [Ge 7:22](#); [Isa 2:22](#); [La 4:20](#).

Like apples; either, 1. Common apples, which sometimes yield a very pleasant smell. Or, 2. Odoriferous apples. [See Comment on Song 2:5](#).

[Song 7:9](#)

The roof of thy mouth; either, 1. Thy speech, the palate being one of the principal instruments of speech; Or rather, 2. Thy taste, whereof the palate or roof of the mouth is the most proper and principal instrument, [Job 34:3](#). But then this is not to be understood actively of her taste, but passively of the taste or relish which her Beloved had of her; as in the foregoing clause, the smell of her nose was not meant subjectively or actively of that sense of smelling which was seated in her nose, but objectively or passively of the breath of her nostrils, which was sweet to the smell of her Beloved.

Like the best wine, grateful and refreshing. For my beloved; either, 1. For thee my beloved, who reapest the comfort and benefit of that pleasure which I take in time; Or, 2. For me thy Beloved, or, according to thy usual expression, for my Beloved; which words Christ takes as it were out of her mouth, and repeats them emphatically; which agrees very well to the style and usage of these dramatical and amaropious writings. And this clause further intimates the church's loyalty or faithfulness to Christ, that she reserves herself and all her loves for Christ alone.

That goeth down sweetly; whereas bad wine either goeth down slowly and tediously, or is not permitted to go down at all; Heb. that walketh directly; or, that moveth itself aright; which is given as the character of good wine, [Pr 23:31](#).

Causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak; causing the most dull, and stupid, and sleepy-headed persons to speak, and that fluently and eloquently, which is a common effect of good wine.

[Song 7:10](#)

This and the following verses contain the words of the bride, in answer to the Bridegroom's most endearing expressions delivered in the foregoing verses.

His desire is toward me; I perceive, and am fully satisfied, that he heartily loves me. It is my duty to have my desire towards him as my Husband, according to God's sentence, [Ge 3:16](#), but it is a wonderful condescension in him, that his desire is towards me.

[Song 7:11](#)

Let us go forth into the field; that being retired from the crowd, we may more freely and sweetly converse together, and may observe the state of the fruits of the earth. In the villages; in one of the villages, as cities is put for one of the cities, [Jdg 12:7](#).

[Song 7:12](#)

Let us get up early: the church having offended and lost her Beloved by her former laziness, now doubles her diligence, and discovers how earnestly she was set upon the following work.

To the vineyards; to particular congregations. See [Song 6:11](#); [Isa 5:1](#).

Let us see if the vines flourish &c.; let us inquire into the success of our labours, what souls are brought in and built up, how they prosper and grow in grace, whether they abound in good works, &c.

There will I give thee my loves; there I will discover the sincerity and fervency of my affections to thee, and maintain communion with thee in thy holy ordinances.

[Song 7:13](#)

Mandrakes: this Hebrew word is used [Ge 30:14-15](#), and the signification of it is very much doubted and disputed by interpreters; of which see my Latin Synopsis on that place. But this is certain, that the word signifies sweet and pleasant flowers; and therefore if it be understood of mandrakes, they were of another sort than ours, as it is no unusual thing for flowers of the same kind in several climates to have very differing natures and qualities.

At our gates; either, 1. Growing there upon the walls, or in gardens, or orchards, near the door of our dwellinghouse. Or rather, 2. Brought thither by divers persons to congratulate and adorn our nuptials, or laid up for our entertainment, as may be gathered from the nature of the fruits, which were not only new, and growing, but also *old*, and laid up, as it here follows.

Fruits new and old; fruits of this year and of the former, that the variety might delight; which seems to be spiritually meant of the various fruits and operations of the Spirit and degrees of grace in several believers.

Which I have laid up for thee; which have been produced by my ministry for thy service and glory.

Chapter 8

The church expresseth her desire of familiarity with Christ, [Song 8:1](#), by the entertainment she would make him, [Song 8:2-3](#). She charges the daughters of Jerusalem not to disturb her. Beloved, [Song 8:4](#). A commendation of the church for her faith in Christ, [Song 8:5](#). She prayeth for full assurance of his love; her invincible desire, [Song 8:6](#); which is insatiable, [Song 8:7](#). The calling of the Gentiles, with their intent, and her condition, [Song 8:8-13](#). Christ's coming prayed for, [Song 8:14](#).

[Song 8:1](#)

Oh that thou wert as my brother, most intimate, and free, and familiar with me, as brethren and sisters commonly are, *that sucked the breasts of my mother!* that came out of the same womb, and sucked the same breasts, and consequently were brother and sister by father and mother too; for such are most dear to one another. See [Ge 43:29](#); [De 13:6](#). Heb. *sucking the breasts*, &c.; so she wisheth that he were as a little sucking brother, with whom she might innocently and inoffensively delight herself, as sister: do with such a brother. The church here expresseth her passionate desire of a stricter union and closer communion with Christ than yet she had attained. And in particular these may be the breathings of the ancient Jewish church after Christ's incarnation, whereby he was to be their brother, [Ro 8:29](#); [Heb 2:11-12](#), and a sucking infant.

