

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION TO SONG OF SOLOMON 6

The discourse between the church and the daughters of Jerusalem is continued in this chapter: they inquire whither her beloved was gone, in order to seek him with her, (²¹⁰⁶Song of Solomon 6:1); she tells them where he was gone, and for what purpose he went thither, and what he was doing there; and claims and asserts her interest in him, (²¹⁰⁷Song of Solomon 6:2,3); Then follows a commendation of the church by Christ, who admires her beauty, and describes her by her eyes, hair, etc. (²¹⁰⁸Song of Solomon 6:4-7); and prefers her to all others; being a singular and choice one to him, and the praise of others, (²¹⁰⁹Song of Solomon 6:8-10); and next he gives an account of his going into his garden, and his design in it, and of what happened to him there, (²¹¹⁰Song of Solomon 6:11,12). And the chapter is concluded with a charge to the Shulamite, to turn herself, that she might be looked upon; which occasions a question, to which an answer is returned, (²¹¹¹Song of Solomon 6:13).

Ver. 1. *Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?* etc.] The title is the same used by them, and by Christ before them, (²¹⁰⁸Song of Solomon 1:8 ²¹⁰⁹Song of Solomon 5:9); and here repeated, to assure her that they were serious in asking this question, and that it was in great respect to her they put it; and which, to the same sense, in other words, is expressed,

whither is thy beloved turned aside? which way did he take? on what hand did he turn, to the right or left, when he went from thy door? They ask no longer who or what he was, being satisfied with the church's description of him; by which they had gained some knowledge of him, and had their affections drawn out unto him; and were desirous of knowing more of him and of being better acquainted with him, and to enjoy his company and presence; though as yet they had but little faith in him, and therefore could not call him "their" beloved, only "her" beloved: and this question is put and repeated in this manner, to show that they were serious and in earnest; yea, were in haste, and impatient to know which way he went; say they,

that we may seek him with thee; it was not mere speculation or curiosity that led them to put the above questions; they were desirous to go into practice, to join with the church in the search of Christ, to seek him with her in the word and ordinances; upon which they were determined, could they get any hint from her whither he was gone, and where it was most likely to find him: for so the words may be rendered, “and we will seek him with thee”^{f377}; this they had resolved on among themselves, and only wanted directions which way to steer their course, or a grant to go along with the church in quest of her beloved.

Ver. 2. *My beloved is gone down into his garden*, etc.] Which may be said by Solomon, in allusion to what he himself was wont to do, as Josephus^{f378} relates; who used to go very early in a morning in great pomp to Etham, about two miles from Jerusalem, a pleasant place, abounding with gardens and flows of water: or respect may be had to the king’s gardens nearer Jerusalem, which were at the descent of Mount Zion, and reached to the lower pool^{f379}; (see ^{<2185>}Nehemiah 3:15); and which lying lower than the king’s palace, he might be said to go down to it. And this may point at the low estate of the people of God on earth, depressed with sorrows, afflictions, and persecutions; and the condescension of Christ, in visiting them in their low estate, and granting them his gracious presence: of the garden of Christ, and of his coming into it, (see Gill on “^{<2112>}Song of Solomon 4:12-16, 5:1”); and the church might remember what he said, “I am come into my garden”, (^{<2181>}Song of Solomon 5:1); though she soon fell asleep and forgot it, and now calls it to mind, and so could direct the daughters where he was. She adds,

to the beds of spices; of odoriferous plants; to which particular believers, planted regularly in the churches of Christ, may be compared, for the excellency and fragrantcy of their graces; and among whom Christ delights to be; (see ^{<2143>}Song of Solomon 4:13,14). Gussetius^{f380} thinks the words, both here and in (^{<2183>}Song of Solomon 5:13), should be rendered “rivers of spices”; an hyperbolical expression, showing that a man walking by rivers of waters, where aromatic plants and fragrant flowers grow, perceives such a sweet odour, that, while he is refreshed with the moisture of the waters, he seems to be walking by rivers of spices. The end of her beloved’s going thither is,

