

## CHAPTER 2

### INTRODUCTION TO SONG OF SOLOMON 2

Here begins a new colloquy between Christ and his church; in which they alternately set forth the excellencies of each other; and express their mutual affection for, and delight and pleasure they take in, each other's company. Christ seems to begin, in an account of himself and his own excellencies, and of the church in her present state, (<sup>2111</sup>Song of Solomon 2:1,2); then she, in her turn, praises him, and commends him above all others relates some choice proofs she had had of his love to her, and of communion with him in his house and ordinances, to such a degree as to overcome her, (<sup>2113</sup>Song of Solomon 2:3-6); and then either he or she gives a charge to the daughters of Jerusalem, not to disturb either the one or the other in their sweet repose, (<sup>2117</sup>Song of Solomon 2:7). Next the church relates how she heard the voice of Christ, and had a sight of him on the hills and mountains, at some distance; then more nearly, behind her wall, and through the lattices, (<sup>2118</sup>Song of Solomon 2:8,9); and expresses the very words in which he spake to her, and gave her a call to come away with him; making use of arguments from the season of the year, the signs of which are beautifully described, (<sup>2120</sup>Song of Solomon 2:10-13); and requests that she would come out of her solitude, that he might enjoy her company, whose countenance and voice are so delightful to him; and gives a charge to her and her friends, to seize on such as were harmful and prejudicial to their mutual property, (<sup>2124</sup>Song of Solomon 2:14,15). And she closes the chapter with expressing her faith of interest in Christ; and with a petition for his speedy approach to her, and continued presence with her, (<sup>2126</sup>Song of Solomon 2:16,17).

**Ver. 1.** *I [am] the rose of Sharon, [and] the lily of the valleys.* Whether Christ, or the church, is here speaking, is not certain: most of the Jewish writers<sup>f92</sup>, and some Christian interpreters<sup>f93</sup>, take them to be the words of the church, expressing the excellency of her grace, loveliness, and beauty, she had from Christ; and intimating also her being in the open fields, exposed to many dangers and enemies, and so needed his protection. The church may be compared to a “rose”, for its beautiful colour and sweet

odour<sup>f94</sup>, and for its delight in sunny places, where it thrives best, and is most fragrant. This figure is exceeding just; not only the beauty of women is expressed by the colour of the rose<sup>f95</sup>, as is common in poems of this kind; to give instances of it would be endless<sup>f96</sup>; some have had the name of Rhoda from hence; (see ~~4423~~ Acts 12:13). No rose can be more beautiful in colour, and delightful to the eye, than the church is in the eyes of Christ, as clothed with his righteousness, and adorned with the graces of his Spirit: nor is any rose of a more sweet and fragrant smell than the persons of believers are to God and Christ, being considered in him; and even their graces, when in exercise, yea, their duties and services, when performed in faith; and, as the rose, they grow and thrive under the warming, comforting, and refreshing beams of the sun of righteousness, where they delight to be. The church may also be compared to a “lily of the valleys”, as she is, in the next verse, to one among thorns. This is a very beautiful flower; Pliny<sup>f97</sup> says it is next in nobleness to the rose; its whiteness is singularly excellent; no plant more fruitful, and no flower exceeds it in height; in some countries, it rises up three cubits high; has a weak neck or body, insufficient to bear the weight of its head. The church may be compared to a lily, for her beauty and fragrance, as to a rose; and the redness of the rose, and the whiteness of the lily, meeting in her, make her somewhat like her beloved, white and ruddy; like the lily, being arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints; and like it for fruitfulness, as it is in good works, under the influence of divine grace, and grows up on high into her head, Christ Jesus; and though weak in herself, yet strong in him, who supports her, and not she him: and the church may be compared to a “lily of the valleys”; which may not describe any particular lily, and what we now call so; but only expresses the place where it grows, in low places, where plants are in danger of being plucked and trodden upon; though they may have more moisture and verdure than those in higher places; so the church of Christ is sometimes in a low estate, exposed to enemies, and liable to be trampled and trodden under foot by them, and to be carried away with the flood of persecution, were it not guarded by divine power; and, being watered with the dews of grace, it becomes flourishing and fruitful. But the more commonly received opinion is, that these are the words of Christ concerning himself; and which indeed best become him, and are more agreeable to his style and language, (~~846~~ John 14:6 ~~850~~ John 15:9); and suit best with the words in the (~~210~~ Song of Solomon 2:2), as one observes<sup>f98</sup>; nor is it unfitly taken by the bridegroom to himself, since it is sometimes given by lovers to men<sup>f99</sup>.

Christ may be compared to a rose for its colour and smell; to the rose for its red colour: and which may be expressive of the truth of his humanity, and of his bloody sufferings in it; and this, with the whiteness of the lily, finishes the description of him for his beauty, (<sup>2150</sup>Song of Solomon 5:10); and for its sweet smell; which denotes the same things for which he is before compared to spikenard, myrrh, and camphire. The rose, as Pliny says<sup>f100</sup>, delights not in fat soils and rich clays, but in rubbish, and roses that grow there are of the sweetest smell; and such was the earth about Sharon<sup>f101</sup>; and to a rose there Christ is compared, to show the excellency and preferableness of him to all others. The word is only used here and in (<sup>2380</sup>Isaiah 35:1,2). Where it is in many versions rendered a “lily”: it seems to be compounded of two words; one which signifies to “cover” and hide, and another which signifies a “shadow”; and so may be rendered, “the covering shadow”: but for what reason a rose should be so called is not easy to say; unless it can be thought to have the figure of an umbrella; or that the rose tree in those parts was so large, as to be remarkable for its shadow; like that Montfaucon<sup>f102</sup> saw, in a garden at Ravenna, under the shadow of the branches of which more than forty men could stand: Christ is sometimes compared to trees for their shadow, which is pleasant and reviving, as in (<sup>2108</sup>Song of Solomon 2:3 <sup>2847</sup>Hosea 14:7). Some render it, “the flower of the field”<sup>f103</sup>; which may be expressive of the meanness of Christ in the eyes of men; of his not being of human production; of his being accessible; and of his being liable to be trampled upon, as he has been. And as he is compared to a rose, so to a “lily”, for its colour, height, and fruitfulness; expressive of his purity in himself, of his superiority to angels and men, and of his being filled with the fruits and blessings of grace; and to a lily of the valleys, denoting his wonderful condescension in his low estate of humiliation, and his delight in dwelling with the humble and lowly: some render the words, “I am the rose of Sharon, with the lily of the valleys”<sup>f104</sup>; by the former epithet meaning himself; and by the latter his church, his companion, in strict union and communion with him; of whom the following words are spoken.