Without; in the open streets; I might then express my affections to thee, and kiss thee openly, without any scandal or contempt. Or, *without*, i.e. come forth from the Father's bosom into the world, [Joh 16:28](#).

I would kiss thee; I would demonstrate my reverence, and subjection, and affection to thee, of all which kissing was a token in those times and places, as hath been oft observed in divers foregoing texts.

Yet I should not be despised; then should I not be ashamed or censured, as if I had done an indecent or immodest action, because such expressions of love are usual amongst persons so nearly and dearly related.

[Song 8:2](#)

Bring thee, with joy and triumph, as the bridegroom was usually brought to the bride's house. See [Ps 45:14-15](#).

Into my mother's house; either, 1. My mother's-inlaw, my husband's mother, as the custom was, [Ge 24:61](#); [Jdg 12:9](#). Or, 2. My own mother's, to show her extraordinary respect and affection to him. In the mystical sense both come to one; for the universal church was in some sort both his and her mother.

Who would instruct me, to wit, how I should behave myself towards thee. Or, *where she did instruct or educate me*.

I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate; I would give thee the best entertainment which the house affords. My gifts and graces should all be employed to serve and glorify thee.

[Song 8:3](#)

The same expressions are used [Song 2:6](#). The sense is, He would not despise me for my forwardness in showing my affections to him, as men commonly do in like cases, but would kindly accept of my love, and return love for it.

[Song 8:4](#)

This verse is here repeated again, from [Song 2:7](#); [3:5](#), [See Comment on Song 3:5](#).

[Song 8:5](#)

Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness? These Words are repeated from [Song 3:6](#), [See Comment on Song 3:6](#). This and the next clause are the words either, 1. Of the daughters of Jerusalem, or the friends of the bride and Bridegroom, admiring and congratulating this happy conjunction. Or, 2. Of the Bridegroom, who proposeth the question, that he may give the answer here following.

Leaning upon her Beloved; which implies both great freedom and familiarity, and fervent affection, and dependence upon him. If these be the Bridegroom's words, he speaketh of himself in the third person, which is usual in the Hebrew language.

I raised thee up, when thou wast fallen, and laid low, and wert dead in trespasses, and in the depth of misery I revived thee.

Under the apple tree; under my own shadow; for she had compared him to an apple tree, and declared that under the shadow of the tree she had both delight and fruit, [Song 2:3](#), which is the same thing with this raising up.

There thy mother brought thee forth; under that tree either the universal or the primitive church did conceive and bring thee forth.

[Song 8:6](#)

Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: these are undoubtedly the words of the bride. The sense is, Let thy mind and thy heart be constantly set upon me, let me be engraven upon the tables of thine heart. He seems to allude to the engraven tablets which are frequently worn upon the breast, and to the signet on a man's arm or hand, which men prize at a more than ordinary rate, as appears from [Jer 22:24](#); [Hag 2:23](#), and which are continually in their sight.

For love, my love to thee, from whence this desire proceeds, *is strong as death;* which conquers every living thing, and cannot be resisted nor vanquished.

Jealousy, or *zeal;* my ardent love to thee, which also fills me with fears and jealousies, lest thou shouldst bestow thine affections upon others, and cool in thy love to me, or withdraw thy love from me; for true believers are subject to these passions.

Cruel, Heb. *hard; grievous and terrible,* and sometimes ready to overwhelm me, and swallow me up; and therefore have pity upon me, and do not leave me.

Are coals of fire; it burns and melts my heart like fire.

[Song 8:7](#)

It is the nature of love in general, and of my love to thee, that it cannot be taken off, neither by terrors and afflictions, which are commonly signified in Scripture by *waters* and *floods*, [Ps 32:6](#); [52:7](#), and elsewhere; not by temptations and allurements. Nothing but the presences and favour of the beloved person can quiet and satisfy it. And therefore do not put me off with other things, but give me thyself, without whom, and in comparison of whom, I despise all other persons and things.

[Song 8:8](#)

These are manifestly the words of the bride, still continuing her speech. The present church, which was that of the Jews, speaks of another future church, which was to consist of the Gentiles, which she calls *little*, because she was the younger sister, and then scarce had a being; and she calls her her *sister*, partly because she was so in the purpose of God, their common Father, though at present she was a stranger to him; and partly to intimate that the Gentile church should be admitted to the participation of the same privileges with that of the Jews.

She hath no breasts; no grown and full breasts, as virgins have when they are ripe for marriage, [Eze 16:7](#). This signifies the present doleful estate of the Gentiles, which as yet were not grown up into a church estate, and wanted the milk or food of life, as for itself so also for its members.