to feed in the gardens; to feed his flocks there: not on commons and in fields, but in gardens, which is unusual: and by which are meant particular

churches, where Christ feeds his people, by his Spirit and by his ministers, word and ordinances, with himself, the bread of life; with the discoveries of his love, better than wine; and with the doctrines and promises of the Gospel: or to feed himself, or that “he [himself] might be fed”^{f381} there; by beholding with pleasure how the plants grow, and the spices flow out; by tasting the pleasant fruits of the garden; and by observing with delight the graces of the Spirit in his people in lively exercise;

and to gather lilies; to crop them with the hand^{f382}; lilies are liable to be cropped, hence Horace^{f383} calls the lily “breve lilium”, the short lived lily: to these saints may be compared, for the glory, splendour, and beauty, they receive from Christ; (see ^{<210D>}Song of Solomon 2:2); there was a gathering of these at the death of Christ, (^{<40E0>}Ephesians 2:10 ^{<4B15>}John 11:51,52); and there is a gathering of them in effectual calling, and into a church state, and into nearer communion with Christ; but here it seems to signify a gathering them by death, when fully ripe, to enjoy everlasting fellowship with him.

Ver. 3. *I [am] my beloved's, and my beloved [is] mine*, etc.] Expressive of interest in Christ, and union to him, and of her faith therein; which still continued, notwithstanding her unbecoming behavior toward Christ, and her many infirmities, (^{<210D>}Song of Solomon 5:2,3). Aben Ezra connects the words with the preceding, “my beloved is gone”, etc. but though he is, and I am left alone, I know I am his, and he is mine; which throws a beauty upon the words, and declares the excellency and strength of her faith; for herein lies the glory and excellency of faith, to believe in an unseen Christ: though it may be the Shechinah was with her, as the Targum has it; or Christ had now appeared to her, and was found by her, and therefore, like Thomas, says, “my Lord and my God”;

he feedeth among the lilies; (see Gill on “^{<2106>}Song of Solomon 2:16”).

Ver. 4. *Thou [art] beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah*, etc.] These are the words of Christ, who had been absent for some time, and till now silent; but, like another Joseph, could not refrain any longer, but makes himself known to his church, and bursts out in strong expressions of love to her, and in high commendations of her; for, notwithstanding her behavior toward him, she was his love still, and as “beautiful” and as comely in his sight as ever: and for which he compares her here to Tirzah; which is either the name of some beautiful woman, well known in those times; so one of the daughters of Zelophehad is called by this name, (^{<40E0>}Numbers 27:1); but whether from her beauty is nowhere said: or rather a city of this name

is here meant, since, in the next clause, the church is compared to the city of Jerusalem for the same reason. There was a city in the land of Canaan, called Tirzah, formerly the seat of one of the ancient kings of Canaan, and, in later times, of Jeroboam and some of his successors; and which, no doubt, was a very pleasant and delightful place, as its name imports, either from its situation or buildings, (~~622~~ Joshua 12:24). Adrichomius^{f384} says, it was an heroic city, situated on a high mountain. In some of the Greek versions, it is read as an appellative, and tendered, as “good will” or “good pleasure”^{f385}, and so may respect the sweetness of her temper and disposition; which is heightened by using the abstract, she was all good nature and good will; not only sweet, as the Vulgate Latin version, but “sweetness” itself, as she says of him, (~~2156~~ Song of Solomon 5:16); and this may be said of her, as she was the object of God’s good will and pleasure in election, of Christ’s in redemption, and of the Spirit’s in effectual calling; and as she was the subject of good will, bearing one to God, to Christ, to his people, word, worship, ways, and ordinances. The word comes from a root which signifies to be “grateful [and] accepted”: and so Jarchi interprets the word here “acceptable”: and so some ancient writings of the Jews^{f386}: and may denote the acceptableness of the church in Christ, with whom God is well pleased in him for his righteousness’s sake, in which she appears exceeding fair and lovely. And for the same reason is said to be