**Ver. 2.** *As the lily among thorns, so [is] my love among the daughters.*] These are manifestly the words of Christ concerning his church, whom he calls “my love”, (see Gill on “<sup>2109</sup>Song of Solomon 1:9”); and was his love still, though in such company, and in such an uncomfortable condition. In what sense she is comparable to a lily has been shown in (<sup>2108</sup>Song of Solomon 2:1); but here she is compared to one among “thorns”: by which

may be meant wicked men, comparable to thorns for their unfruitfulness and unprofitableness; for their being hurtful and pernicious to good men; and for their end, which is to be burned; especially persecutors of religion, who are very distressing to the saints who dwell among them; (see <sup><1016-2</sup> Samuel 23:6); and her being among such serves for a foil, to set off her excellency the more: and the simile is designed, not so much to observe that Christ's lily grows among thorns, as to show that the church is as preferable to such persons as a lily is to thorns; which is justly remarked by Carolus Maria de Veil; and which sense the comparison requires, as appears by the reddition, so is "my love among the daughters": the nations and men of the world, and even carnal professors, members of the visible church, whom she as much exceeds in beauty, grace, and fruitfulness, as the lily exceeds thorns. Ainsworth thinks the "woodbind" or "honeysuckle" is meant, which grows in thorn hedges, and is sometimes called "lilium inter spinas", as Mercer observes; this is indeed of a sweet smell, yet very weak, and cannot support itself; and therefore twists and wraps itself about other trees, their twigs and branches, "convolvens se adminiculis quibuscunque", as Pliny<sup>f105</sup> says; hence we call it "woodbind", and for the same reason its name in Greek is "periclymenon"; so saints are of a sweet fragrance to Christ, and, weak in themselves, cannot support themselves; yet they twine about Christ, lean on him, and are upheld by him, and depend on him for all good things. But it is the same word as in (<sup><2111</sup> Song of Solomon 2:1), and may be rendered "lily" here as there; and not a "rose", as it is in the Targum, from which it is there distinguished. The lily is often mentioned in this love song; it is said to be the delight of Verus<sup>f106</sup>. Some call it "ambrosia".

**Ver. 3.** *As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so [is] my beloved among the sons,* etc.] As the apple tree, in a garden or orchard, excels and is preferable to the wild barren trees of a forest<sup>f107</sup>, especially it appears so when laden with choice fruit; so the church, who here returns the commendation to Christ, asserts, that he as much excels all the "sons", the creatures of God, angels or men: angels, as the Targum, who, though sons of God by creation, Christ is the Son of God, in a higher sense; he is their Creator, and the object of their worship; they are confirmed by him in the estate they are, and are ministering spirits to him; and he is exalted above them in human nature: men also, the greatest princes and monarchs of the earth, are sometimes compared to large and lofty trees; but Christ is higher than they, and is possessed of far greater power, riches, glory, and majesty.

All the sons of Adam in general may be meant; wicked men, who are like forest trees, wild, barren, and unfruitful; yea, even good men, Christ has the pre-eminence of them, the sons of God by adopting grace; for he is so in such a sense they are not; he is their Creator, Lord, Head, Husband, and Saviour, and they have all their fruit from him; and so ministers of the word have their gifts and grace from him, and therefore Christ excels all that come under this appellation of sons. Christ may be compared to an apple tree, which is very fruitful; and, when full of fruit, very beautiful; and whose fruit is very cooling, comforting, and refreshing. Christ is full of the fruits and blessings of grace, which are to be reached by the hand of faith, and enjoyed; and as he is full of grace and truth, he looks very beautiful and glorious in the eye of faith; and which blessings of grace from him, being applied to a poor sensible sinner, inflamed by the fiery law, and filled with wrath and terror, sweetly cool, refresh, and comfort him. The apple tree has been accounted an hieroglyphic of love, under which lovers used to meet, and sit under its delightful shade, and entertain each other with its fruit; to which the allusion may be; (see <sup>2186</sup>Song of Solomon 8:5); the apple was sacred to love<sup>f108</sup>. The Targum renders it, the pome citron, or citron apple tree; which is a tree very large and beautiful; its fruit is of a bitter taste, but of a good smell; always fruit on it; is an excellent remedy against poison, and good for the breath, as naturalists<sup>f109</sup> observe; and so is a fit emblem of Christ, in the greatness of his person, in the fulness, of his grace, in the virtue of his blood, and righteousness and grace, which are a sovereign antidote against the poison of sin; and whose presence, and communion with him, cure panting souls, out of breath in seeking him; and whose mediation perfumes their breath, their prayers, whereby they become grateful to God, which otherwise would be strange and disagreeable;

*I sat down under his shadow with great delight:* under the shadow of the apple tree, to which Christ is compared; whose person, blood, and righteousness, cast a shadow, which is a protecting one, from the heat of divine wrath, from the curses of a fiery law, from the fiery darts of Satan, and from the fury of persecutors, (<sup>2206</sup>Isaiah 25:4,5); and is a cooling, comforting, and refreshing one, like the shadow of a great rock to a weary traveller, (<sup>2330</sup>Isaiah 32:2); and though the shadow of some trees, as Pliny<sup>f110</sup> observes, is harmful to plants that grow under them, others are fructifying; and such is Christ; “they that dwell under his shadow shall revive and grow”, etc. (<sup>2847</sup>Hosea 14:7). “Sitting” here supposes it was her

choice; that she preferred Christ to any other shadow, looking upon him to be a suitable one in her circumstances, (<sup>(2006)</sup>Song of Solomon 1:6,7); it intimates that peace, quietness, satisfaction, and security, she enjoyed under him; it denotes her continuance, and desire of abiding there, (<sup>(4908)</sup>Psalm 91:1); for the words may be rendered, “I desired, and I sat down”<sup>f111</sup>; she desired to sit under the shade of this tree, and she did; she had what she wished for; and she sat “with great delight”: having the presence of Christ, and fellowship with him in his word and ordinances, where Christ is a delightful shade to his people;

*and his fruit [was] sweet to my taste*; the fruit of the apple tree, to which the allusion is. Solon<sup>f112</sup> advised the bride to eat a quince apple before she went into the bridegroom, as leaving an agreeable savour; and intimating how graceful the words of her mouth should be. By “his fruit” here are meant the blessings of grace, which are Christ’s in a covenant way, come through his sufferings and death, and are at his dispose; such as peace, pardon, justification, etc. and fresh discoveries and manifestations of his love, of which the apple is an emblem: and these are sweet, pleasant, and delightful, to those that have tasted that the Lord is gracious; whose vitiated taste is changed by the grace of God, and they savour the things of the Spirit of God.