What shall we do for our sister? teach us to know and perform our duty to them, which is to embrace them with sincere and fervent affections, to promote their coming in to Christ, and to rejoice in it, and not to envy it, and murmur at it, as the Jews did in the days of Christ and of his apostles.

In the day when she shall be spoken for, to wit, for bringing her into the state of matrimony; when Christ and his apostles, and others, the first ministers of the gospel, who were members of the Jewish church, did speak and act for the conversion of the Gentiles.

[Song 8:9](#)

This seems to be Christ's answer to the foregoing question of the Jewish church concerning their sister church of the Gentiles, for which they were very solicitous. Christ therefore engageth himself to take care of her, and to provide for her, as the matter doth require, and as suits best with her condition. If the Gentiles, when they are converted, shall be like a *wall*, strong and firm in faith, stedfast against all assaults and temptations, for a *wall* in Scripture use signifies strength, [Isa 26:1](#); [Jer 15:20](#), and elsewhere, *we*, my Father, and I, and the Holy Ghost, as the principal builders, and my ministers as workers with and under us, *will build upon her a palace of silver*; will add more strength and beauty to her, will enlarge and adorn her, make her more amiable in mine eyes, and more visible and glorious in the eyes of the world.

And if she be as a door, which is weaker than a wall, and where the enemy doth or may break in upon her; if she be weak in faith, and sometimes overcome by the tempter, yet we will not therefore reject and forsake her, but *we will enclose*, or (as many others render the word) *strengthen, or fortify, her with boards of cedar*, which are not only beautiful, but also strong

and durable. If she be sincere, and open the door of her heart to me, though she be weak, I will come in to her, and make her stronger.

[Song 8:10](#)

These seem to be the words of the Jewish church to Christ: O Lord, by thy grace I am what thou wouldst have my sister to be, a wall, and therefore do humbly beg and hope that, according to thy promise to her in that case, thou wilt build upon me a palace of silver.

My breasts like towers; which stand out from and above the wall, and are an ornament and defence to it. Of the church's breasts, see before, [Song 4:5](#); [7:3](#), [7](#).

Then was I in his eyes as one that found favour; when by his grace I was made a wall, he was well-pleased with me, and with his own workmanship in me.

[Song 8:11](#)

Baal-hamon; a place not far from Jerusalem, where Solomon had, as it seems, a noble vineyard.

Every one was to bring a thousand pieces of silver; whereby he signifies both the vast extent of the vineyard, which required so many keepers, and its singular fertility, which afforded so great a rent.

[Song 8:12](#)

My vineyard; my church, which is oft compared to a vineyard, and is here opposed to Solomon's vineyard. It is much doubted and disputed whether this verse be spoken by Christ or by the spouse; the first clause seems to agree best to the former, and the following clause to the latter. Possibly the difficulty may be reconciled by ascribing the first clause to Christ, and the latter to the spouse; such interlocutions being familiar in this book, and in other writings of this kind. *Which is mine*: this repetition is not idle, but very emphatical, to show that Christ had a more eminent and special title to his vineyard, the church, than Solomon had to his vineyard, because it was purchased not by his money, but by his blood, and because it was his, not only for the short time of this present life, as Solomon's was, but to all eternity.

Is before me; is under my own eye and care, and is not wholly committed to the care and management of others, as Solomon's was: *I the Lord do keep it night and day*, as we read, [Isa 27:3](#). *I am with it to the end of the world*, [Mt 28:20](#).

Thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand: these are the church's return to Christ, who is here called Solomon, as he was [Song 3:9](#), [11](#), as elsewhere he is called David. Dost thou, O Christ, keep thine own vineyard, which Solomon did not? Then surely it is meet that thou shouldst receive, and thou shalt receive, as large a revenue from thy vineyard as he did from his.

Those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred; though the chief revenue belongeth and is justly given to thee, yet thy ministers who serve thee in thy vineyard shall have, and are allowed by thee to receive, some encouragement for their service. See [1Co 9:7](#).

[Song 8:13](#)

Thou that dwellest: the Hebrew word is of the feminine gender, which plainly showeth that Christ speaks here to his spouse, being about to depart from her for a season, as the next verse showeth.

In the gardens; not in the wilderness of the world, for believers are chosen or *called out of the world*, [Joh 15:19](#); but in the church, the garden of God, which God hath fenced and appropriated to himself. He saith *gardens*, because of the many particular congregations into which the church is divided.

The companions, the friends of the bride and Bridegroom, *hearken to thy voice;* diligently observe all thy words and carriages towards me, and all the transactions between thee and me.

Cause me to hear it; when I am gone from thee, let me hear thy prayers, and praises, and the preaching of my gospel in the world.

[Song 8:14](#)

Seeing we must part for a time, make haste, O my beloved Bridegroom, and speedily finish the work which thou hast to do in the world, that so thou mayst take me to thyself, that I may live in thine everlasting embraces. The words of this verse are borrowed from [Song 2:17](#), where they are explained.