comely as Jerusalem; the metropolis of Judea, and seat of the kings of it; and, as Pliny^{f387} says, was far the most famous of any of the cities of the east; it was a city well built and compact together, beautiful for situation, very rich in Solomon’s time, the place of divine worship, and was strongly fortified by nature and art: and hence the church of God often bears this name, both in the Old and New Testament, (~~2310~~ Isaiah 40:2 ~~3822~~ Hebrews 12:22), being the city of the great King, built on Christ, the Rock; consisting of saints, fitly and closely united together; rich with the unsearchable riches of Christ; where the several parts of spiritual and evangelic worship are performed; possessed of many privileges, and well secured by the power and salvation of God. Yet

terrible as [an army] with banners; to her enemies, though so lovely to Christ. This shows that not a single person is meant all along, who could not with propriety be compared to an army; but a collective body, as the church is: and that the church on earth is militant, and, like a well disciplined army, in good order, and provided with proper officers and suitable armour, and in a posture of defence, and ready to fight when

attacked; and so “terrible” to her enemies, Satan and his principalities, wicked men and false teachers; who are terrified by their having such a General at the head of them as Christ, and being under such banners as his, and provided with such good weapons of warfare, as are mighty through God; by their close union to one another; and by the constancy, undauntedness, and invincibility of their faith; and are awed by their pious conversation and good examples. Perhaps some respect may be had by Christ to the church’s courage and constancy in seeking after him; the force of whose faith and love he felt, which he could not withstand, and therefore says as follows:

Ver. 5. *Turn away thine eyes from me*, etc.] Her eyes of faith and love; not through dislike of them, but as ravished with them; his passions were so struck by them, and his heart pierced with them, that he could stand it out no longer against her; (see ²¹⁴⁹Song of Solomon 4:9,10). Some render the words, “turn about thine eyes over against me”^{f388}; this being the first time of meeting, after her ungrateful treatment of him, she might be filled with shame and confusion for it, and therefore hung down her head, or looked on one side; wherefore he encourages her to look him full in the face, with a holy confidence; for such looks of faith are very agreeable to Christ; (see ²¹¹⁴Song of Solomon 2:14);

for they have overcome me; that is, her eyes, they had made a conquest of his heart; which does not imply weakness in Christ, but condescending grace, that he should suffer himself, as it were, to be overpowered by the faith and love of his people, who has conquered them and all their enemies. This clause is very differently rendered: by some, “they have strengthened me”^{f389}; his desire towards his church, and the enjoyment of her company: by others, the reverse, “are stronger than me”, or “have taken away my strength”^{f390}; so that he was spiritless, and as one dead, or in an ecstasy: by others, “they have made me fly away”^{f391}; that is, out of himself; so that he was not master of himself, could not bear the force and brightness of her eyes: by others, “they have lifted me up”^{f392}; revived, cheered, and comforted him, through sympathy with her, in virtue of their near union: by others, “they have made me proud”, or “prouder”^{f393}; see (²¹⁸⁵Isaiah 3:5). Christ has a kind of pride as well as pleasure in his church; he is proud of the beauty he has put upon her, of the graces he has wrought in her; and especially of her faith, when in exercise; see (⁴¹⁸⁰Matthew 8:10); and by others, “they have made me fiercer”^{f394}; not with anger and indignation, but with love; there is a force, a fierceness in love, as well as in wrath: “love

[is] strong as death, [and] jealousy [is] cruel as the grave”, (²¹⁸⁶Song of Solomon 8:6); it is so in the church, much more in Christ. All which shows the power of faith, to which mighty things are ascribed, (³¹⁰¹Hebrews 11:1-40); and here the conquest of Christ himself;

thy hair [is] as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead; from Mount Gilead, (see Gill on “²⁰⁰¹Song of Solomon 4:1”).

Ver. 6. *Thy teeth [are] as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof everyone beareth twins, and [there is] not one barren among them.* (See Gill on “²⁰⁰²Song of Solomon 4:2”).