**Ver. 4.** *He brought me to the banqueting house*, etc.] Or “into” it<sup>f113</sup>. The “house of wine”<sup>f114</sup>, as it is literally in the original; either the “wine cellar”<sup>f115</sup>, as some, where stores of it were kept; or, the “place of fasting”<sup>f116</sup>, as others, and, as we render it, a “banqueting house”; where it was distributed and drank; a banquet of wine being put for a feast, and here the nuptial feast; and may design the Gospel feast in the house of God, where there is plenty of the wine of Gospel truths, and provisions of rich food, with which believers are sweetly refreshed and delightfully regaled: and to be brought hither, under the drawings and influences of divine grace, is a special privilege, a distinguishing layout; and show a great condescension in Christ, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, to take his people by the hand, as it were, and introduce them into his house, so well furnished, and to a table so well spread: and so the church relates it as an instance of divine favour, and as a fresh token of Christ’s love to her; which further appears by what follows: the covenant of grace and the Scriptures of truth may be thought of as a banqueting house, well stored with blessings, and promises, and rich provisions; which, to be led and let into, is a singular kindness;

*and his banner over me [was] love*; signifying, that she was brought into the banqueting house in a grand, stately, and majestic manner, with flying colours; the motto on which inscribed was “love”; the allusion may be to the names of generals being inscribed on the banners of their armies; so Vespasian’s name was inscribed on the banners throughout his armies<sup>f117</sup>. Christ’s name, inscribed on his, was “love”, his church’s love; and by which his company or band was distinguished from all others, even by electing, redeeming, calling love. It may signify the security and protection of the saints, while in the house of God, and enjoying communion with him, being under the banner of love, with which they are encompassed as a shield; and it may denote the very manifest and visible displays of it, which the church now experienced.

**Ver. 5.** *Stay me with flagons*, etc.] Of wine, which is a supporter of the animal spirits<sup>f118</sup>. The church was now in a house of wine, where was plenty of it; even of the love of Christ, compared to wine, and preferred unto it, (<sup>(200)</sup>Song of Solomon 1:2,4); the church though she had had large discoveries of it, desired more; and such that have once tasted of this love are eagerly desirous of it, and cannot be satisfied until they have their fill of it in heaven: the flagons, being vessels in which wine is put, and from thence poured out, may signify the word and ordinances, in which the love of Christ is displayed and manifested; the church desires she might be stayed and supported hereby, while she was attending on Christ in them;

*comfort me with apples*; with exceeding great and precious promises; which, when fitly spoken and applied, are “like apples of gold in pictures of silver”, (<sup>(251)</sup>Proverbs 25:11); and are very comforting: or rather, with fresh and greater manifestations of his love still; for the apple is an emblem of love, as before observed; for one to send or throw an apple to another indicated love<sup>f119</sup>. It may be rendered, “strew me with apples”<sup>f120</sup>; in great quantities, about me, before me, and under me, and all around me, that I may lie down among them, and be sweetly refreshed and strengthened: the words, both in this and the former clause, are in the plural number; and so may be an address to the other two divine Persons, along with Christ, to grant further manifestations of love unto her, giving the following reason for it:

*for I [am] sick of love*; not as loathing it, but as wanting, and eagerly desirous of more of it; being, as the Septuagint version is, “wounded”<sup>f121</sup> with it; love’s dart stuck in her, and she was inflamed therewith: and

“languished”<sup>f122</sup>; as the Vulgate Latin version is; with earnest desires after it; nor could she be easy without it, as is the case of lovers.

**Ver. 6.** *His left hand [is] under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.*] The church, having desired to be stayed, supported, strengthened, and comforted, presently found her beloved with her, who with both hands sustained her; which shows his tender love to her, care of her, and regard for her; and is expressive of the near and intimate communion she had with him, as the effect of union to him, often enjoyed in his house and ordinances; likewise of blessings of every kind she received from him; temporal, mercies, or left hand blessings, which are necessary to support and carry through this wilderness; and spiritual, or right hand blessings, as justification, pardon, adoption, etc. and, moreover, may denote the safety and security of the church, being encircled in the arms of her beloved, sustained by Christ’s left hand, and embraced by his right hand, out of whose hands none can pluck. Some read the words prayer wise, “let his left hand be”, etc.<sup>f123</sup>; still desiring further tokens of his love to her, and more and nearer communion with him: others read it in the future, “his left hand will be”, etc.<sup>f124</sup>; “his right hand shall embrace”, etc. expressing the strength of her faith that she should for the future enjoy his gracious presence; and that he would support her, that she should not sink and faint.

**Ver. 7.** *I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,* etc.] Of whom, see (<sup>2005</sup>Song of Solomon 1:5). There is some difficulty in these words, whether they are spoken by the church, or by Christ: according to our version, they are the words of the church, and bids fair to be the sense; since they are spoken to the virgins, her companions, that waited on her; and the manner of speech is not by way of command, as by way of adjuration; and the matter, style, and language of it, Christ being the church’s love; and the phrase, “till he please”, best agrees with his sovereignty and authority, who is at liberty to stay with, and remove from, his people at pleasure; and the context and scope of the place seem to confirm it; the church, enjoying communion with Christ, chooses not that he should be disturbed, and by any means be caused to depart from her. Others think they are the words of Christ, and not without reason; since it was the church that was in Christ’s arms, and fallen asleep in them; and the phrase, “my love”, is used by Christ concerning his church, (<sup>2006</sup>Song of Solomon 7:6); and not this, but another, is used by her concerning him; and besides, both the word for “my love”, and that which is rendered “he please”, are feminine, and best agree with her, “that ye stir not up, the” or



“this love, until she please”; so Michaelis<sup>f125</sup> interprets and renders the word for “love [by] this lovely one”; the word is very emphatic, the love, the famous love, the well known love<sup>f126</sup>: add to which, the following words seem to confirm this sense, “the voice of my beloved”, which she had heard, adjuring the daughters of Jerusalem. This charge is made,

*by the roes, and by the hinds of the field*; not that either Christ or his church swore by them; but the words may be descriptive of the persons addressed by the creatures, among whom they were feeding their flocks, or whom they delighted to hunt<sup>f127</sup>; or were loving and lovely creatures, as they: and the charge is, that they would continue among them, and mind their business, and give no disturbance to Christ or the church; or these creatures are called as witnesses to this charge, which, if not observed, would be brought against them: or the charge is made by all that is dear, these being pleasant and lovely creatures, that they would not interrupt the mutual communion of Christ and his church; or it may be a severe threatening, that, should they disregard the charge, they should become food as common as roes and hinds; and that they should be as cautious of stirring up and awaking the person meant as they would be of starting those timorous creatures. The charge is,

*that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please*; or, “till she please”; if it is the charge of the church, it may lead to observe, that Christ is the object of the church’s love; and that she is his resting place; that he may not be disturbed and raised up from it by an unfriendly behavior toward him, or by animosities among themselves; that saints should be very careful that they do not provoke Christ to depart from them; and that communion with him is entirely at his pleasure, when and how long it shall continue; it depends as much upon his sovereign will as the first acts of his grace towards them. But if this is the charge of Christ, not to disturb his church, then it may be observed, that the church is the object of Christ’s love, and always continues so; that the church sleeps and takes her rest in Christ’s arms; which is not to be understood of a criminal drowsiness and sleep, but of comfortable repose and rest, Christ gives his beloved ones, in communion with himself; that he loves and delights in the company of his people, and would not have them disturbed in their fellowship with him; and though, while grace is in exercise, saints are desirous of enjoying Christ’s presence always; yet, when it is otherwise, they become indifferent to it, which provokes Christ to depart from them; and therefore it is said, “till she please”: and as this charge is given to the “daughters of

Jerusalem”, young converts, or weak believers; it suggests, that they are apt to disturb both Christ and his church; to disturb Christ by their impatience and frowardness, like children; hence the church acts the part of a mother charging her children to be quiet, and not disturb her loving husband, while she enjoyed his company; and to disturb the church, through their weakness, not being able to bear the sublime doctrines of the Gospel, and through their ignorance of Gospel order.

**Ver. 8.** *The voice of my beloved!* etc.] So says the church, who well knew Christ her beloved’s voice; which is known by all believers in him, and is distinguished by them from the voice of others; by the majesty and authority of it; by the power and efficacy of it; by its directing them to himself, and by the pleasure it gives them: and she speaks of it as being very delightful to her; it being the voice of him whom she loved, and a voice of love, grace, and mercy, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation; and, being observed before, what follows shows that Christ is heard before he is seen; he is first heard of in the Gospel, before he is seen, by an eye of faith: and such would have others observe the voice of Christ as well as they, for here the church speaks to the daughters of Jerusalem; and it seems by this, that, by some means or another, Christ had been disturbed, and had departed from the church for a while, and was now upon the return to her, which made his voice the more joyful to her;

*behold, he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills;* this may be, understood, either of Christ’s first coming in the flesh, much prophesied of, long expected, and was very welcome: this was attended with many difficulties, comparable to mountains and hills; that he the Son of God should become man; that he should obey, suffer, and die for men, fulfil the law, satisfy justice, atone for sin, and save from all enemies; but those which seemed insuperable were easily surmounted by Christ: or of his spiritual coming; sometimes he withdraws himself, and then returns again, and faith, spying him at a distance, rejoices at his nearer approach; for impediments in his way, occasioned by the unbelief, carnality, lukewarmness, backslidings, and ingratitude of his people, are removed and got over by him, nothing being able to separate from his love; and his coming, either way, is with all readiness, swiftness, speed, and haste. And a “behold” is prefixed to this, as a note of admiration and attention; and is so, whether applied to the one or other. Christ’s incarnation was matter of wonder, “behold, a virgin”, etc. (<sup><2374></sup>Isaiah 7:14); and so his manifestation of himself to his people, and not to others, is marvellous, “Lord, how is it”,

etc. (<sup>6142</sup>John 14:22); and both comings are visible, glorious, and delightful. Ambrose<sup>f128</sup> has these remarkable words, by way of paraphrase, on this passage,

“Let us see him leaping; he leaped out of heaven into the virgin, out of the womb into the manger, out of the manger into Jordan, out of Jordan to the cross, from the cross into the tomb, out of the grave into heaven.”

The allusion is to the leaping of a roe, or a young hart, as in (<sup>2119</sup>Song of Solomon 2:9), which is remarkable for its leaping, even one just yeaned<sup>f129</sup>; so a young hart is described, by the poet<sup>f130</sup>, as leaping to its dam the leap of one of these creatures is very extraordinary<sup>f131</sup>.

**Ver. 9.** *My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart*, etc.] The church, upon the swift and speedy approach of Christ unto her, compares him to these creatures; which are well known for their swiftness<sup>f132</sup> in running, and agility in leaping, as before observed: and, besides these things, Christ may be compared to them on other accounts; they are pleasant and lovely, choice and valuable; bear an antipathy to serpents, which they easily overcome; are very good for food, and very agreeable, and are long lived creatures<sup>f133</sup>; Christ is lovely and amiable in his person, and high in the esteem of his divine Father, angels and men; is choice and excellent in his nature, offices, and grace; bears an antipathy to the old serpent, the devil, whose works and powers he came to destroy, and has got an entire victory over them; and is very agreeable food to faith; his flesh is meat indeed, and the more so through his sufferings and death; as the flesh of those creatures is said to be the more tender and agreeable, by being hunted; and Christ, though dead, is alive, and lives for evermore;

*behold, he standeth behind our wall*; not the middle wall of the ceremonial law, behind which, Christ, under the Old Testament dispensation, stood, showing himself to believers; nor the wall of our humanity he partook of, when he came in the flesh, and under which his glorious deity was in some measure covered and hid; but rather the wall of our hearts, (<sup>2419</sup>Jeremiah 4:19); the hardness, infidelity, and carnal reasonings of it, which are so many walls of separation between Christ and his people; behind which he stands, showing his resentment of them, and in order to demolish them, and get admittance: he is represented here, as nearer than when she first saw him, even at her very home;

*he looketh forth at the windows*; this is coming nearer still; for, by the manner of the expression, it seems that he was within doors, since he is said, not to look through the windows, but to look forth at them, meaning the ordinances; which are that to the church as windows to a house, the means of letting in light into the souls of men; and where Christ shows himself, in his glory and beauty, as kings and great personages look out at windows to show themselves to their people: though Christ may also be said to look in at, those windows, to observe the behaviour of his people in his house and ordinances, with what attention, affection, faith, and reverence, they wait upon him in them;

*showing himself through the lattice*; by which may be meant the same things, only a larger and clearer discovery of Christ in them, of which ordinances are the means; and yet, unless Christ shows himself through them, he cannot be seen in them: and a “behold” being prefixed to these gradual discoveries of himself, show them to be wonderful! a glance of him behind the wall is surprising; his looking in at the windows still more so; but his showing himself, in all his glories and excellencies, through the lattice, is enough to throw into the greatest rapture, to fill with joy unspeakable and full of glory! Some render the word “flourishing”,<sup>f134</sup> like a rose or lily, or like a vine, or jessamine; which grow up by a window or lattice, and, seen through them, took very pleasant and delightful. But the allusion is rather to the quick sighted roe, or young hart; which, as it is remarkable for its swiftness, referred to, (<sup>2118</sup>Song of Solomon 2:8), so for the sharpness of its sight; Pliny<sup>f135</sup> says it is never dim sighted; it has its name “dorcās”, in Greek, from its sight.