Ver. 7. *As a piece of a pomegranate [are] thy temples within thy locks.*] The same descriptions are given in (²⁰⁰³Song of Solomon 4:3); (see Gill on “²⁰⁰³Song of Solomon 4:3”); and these are repeated, to show the reality of the church’s beauty, and for the sake of confirmation; and that it still continued the same, notwithstanding her failings and infirmities; and that Christ had the same esteem of her, and love to her, he ever had. That part of the description, respecting the church’s lips and speech, in (²⁰⁰³Song of Solomon 4:3); is here omitted, though added at the end of (²⁰⁰⁶Song of Solomon 6:6); by the Septuagint; but is not in the Hebrew copies, nor taken notice of in the Targum; yea, the Masorah, on (²⁰⁰²Song of Solomon 4:2), remarks some words as only used in that place, and therefore could not be repeated here in the copies then in use.

Ver. 8. *There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.*] In this verse and (²⁰⁰⁹Song of Solomon 6:9) the church is commended as she stood related to others; and is compared with them, and preferred to them. The words may be considered either as an assertion, “there are”, etc. or as a supposition, “though there be”, etc. yet Christ’s church is but one, and excels them all. “Queens” are principal and lawful wives of kings; “concubines”, secondary or half wives, as the word^{f395} signifies; who were admitted to the bed, but their children did not inherit: “virgins”, unmarried persons, maids of honour, who waited on the queen. The allusion is to the custom of kings and great personages, who had many wives, and more concubines, and a large number of virgins to wait on them; (see ¹¹¹⁸1 Kings 11:3); or to a nuptial solemnity, and the ceremony of introducing the bride to the bridegroom, attended with a large number of persons of distinction; and so Theocritus^{f396} speaks of four times sixty virgins attending the nuptials of Menelaus and Helena; (see ⁴⁹⁸Psalm 45:9). By all which may be meant either the kingdoms and nations of the

world; by “queens”, the more large, rich and flourishing kingdoms; by “concubines”, inferior states; and by “virgins without number”, the vast multitudes of inhabitants that fill them; but all, put together, are not equal to the church; (see ^{<2100>}Song of Solomon 2:2); or else false churches; by “queens”, such who boast of their riches and number, as the church of Rome, (^{<6637>}Revelation 18:7); by “concubines”, such as are inferior in those things, but equally corrupt, as Arians, Socinians, etc. and by “virgins without number”, the multitudes of poor, weak, ignorant people, seduced by them; and what figure soever these make, or pretensions to be the true churches of Christ, they are none of his, his spouse is preferred to them all. Or rather true believers in Christ, of different degrees, are here meant; queens, those that have the greatest share of gifts grace, most nearness to Christ, and communion with him; by “concubines”, believers of a lower class, and of a more servile spirit, and yet sometimes are favoured with, fellowship with Christ; and by “virgins”, young converts, who have not so large an experience as the former; and this distribution agrees with (^{<6123>}1 John 2:13,14); and the rather this may be the sense, since each of these are said to praise the church in (^{<2100>}Song of Solomon 6:9), who is preferable to them, and includes them all.

Ver. 9. *My dove, my undefiled, is [but] one*, etc.] Of these titles, see (^{<2104>}Song of Solomon 2:14 ^{<2100>}Song of Solomon 5:2). Christ’s church is called one, in distinction from the many before mentioned; and either designs her small number, in comparison of the nations of the world, and of false churches, like one to sixty or eighty, and even to an innumerable company; (see ^{<2094>}Ecclesiastes 9:14) (^{<2122>}Luke 12:32 ^{<6138>}Revelation 13:3 ^{<6175>}Revelation 17:15); or else her unity in herself, being but one general assembly and church of the firstborn, made up of various particular congregated churches; and “one body”, consisting of various members, united together in affection, and partakers of the same grace, blessings, and privileges; actuated by “one Spirit”, the Spirit of God, (^{<4048>}Ephesians 4:4); and having but “one Head”, Christ Jesus, (^{<4045>}Ephesians 4:15): and it may signify that the church is the spouse of Christ; that though other princes may have sixty queens, and eighty concubines, and virgins without number, to wait on them, (^{<2108>}Song of Solomon 6:8); Christ had but one, and was well pleased with her, and desired no other;

she [is] the [only] one of her mother; the Jerusalem above, the mother of us all: or the sense is, she was to Christ as a mother’s only child, most tenderly beloved by him;

she [is] the choice one of her that bare her; esteemed and loved best of all her mother's children. The word may be rendered, "the pure" or "clean one"^{f397}; so the church is, as clothed in "clean" linen, the righteousness of Christ; cleansed from sin in his blood; sprinkled with the clean water of the covenant, and of an unspotted conversation.