**Ver. 10.** *My beloved spake, and said unto me*, etc.] Christ, the church’s beloved, being so near her, she could distinctly hear and understand what he spoke, and relate the very words: or, “he answered to me”<sup>f136</sup>; to a secret petition, put up to him for a more full enjoyment of him; for there is mental as well as vocal prayer, which Christ, as God omniscient, knows full well, and gives answer to: of this may be an answer to her petitions in (<sup>2115</sup>Song of Solomon 2:5); and as some in (<sup>2116</sup>Song of Solomon 2:6); however, Christ said something after related, that she well knew he spake, and not another, and to her in particular. What he said follows:

*Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away*; the affectionate and endearing titles of “love” and “fair one”, have been met with and explained, on (<sup>2105</sup>Song of Solomon 1:5,8,9); and are repeated to show his ardent love

to her, notwithstanding the frame she was in, which was very probably a slothful one, by the exhortations given; and to remove her discouragements, arising from her present state; and to prevail upon her to get up from her bed of carnal sloth and security, at least to shake off her indolence; and to quit her seat and company, and go along with him, or where he should direct, since it would be to her own advantage: for the words may be rendered, “rise up for thyself, and come away for thyself”<sup>f137</sup>; it will turn to thy account, and to do otherwise will be detrimental to thee. The arguments follow.

**Ver. 11.** *For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over [and] gone.*] A season of the year which keeps persons within doors, makes going abroad unsafe, unpleasant, and uncomfortable; very unfit for travelling, roads bad, rivers impassable, and journeying very difficult; but now this season being over, and the spring come, the weather fair, and every thing gay and pleasant, it is inviting to be abroad; winter is by some writers<sup>f138</sup> used not for the season of the year, but for a storm or tempest. Thus the winter and rain may be descriptive of the state and condition of Jews and Gentiles before the coming of Christ<sup>f139</sup>, and which then ceased; it having been a stormy dispensation with the one, and a time of darkness and ignorance with the other, (<sup><58218></sup>Hebrews 12:18-27) (<sup><41731></sup>Acts 17:30); or rather it may in general represent the state of God’s people both before and after conversion; before conversion it is a time of darkness, coldness, barrenness, and unfruitfulness; and which are removed by the powerful and efficacious grace of Christ: and after conversion it is often a winter season with them, through the blustering winds of Satan’s temptations; the storms of impending wrath for sin, as they imagine; the nipping blasts of persecution, and sharp and severe afflictions they are at times exposed unto: moreover, they are often in great darkness of soul, clouds interpose between Christ and them; a great deal of coldness attends them, their hearts are frozen up and hard, and no impression made on them by the preaching of the word, or by the providences of God; there is a coolness in their love to God and Christ, his people, ordinances, cause, and interest; great barrenness and unfruitfulness in them, they look like trees in winter, and no appearance of fruit on them; their hands are sealed up from working, and they become indolent and inactive; and by all these fellowship with Christ is greatly interrupted: but, when the spring returns again, light breaks in upon them, and their hearts are melted with a sense of love; they become lively in their frames, and in the exercise of grace, and are fruitful in good works; and

enjoy much calmness and serenity, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost: sometimes they think the winter is not over when it is, and fear more storms are behind, even of divine wrath and vengeance, though without reason; since Christ has bore all wrath for them, and has satisfied law and justice, and has delivered them from wrath to come; and he that has done this says, “the winter is past”, etc.

**Ver. 12.** *The flowers appear on the earth*, etc.] One of the first signs of the spring being come<sup>f140</sup>; and make the season delightful and pleasant; the sun returning with its warming influences, herbs and plants are quickened and spring up; fields and meadows, as well as gardens, are covered with a variety of beautiful flowers, which make walking abroad very delightful. By these “flowers” may be meant either the graces of the spirit in the saints, which, when a wintertime with them, seem to be dead, at least are hid; but, upon a return of the sun of righteousness, revive and are seen again: or the saints themselves, when in a flourishing condition, and in the exercise of grace; who may be compared to the flowers of the field for the production of them in the spring, which is a kind of re-creation of them, (<sup>(1940)</sup>Psalm 104:30); and fitly expresses the renovation of the Holy Ghost, to which the revival of them is owing; and for the fragrancy of them, their persons and services being of a sweet savour through the grace and righteousness of Christ; and for their beauty and ornament to the fields in which they grow, as saints are through Christ in themselves, and to the churches and interest of Christ; and for the gaiety and cheerfulness in which the flowers appear in the spring season, and so a proper emblem of the joy and consolation of the saints; where grace revives, Christ returns, and they are favoured with communion with him. It may not be improper to observe, that this may represent the large conversions of souls to Christ, and the numerous appearance of so many beautiful flowers in the church of Christ in the first ages of Christianity, after a long winter of Jewish and Gentile darkness;

*the time of the singing [of birds] is come*; another sign of spring, and suits the Gospel dispensation, in which the churches of Christ, and the members of them, sing the praises of the Lord in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; and particularly young converts, those little birds that sing in warbling notes and tuneful lays the songs of electing, redeeming, calling, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace, to the glory of God, and to their mutual comfort and edification. Some render it, “the time of the branch”<sup>f141</sup>, of the vine putting forth its branches; or “the time of cutting”<sup>f142</sup>, of pruning vines, of lopping trees, and cutting off unfruitful branches; as in the Gospel

dispensation, when the Jewish branches were broken off, and the Gentiles were ingrafted in, and being pruned brought forth more fruit; and this agrees with the season of the year, the spring being the time of cutting and pruning vines<sup>f143</sup>; though this is by some objected to as unseasonable;

*and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land*; so one part of rural pleasures is described by the poet<sup>f144</sup>, not only by the singing of birds of various kinds, but particularly by the note of the turtle; which is a kind of dove that lies hid in the wintertime, or is gone, being a bird of passage, and appears and returns at the spring, when its voice is heard again<sup>f145</sup>; (see <sup><3807></sup>Jeremiah 8:7); for its voice is never heard in winter, unless on a fine day<sup>f146</sup>; by which may be meant, not the voice of the law, as the Jewish writers<sup>f147</sup>, rather of the Gospel, the joyful sound, which for a while was heard only in the land of Judea, called by way of specialty “our land”: but either of the voice of the Messiah himself<sup>f148</sup>, preaching the everlasting Gospel in the land of Israel when here on earth; or of John the Baptist his forerunner; and so Alshech interprets it of Elijah, who was to come before the Messiah, and refers to (<sup><3045></sup>Malachi 4:5). It may design the voice of all the apostles of Christ, and first ministers of the Gospel<sup>f149</sup>; or of the Holy Ghost, as the Targum, who appeared as a dove at Christ’s baptism; and whose voice in the hearts of his people, speaking peace and pardon, and witnessing their adoption, causes joy and gladness; or of the church itself, compared to a turtledove for its harmlessness, meekness, chastity, etc. whose voice in prayer and praise is heard, and is acceptable to Christ, (<sup><2014></sup>Song of Solomon 2:14).