The daughters saw her, and blessed her; [yea], the queens and the concubines, and they praised her: it may seem strange that concubines should praise a queen; but it was not unusual in the eastern countries; with the Persians, as the queen admitted of many concubines by the order of her lord the king, so the queen was had in great veneration, and even adored by the concubines^{f398}: which may respect either the great esteem the church had, or should have, in the world, even from the great men of it, as she will have in the latter day, (²³⁰²Isaiah 49:23 ²³⁰³Isaiah 60:3,10,11); or which young converts have for her; who may more especially be meant by the "daughters" and "virgins", who, in (²¹⁰¹Song of Solomon 6:1), call the church the "fairest among women": these blessed her, and pronounced her happy, and wished all happiness to her; they "praised her", spoke well of her, and commended her for her beauty; which was pleasing to Christ, and therefore observed by him.

Ver. 10. *Who is she [that] looketh forth as the morning?* etc.] These words may be connected with the preceding, by a supplement of the word "saying"; and so may express what the daughters said, when they blessed and praised the church, wondering at her beauty, it being like the rising morning; so Helena is said to show her beautiful face, *αως αντελλοισα*, as the morning, when it springs forth^{f399}: there was a city in the tribe of Reuben, called Zarethshahar, the beauty or splendour of the morning, (⁰⁸³⁹Joshua 13:19). Homer often describes the morning by her rosy fingers^{f400}, and as clothed with a saffron garment^{f401}, and as beautiful and divine^{f402}, and fair haired^{f403}; and as on a golden throne and beautiful^{f404}. And as these words describe the progressive gradations of light, so they may set forth the state and condition of the church in the several ages of the world; its first state in this clause, which may reach from the first dawn of light to Adam, (⁰⁰⁸⁵Genesis 3:15); increasing in the times of the patriarchs, Noah, Abraham, and Jacob, and in which and to whom were various displays of Gospel light and grace; to the time of the giving of the law by Moses, when the church might be said to be

fair as the moon; which, though it receives its light from the sun, yet splendour and brightness are ascribed to it, (~~<89D6>~~ Job 31:26); and, by other writers^{f405}, is represented as fair and beautiful; and the beautiful form of persons is expressed by it^{f406}: and very fitly is the state of the church under the law signified by the moon, by which the ceremonial law seems intended, in (~~<66D1>~~ Revelation 12:1); that lying much in the observation of new moons, by the which the several festivals under the law were regulated; and which law gave light in the night of Jewish darkness, into the person, offices, and grace of Christ; and though it was imperfect, variable, waxed old, and at length vanished away, yet the church under it was “fair”; there being a beauty and amiableness in the worship of that dispensation, (~~<49D4>~~ Psalm 27:4 ~~<49D1>~~ Psalm 84:1). The next clause, “clear as the sun”, may describe the church under the Gospel dispensation; when the “sun of righteousness” arose, and made the famous Gospel day; when the shadows of the old law fled away, Christ, the substance, being come; when there were more light and knowledge, and a clear discerning of spiritual and evangelic things: and, in all those periods, the church was “terrible as [an army] with banners”; to her enemies, being in a militant state; (see Gill on “~~<21D4>~~ Song of Solomon 6:4”). The whole of this may be applied to particular believers; who, at first conversion, “look forth as the morning”, their light being small, but increasing; and, as to their sanctification, are “fair as the moon”, having their spots and imperfections, and deriving all their light, grace, and holiness, from Christ; and, as to their justification,

clear as the sun, being clothed with Christ, the sun of righteousness, (~~<66D1>~~ Revelation 12:1); and so all fair and without spot;

[and] terrible as [an army] with banners, fighting the good fight of faith, under the banners of Christ, against all spiritual enemies.

Ver. 11. *I went down into the garden of nuts*, etc.] This is very properly taken notice of in this song of love; it being usual for newly married persons to get nuts, and throw them among children, to make pastime; to signify, among other things, that they now renounced childish things^{f407}. These are the words of Christ, declaring to the church where he went, and what he employed himself about, when he departed from her; (see ~~<21D2>~~ Song of Solomon 6:2). Of the garden, as it intends the church, (see Gill on “~~<21D2>~~ Song of Solomon 5:12”); into which he was invited to come, and did, as here; (see ~~<21D6>~~ Song of Solomon 4:16, 5:1); here it is called a “garden of nuts”, which may design a spot in it destined for this fruit; by which some

understand “nutmegs”, which is not very likely, since such grew not in those parts: rather “walnuts”, which the Arabs call “gauz” or “geuz”, which is the same word that is here used; Pistacia nuts were well known in Syria^{f408}, which joined to Judea. And by “nuts”, which grew in the garden, the church, true believers, may be designed; who, like them, have a mean outward appearance, but are valuable within, having the true grace of God in them; and because of their divers coverings, their outward conversation garments, the robe of Christ’s righteousness, and the internal sanctification of the Spirit, which answer to the husk and shell, and the thin inward skin over the nut; and because of their hardness in enduring afflictions and troubles, the shell may represent; and because of their best and most excellent parts being hidden, even grace, the hidden man of the heart, signified by the kernel, and which will not fully appear until the shell or tabernacle of the body is broken down; and because of their safety from harm and pollution, amidst the storms of afflictions, persecutions, and temptations, and pollutions of the world, the principle of grace, like the kernel, remains unhurt and undefiled; and because of the multitude of believers, united and cleaving together, which is delightful to behold, like clusters of nuts in a nut garden. Some render it, “the pruned garden”, or “garden of pruning”^{f409}; whose plants, trees, and vines, are pruned and kept in good order, by Christ’s father, the husbandman and vinedresser; (see ^{<2002>}Song of Solomon 2:12, 5:12). The ends of Christ in going into it were,

to see the fruits of the valley; to observe the graces of his Spirit; the actings, exercise, and growth of them in humble souls, among whom he delights to be, (^{<2575>}Isaiah 57:15); the Septuagint version is, “the shoots of the brook” or “river”: and may denote the fertile soil in which believers are planted, even by the river of divine love; with which being watered, they flourish, (^{<1906>}Psalms 1:3);

[and] to see whether the vine flourished; particular churches, or believers, compared to vines; who may be said to flourish, when they increase in numbers, and are fruitful in grace and good works; see (^{<2113>}Song of Solomon 2:13);

[and] the pomegranates budded; of which, (see ^{<2143>}Song of Solomon 4:13); the budding, of them may design the beginnings, or first putting, forth, of grace in the saints; which Christ takes much notice of, and is highly pleased with.