**Ver. 13.** *The fig tree putteth forth her green figs*, etc.] Another sign of spring being come, nay, of its being pretty much advanced, since Christ makes this a token of summer being at hand, (<sup><4082></sup>Matthew 24:32). Theopompus<sup>f150</sup> speaks of figs in the middle of the spring. This tree puts forth its fruit at once, and does not flower or blossom<sup>f151</sup>, wherefore (<sup><3817></sup>Habakkuk 3:17) is wrongly translated; (see Gill on “<sup><3817></sup>Habakkuk 3:17”): though Arianus<sup>f152</sup> speaks of its flowering: Aben Ezra thinks the word signifies the sweetening of the figs, and so points at the time when they are sweet and eatable. By the “fig tree” may be meant the saints putting forth their grace in exercise on Christ, who may be compared to fig trees for their leaves and fruit, and for the putting forth the latter before the former<sup>f153</sup>; for the fig tree is a tree full of large leaves, which may be an emblem of a profession of religion, and of a conversation agreeably to it, which yet are no covering, only the righteousness of Christ is that, yet

ought to be and are ornamental; and for the fruit of it, which is wholesome, pleasant, and delightful, as are the fruits of the Spirit, the fruits of grace and righteousness, fruits meet for repentance, which ought to appear before a profession of religion is made. If the Egyptian fig tree is meant, that is a very fruitful tree; it is said to bear fruit seven times a year, but ripens no other way than by scratching it with iron hooks<sup>f154</sup>; and its wood cut down and cast into water, being dry, sinks, but when thoroughly wet will swim. Saints should bear fruit always, and ever continue to do so, even to old age; nor do any ever become fruitful until their hearts have been pricked and cut by the word of God; and they never grow better, or are more fruitful, than when attended with afflictions and tribulations; when they first enter into the waters of affliction, like Peter, they sink, but, when more used to them, they lift up their heads above them, and bear up with great courage and resolution. By the “green figs” may be meant the beginnings of grace in the soul, some stirrings of affection to Christ, desires of knowledge of him, pantings and breathings after his ordinances, love to his people; all which appear soon, are very imperfect, and, like unripe figs, liable to be shaken off; and it is a miracle of grace that the first impressions of it are not destroyed by the force of corruption and temptation; and it may be observed, that grace in its first appearance, though but small, is not despised, but taken notice of by Christ: yea, he makes use of it as exercised by young converts to stir up old professors, as here the church, to be more active and vigorous in it;

*and the vines [with] the tender grape give a [good] smell*; or “being in flower give a good smell”<sup>f155</sup>, as the word is used in the Targum in (<sup>238B</sup>Isaiah 18:5); and that vines do flower appears from the same place, and from (<sup>0400</sup>Genesis 40:10); as well as is observed by naturalists and others<sup>f156</sup>; and these flowers, and not the tender grapes, emit a sweet smell; and, as some say<sup>f157</sup>, not in the vineyards only, but in the country round about; and these are fitly mentioned next to figs, since the black fig is by some called the sister of the vine<sup>f158</sup>. By the vines may be intended distinct congregated churches of Christ, or particular believers; vines are very weak; and cannot bear up of themselves, must be fixed to some place, and be supported by something else; and being supported, will run up a great height, and bring forth much fruit. So saints are weak in themselves, and cannot support themselves; their strength is in Christ, and they are upheld by him, and have their dependence on him; and being supported by him they grow up to the stature of the fulness of Christ; and through their



grafting into him, and abiding in him the true vine, bring forth much fruit to the glory of God, and such as is not to be found in others. The wood of the vine is of very little worth or use, (<sup>2650</sup>Ezekiel 15:2,3); and yet is very lasting. Pliny<sup>f159</sup> ascribes a sort of an eternity to it. Believers in Christ, however weak and worthless they are in themselves, as are their best works and services, yet being in Christ they shall abide in him for ever, and never perish, but have everlasting life. And by the “tender grapes”, or “flowers”, may be designed either the graces of the spirit, as before; or rather young converts, the fruit of Christ’s vines, the churches, who, though weak and tender, yet are dear to Christ; and when there is a large appearance of them, it is a great encouragement to churches, and promises a glorious vintage. And the “smell” of these vines, with their grapes and flowers, may intend the fragrantcy, of believers through the righteousness of Christ on them, and the odour of their graces, as exercised on him; and the sweet savour of their godly conversation, observed by all about them.

*Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away;* repeated from (<sup>2200</sup>Song of Solomon 2:10); which shows sluggishness on the part of the church, that she needed one exhortation after another; and great love on the part of Christ, that notwithstanding this he persists in calling her; and even importunity in him, that he will have no denial<sup>f160</sup>: and it may be observed, that what is entertaining to most of the senses is mentioned to engage the church to arise and go along with her beloved; the flowery fields would be pleasing to her eye, the chirping birds to her ear, the sweet and ripening figs to her taste, and the refreshing odour of the vines to her smell.

**Ver. 14.** *O my dove*, etc.] An epithet sometimes used by lovers<sup>f161</sup>, and is a new title Christ gives to his church, to express his affection for her and interest in her; and to draw her out of her retirement, to go along with him. The dove is a creature innocent and harmless, beautiful, cleanly, and chaste; sociable and fruitful, weak and timorous, of a mournful voice, and swift in flying; all which is suitable to the church and people of God: they are harmless and inoffensive in their lives and conversations; they are beautiful through the righteousness of Christ on them, and the grace of the Spirit in them; they are clean through the word Christ has spoken, and having their hearts purified by faith; they are as chaste virgins espoused to Christ, and their love to him is single and unfeigned; they cleave to him, are fruitful in grace and good works; and the church being espoused to Christ brings forth many souls unto him in regeneration; saints carry on a social worship and delight in each other’s company; they are weak and timorous,

being persecuted and oppressed by the men of the world; and mourn for their own sins and others, and often for the loss of Christ's presence; and are swift in flying to him for safety and protection. Under this character the church is said to be

*in the clefts of the rock*, the usual place where the dove makes its nest, (~~2483~~ Jeremiah 48:28); or retires to it for safety<sup>f162</sup>. Adrichomius says<sup>f163</sup>, there was a stone tower near Jerusalem, to the south of the mount of Olives, called "petra columbarum", "the rock of the doves", where often five thousand were kept at once, to which there may be an allusion here; or else it may have respect to the place where doves are forced to fly when pursued by the hawk, even into a hollow rock, as described by Homer<sup>f164</sup>; and may be expressive of the state of the church under persecution, when obliged to flee into holes and corners, and caves of the earth; when the Lord is a hiding place to her, in his love, and grace, and power; and particularly Christ is the Rock of his people, so called for height, strength, and duration, and they are the inhabitants of this Rock; and who was typified by the rock in the wilderness, and particularly by that into the clefts of which Moses was put, when the glory of the Lord passed before him: moreover, the clefts of this rock may design the wounds of Christ, which are opened for the salvation of men; and where saints dwell by faith, and are secure from every enemy<sup>f165</sup>. The Ethiopic version is, "in the shadow of the rock", to which Christ is compared, (~~2310~~ Isaiah 32:2); and so the Septuagint version, "in the covering of the rock", which is no other than the shade of it. Likewise the church is said to be

*in the secret [places] of the stairs*; Christ is the stairs or steps by which saints ascend up to God, have access to and communion with him; and the secret places may have respect to the justifying righteousness of Christ, and atonement by him, hidden to other men, but revealed to them; and whither in distress they betake themselves, and are sheltered from sin, law, hell, and death, and dwell in safety. Though as such places are dark and dusty, and whither the dove, or any other creature, may in danger betake itself, so upon the whole both this and the preceding clause may design the dark, uncomfortable, and solitary condition the church was in through fear of enemies; in which situation Christ addresses her, saying,

*let me see thy countenance*, or "face"; and encourages her to appear more publicly in, his house and courts for worship, and present herself before him, and look him full in the face, and with open face behold his glory, and

not be shamefaced and fearful; not to be afraid of any thing, but come out of her lurking holes, and be seen abroad by himself and others, since the stormy weather was over, and everything was pleasant and agreeable;

*let me hear thy voice*; in prayer to him and praise of him, commending the glories and excellencies of his person, and giving thanks to him for the blessings of his grace;

*for sweet [is] thy voice*; pleasant, harmonious, melodious, having a mixture of notes in it, as the word signifies; and so exceeds the voice of a natural dove, which is not very harmonious: Herodotus<sup>f166</sup> makes mention of a dove that spoke with a human voice; and such a voice Christ's dove speaks with, and it is sweet; that is, pleasant and delightful to him, who loves to hear his people relate the gracious experiences of his goodness, and speak well of his truths and ordinances; prayer is sweet music to him, and praise pleases him better than all burnt offerings;

*and thy countenance [is] comely*; fair and beautiful, and therefore need not cover her face, or hang down her head, as if ashamed to be seen, since she was in the eye of Christ a perfection of beauty.

**Ver. 15.** *Take us the foxes*, etc.] Of which there were great numbers in Judea; (see <sup><07504></sup>Judges 15:4); these words are directed not to angels, nor to civil magistrates, but to ministers of the word; but whether the words of Christ, or the church, is not easy to determine; some think they are the words of the church, who had hitherto been relating what Christ said to her, and who, having neglected her vineyard, (<sup><2006></sup>Song of Solomon 1:6); and now stirred up by Christ to a greater care of it, expresses her concern for its flourishing; and therefore calls upon her attendants and companions, to assist in taking and destroying those which were harmful to it: but rather they seem to be the words of Christ continued; since they not only show the care of his vines, the churches; but express power and authority over those they are spoken to: and perhaps they may be the words of them both jointly; since the church, with Christ, and under him, has a right to stir up her officers to do their work, and fulfil their ministry, they have received of Christ for her service. By foxes may be meant false teachers, to whom the false prophets of old were compared, (<sup><2338></sup>Ezekiel 13:3,4); foxes are crafty and subtle creatures, malignant and mischievous, hungry and voracious, full of deceit and dissimulation, are of an ill smell, and abominably filthy; so false teachers walk in craftiness, use good words and fair speeches, and thereby deceive the hearts of the simple; their doctrines are pernicious,

their heresies damnable, and they bring destruction on themselves and others; they are hungry after worldly substance, are greedy of it, and can never have enough; devour widows' houses, and make merchandise of men, to enrich themselves; they put on sheep's clothing, transform themselves into angels of light, mimic the voice of Gospel ministers, use their phrases and expressions, that they may not be easily discovered; and are abominable in their principles and practices, and to be shunned by all good men. Now ministers of the Gospel are ordered to take these, to detect them, and refute their errors, and reprove them sharply for them; and, after proper steps taken, to reject them, to cast them out of the vineyards, the churches, and keep them out. Even

*the little foxes*; heresies and heretics are to be nipped in the bud, before they increase to more ungodliness; otherwise errors, which may seem small at first, soon grow larger and spread themselves, and become fatal to the churches:

*that spoil the vines*; as foxes do, by gnawing the branches, biting the bark, making bare the roots, devouring the ripe grapes, and infecting all with their noxious teeth and vicious breath<sup>f167</sup>: so false teachers make divisions and schisms in churches; disturb their peace; unsettle some, and subvert others; sap the foundation of religion, and corrupt the word of God; and therefore by all means to be taken, and the sooner the better;

*for our vines [have] tender grapes*: or “flowers”; (see Gill on “<sup>21B3</sup>Song of Solomon 2:13”). The “vines” are the churches; the “tender grapes”, or “flowers”, young converts, which Christ has a particular regard unto, (<sup>240B</sup>Isaiah 40:11 <sup>238B</sup>Isaiah 42:3); and these, having but a small degree of knowledge, are more easily imposed upon and seduced by false teachers; and therefore, for their sakes, should be carefully watched, and vigorously opposed, since otherwise a promising vintage is in danger of being spoiled. Christ, in this address, intimates, that not only he and the church, but, he ministers also, had an interest in the vines and tender grapes, as they have; (see <sup>21B1B</sup>Song of Solomon 8:11,12); and therefore should be the more concerned for their welfare; hence he calls them “ours”; interest carries a powerful argument in it.