Ver. 12. *Or ever one was aware, my soul made me [like] the chariots of Amminadib.*] These are either the words of the church or of Christ, saying, “I know not”,^{f410} as the first clause may be rendered: if the words of the church, the sense may be, that though she knew not where her beloved was gone, when he went from her, yet she ran about in search of him as swiftly as the chariots of Amminadib; and when she did know that he was gone down into the garden, immediately, on a sudden, at an unawares, such was the strength of her love and affection to him, the she moved as swiftly after him as if she had been in one of those chariots; and this may signify also her courage and resolution, that, notwithstanding all difficulties and discouragements she met with, she drove on as briskly and as courageously after him as ever Amminadib did, in one of his chariots, in the field of battle: or, “I know not”; whether in the body or out of the body; such was the rapture and ecstasy she was in, when she heard her beloved say, “I went down into the garden of nuts”, etc. or, when she heard the daughters’ commendations of her, she did not think that such belonged to her, and therefore said, “I know not”; however, this caused her to make the greater haste to answer such characters, and to enjoy the company of her beloved. But rather they are the words of Christ, who was now in his garden, observing the condition it was in, and says, “I know not”, or do not perceive^{f411}, that it was in a fruitful and flourishing case, and therefore took all the speedy methods he could to bring it into a better; or being in a transport of love to his church, it caused him speedily to return unto her, and grant her his presence; offer all necessary assistance, and be as chariots to her, to carry her through difficulties, and to protect and defend her from all enemies: and this his soul caused him to do, not her worth and worthiness, love and loveliness, but his own good will and pleasure, and cordial affection for her. Many take Amminadib to be the proper name of a person, who was one of Solomon’s chariot drivers, that understood his business well, and drove swiftly, and with success, to whom Christ compares himself, when returning to his church with haste: but I rather think, with Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and others, that it is an appellative, consisting of two words, “ammi”, my people, and “nadib”, willing or princely, and may be rendered, “the chariots of my willing” or “princely people”,^{f412}; meaning, not angels, nor ministers, but the people of Christ themselves, to whom he is as chariots; for so I should choose to translate the words, “my soul made me as chariots to my willing” or “princely people”; and so describes the persons who share in this instance of his grace; they are such who are made willing by Christ, in the day of his

power on them, to be saved by him, and serve him, (^{4910B}Psalm 110:3); and who are of a free, princely, and munificent spirit, (^{4912D}Psalm 2:12); being princes, and the sons and daughters of a prince, (^{2100L}Song of Solomon 7:1); to these Christ makes himself as chariots, as he now was to the church, and took her up along with him to enjoy his presence, she had sought for and desired. Wherefore the daughters of Jerusalem, who had accompanied her hitherto in search of him, perceiving she was going from them, say what follows.

Ver. 13. *Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return,* etc.] By whom the church is meant, so called from her being the spouse of Christ, the true Solomon; it being common for the wife to have the same name with her husband; thus, with the Romans, if the man's name was Caius, the woman's name was Caia: is the name of Christ Solomon? the church's name is Shulamite; (see ³²³¹⁶Jeremiah 23:6, 33:16 ^{4912D}1 Corinthians 12:12). The word from which this is derived signifies both perfection and peace; and the church may be called the Shulamite from her perfection, not in herself, but in Christ, in whom she is complete, and perfectly comely through his righteousness; and is also denominated from the peace which she has from Christ, and he has made for her through his blood, and he gives unto her by his Spirit; and from what she does or should enjoy in her members, and from what she will be possessed of to all eternity. Now the church, the Shulamite, is very importunately desired by the daughters of Jerusalem to return; which is said no less than four times, which shows how vehemently desirous they were of her company: and perceiving she was about to go from them, most earnestly press her to return, or to "turn"^{f413}; to turn herself, that her beauty and comeliness might be more plainly seen; for this is the end proposed by them,

that we may look upon thee; that they might still have more opportunity of viewing her, and more narrowly to examine her beauty, for which she was so much commended; and that they might enjoy more of her company and conversation, which had been, and they might hope would be, more useful and instructive to them. A question upon this follows,

What will ye see in the Shulamite? which question is put, either by the daughters among themselves; some wishing for her return, and others asking what they expected to see in her, should she return: or rather it is put by the church herself; who asks the daughters, what they expected to see in her, a poor, mean, unworthy creature, not fit to be looked on, having

nothing extraordinary, nor indeed valuable or of worth, in seeing of her? Which question is thus answered,

As it were the company of two armies: either by the daughters, declaring what they expected to see in the church; either such a glorious and joyful meeting between Christ and her, as is often between great persons, attended with singing and dancing; so the word for company is rendered by the Septuagint^{f414} “choroi”, a “company” of those that dance and sing; (see ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 68:24,25); or such an appearance as an army makes at the reception of their prince, when it is divided into two bands, for the sake of greater honour and majesty. Or rather this answer is returned by the church herself; signifying that nothing was to be seen in her but two armies, flesh and Spirit, sin and grace, continually warring against each other; which surely, she thought, could be no desirable and pleasing sight to them; (see ~~Romans~~ Romans 7:23 ~~Galatians~~ Galatians 5:17).