**Ver. 16.** *My beloved [is] mine, and I [am] his*, etc.] These are the words of the church; who, having had such evidences of Christ's love to her, and care of her, expresses her faith of interest in him, and suggests the obligations she lay under to observe his commands. The words are

expressive of the mutual interest had property Christ and his church have in each other: Christ is the church's, by the Father's gift of him to her, to be her Head, Husband, and Saviour; and by the gift of himself unto her, to be her Redeemer and ransom price; and by marriage, having espoused her to himself, in righteousness and lovingkindness; and by possession, he living and dwelling in her, by his Spirit and grace: the church also acknowledges herself to be his, as she was, by the Father's gift of her to Christ, as his spouse and bride, his portion and inheritance; and by purchase, he having bought her with his precious blood; and by the conquest of her, by his grace in effectual calling; and by a voluntary surrender of herself unto him, under the influence of his grace: hence all he is, and has, are hers, his person, fulness, blood, and righteousness; and therefore can want no good thing. Moreover, these words suggest the near union there is between Christ and his church; they are one in a conjugal relation, as husband and wife are one; which union is personal, of the whole person of Christ to the whole persons of his people; it is a spiritual one, they having the same Spirit, the one without measure, the other in measure; it is a vital one, as is between the vine and its branches; and it is a mysterious one, next to that of the union of the three Persons in the Godhead, and of the two natures in Christ; it is an indissoluble one, the everlasting love of Christ being the bond of it, which call never be dissolved; and from this union flow a communication of the names of Christ to his church, conformity to him, communion with him, and an interest in all he has. Likewise these phrases express the mutual affliction, complacency, and delight, Christ and his church have in each other; he is beloved by his church, and she by him; she seems to have a full assurance of interest in him, and to make her boast of him; excluding all other beloveds, as unworthy to be mentioned with him: of whom she further says,

*he feedeth among the lilies*; which is either an apostrophe to him, "O thou that feedest", etc. thou only art my beloved; or is descriptive of him to others, inquiring who he was, and where to be seen: the answer is, he is the person that is yonder, feeding among the lilies; either recreating and delighting himself in his gardens, the churches, where his saints are, comparable to lilies; (see Gill on "~~200~~ Song of Solomon 2:1, 2"); or feeding his sheep in fields where lilies grow: and it may be observed, it is not said, he feedeth on, or feeds his flock with lilies, but among them; for it is remarked<sup>f168</sup>, that sheep will not eat them: or the sense may be, Christ feeds himself, and feeds his people, and feeds among them, as if he was crowned

with lilies, and anointed with the oil of them; as was the custom of the ancients at festivals<sup>f169</sup>, thought to be here alluded to by some who read the words, “that feeds”; that is, sups in or with lilies, being anointed and crowned with them. The lily is a summer flower<sup>f170</sup>; the winter was now past, (<sup>2011</sup>Song of Solomon 2:11).

**Ver. 17.** *Until the day break, and the shadows flee away*, etc.] Which may be connected with (<sup>2016</sup>Song of Solomon 2:16); either with the former part, “my beloved is mine”, etc. (<sup>2016</sup>Song of Solomon 2:16); and then the sense is, as long as night and day continue, and God’s covenant with both stands sure; so long union to Christ, and covenant interest in him, will abide: or with the latter part, “he feedeth among the lilies until”, etc. even until his second coming: or with the next clause in this verse,

*turn, my beloved*; and so is a prayer for Christ’s speedy coming to her, and continued presence with her, until the day should break: which may be understood either of the Gospel day made by the rising of Christ, the sun of righteousness, at his first coming in the flesh; when the shadows of the ceremonial law disappeared, Christ, the body and substance of them, being come, and the darkness of the Gentile world was scattered, through the light of the Gospel being sent into it: the words may be rendered, “until the day breathe”, or “blow”<sup>f171</sup>; and naturalists observe<sup>f172</sup>, that, upon the sun’s rising, an air or wind has been excited, and which ceases before the middle of the day, and never lasts so long as that; and on Christ’s, the sun of righteousness, arising with healing in his wings, some cool, gentle, and refreshing breezes of divine grace and consolation were raised, which were very desirable and grateful: or this may be understood of Christ’s second coming; which will make the great day of the Lord, so often spoken of in Scripture: and which suits as well with the Hebrew text, and the philosophy of it, as the former; for, as the same naturalists<sup>f173</sup> observe, the wind often blows fresh, and fine breezes of air spring up at the setting as well as at the rising of the sun; (see <sup>0108</sup>Genesis 3:8); and may very well be applied to Christ’s second coming, at the evening of the world; which will be a time of refreshing to the saints, and very desirable by them; and though it will be an evening to the world, which will then come to an end, with them there will be no more night of darkness, desertion, affliction, and persecution; the shadows of ignorance, infidelity, doubts, and fears, will be dispersed, and there will be one pure, clear, unclouded, and everlasting day; and till then the church prays, as follows:

*turn, my beloved*; that is, to her; who seemed to be ready to depart from her, or was gone; and therefore she desires he would turn again, and continue with her, until the time was come before mentioned: or, “turn about”,<sup>f174</sup>; surround me with thy favour and lovingkindness, and secure me from all enemies, until the glorious and wished for day comes, when I shall be out of fear and danger; or, “embrace me”<sup>f175</sup>; as in (<sup>2116</sup>Song of Solomon 2:6); during the present dispensation, which was as a night in comparison of the everlasting day;

*and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether*; the same with Bethel, according to Adrichomius<sup>f176</sup>; where were mountains, woody, set with trees, full of grass and aromatic plants; and so may be the same with the mountains of spices, (<sup>2184</sup>Song of Solomon 8:14); where the Ethiopic version has Bethel; and so that and the Septuagint version, in an addition to (<sup>2119</sup>Song of Solomon 2:9); here; (see <sup>1323</sup>2 Kings 2:23,24); unless Bithron is meant, (<sup>1029</sup>2 Samuel 2:29); a place in Gilead, beyond Jordan, so called, because it was parted from Judea by the river Jordan: and the words are by some rendered, “the mountains of division or separation”<sup>f177</sup>; which, if referred to Christ’s first coming, may regard the ceremonial law, the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, broke down by Christ, and the two people divided by it, which were reconciled by him; if to his spiritual coming, the same things may be intended by them as on (<sup>2119</sup>Song of Solomon 2:9); but if to his second coming, the spacious heavens may be meant, in which Christ will appear, and which now interpose and separate from his bodily presence; and therefore the church importunately desires his coming with speed and swiftness, like a roe or a young hart, and be seen in them; (see <sup>620</sup>Revelation 22:10).