

# CHAPTER 7

## INTRODUCTION TO SONG OF SOLOMON 7

In this chapter Christ gives a fresh commendation of the beauty of his church, in a different order and method than before; beginning with her “feet”, and so rising upwards to the “hair” of her head, and the roof of her mouth, (<sup><2700></sup>Song of Solomon 7:1-9); And then the church asserts her interest in him, and his desire towards her, (<sup><2710></sup>Song of Solomon 7:10); and invites him to go with her into the fields, villages, and vineyards, and offers various reasons, by which she urges him to comply with her invitation, (<sup><2711></sup>Song of Solomon 7:11-13).

**Ver. 1.** *How beautiful are thy feet with shoes*, etc.] It is no unusual thing to describe the comeliness of women by their feet, and the ornaments of them; so Hebe is described by Homer<sup>f415</sup> as having beautiful feet, and Juno by her golden shoes: particular care was taken of, and provision made for, the shoes of queens and princesses in the eastern countries; Herodotus<sup>f416</sup> tells us, that the city of Anthylla was given peculiarly to the wife of the king of Egypt, to provide her with shoes; which custom, he says, obtained when Egypt became subject to Persia; (see Gill on “<sup><1728></sup>Esther 2:18”). Shoes of a red, or scarlet, or purple colour, were in esteem with the Jews; and so the Targum here is,

“purple shoes:”

the word used is thought by some<sup>f417</sup> to signify a colour between scarlet and purple; (see <sup><2560></sup>Ezekiel 16:10); and also with the Tyrian virgins<sup>f418</sup>; and so with the Romans<sup>f419</sup>; and with whom likewise white shoes<sup>f420</sup> were much in use. That this is said of the church, is plain from the appellation of her,

*O Prince’s daughter!* the same with the King’s daughter, (<sup><19513></sup>Psalm 45:13); the daughter of the King of kings; for, being espoused to Christ, his Father is her Father, and his God her God: besides, she is born of him who is the Prince of the kings of the earth, (<sup><6128></sup>1 John 2:28); she is both a Prince’s wife and a Prince’s daughter. It may be rendered, “O noble”, or “princely daughter”,<sup>f421</sup>! being of a free princely spirit, in opposition to a servile one, (<sup><15512></sup>Psalm 51:12); of a bountiful and liberal spirit, as in,

(<sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 32:5-8); in distributing temporal things to the necessities of the poor; and in communicating spiritual things to the comfort and edification of others. Some take these to be the words of the daughters of Jerusalem, wondering at the church's beauty, on turning herself to them as they desired: but they are rather the words of Christ; who, observing the church speak so meanly of herself, in order to encourage her, gives a high commendation of her in this and some following verses, and begins with her "feet"; not her ministers, who are "shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace", (<sup><4065></sup>Ephesians 6:15), and who appear beautiful in the eyes of those who have any knowledge of the good things they publish and proclaim; for they are set in the highest place in the church: but here the lowest and meanest members of the church are meant; whose outward walk, the feet are the instruments of, may be said to be "beautiful with shoes", when they are ready to every good work; when their conversation is ordered aright, is agreeably to the word of God, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ; and which, like shoes, is a fence against the briers and thorns, the reproaches and calumnies, of the world; and when there is such a lustre upon it that it cannot but be seen and observed by spectators, by which they are excited to glorify God, it is so beautiful in the eyes of Christ, that to such he shows the salvation of God;

*the joints of thy thighs [are] like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman*; a skilful artificer, a goldsmith or jeweller: the allusion seems to be to some ornaments about the knees or legs, wore by women in those times; (see <sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 3:18); and this may serve to set off the lustre and beauty of the church's conversation. And since it seems not so decent to describe the parts themselves mentioned, the words may rather design the "femoralia", or garments, with which they were covered; and may signify the garments of salvations and robe of Christ's righteousness, whereby the church's members are covered, so that their nakedness is not seen; but with them are as richly adorned bridegroom and bride with their ornaments and which are not the bungling work of a creature, but of one that is God as well as man, and therefore called the righteousness of God. Some have thought that the girdle about the loins is meant, the thighs being put for the loins, (<sup><0463></sup>Genesis 46:26); and so may intend the girdle of truth, mentioned along with the preparation of the Gospel of peace the feet are said to be shod with, (<sup><4064></sup>Ephesians 6:14,15); and the metaphor of girding is used when a Gospel conversation is directed to, (<sup><0125></sup>Luke 12:35 <sup><4013></sup>Peter 1:13). But it seems best by these "joints", or "turnings of the

thighs”<sup>f422</sup>, by which they move more orderly and regularly, to understand the principles of the walk and conversation of saints, as one observes<sup>f423</sup>; without which it cannot be ordered aright; for principles denominate actions, good and bad; and the principles of grace, by which believers move in their Christian walk, are as valuable and as precious as jewels, such as faith and love, and a regard to the glory of God; and which are curiously wrought by the finger of God, by his Holy Spirit, who “works [in them] both to will and to do of his good pleasure”, (<sup><38B3></sup>Philippians 2:13).

**Ver. 2.** *Thy navel [is like] a round goblet*, etc.] According to some, not the navel itself is meant; but a covering of it, a jewel or plate of gold in the shape of it; and because the word for “round”, in the Chaldee language, signifies the “moon”, and so Ben Melech interprets it, some have thought of the “round tire like the moon”, (<sup><21B8></sup>Isaiah 3:18); though that was rather an ornament about the neck. Bishop Patrick is of opinion that it refers to “the clothing of wrought gold”, (<sup><96B3></sup>Psalms 45:13); which had, on the part that covered the belly, a raised embossed work, resembling a heap or sheaves of wheat; about which was an embroidery of curious flowers, particularly lilies; and, in the midst of the whole, a fountain or conduit, running with several sorts of liquor, into a great bowl or basin: and Fortunatus Scacchus<sup>f424</sup> interprets it of a garment, covering this part, embroidered with lilies. All which may represent the beautiful robe of Christ’s righteousness the church is adorned with. But rather the part itself is meant, and designs the ministers of the Gospel; who, in the administration of the word and ordinances, are that to the church as the navel is to a human body; that is in an eminent part of it, is the strength of the intestines, conduces much to the health of the body, and by which the child in the womb is supposed to receive its nourishment: ministers are set in the highest place in the church; are strong in themselves, through the grace and power of Christ and the means of strengthening others; and of keeping the church a good plight and healthful state, by the wholesome words and sound doctrines they preach; and also of nourishing souls in embryo, and when new born, with the sincere milk of the word: and as the navel is said to be like a “round goblet”, cup, bowl, or basin, this aptly describes that part; and may express the perfection of Gospel ministers, their gifts and grace, not in an absolute, but comparative sense, the round or circular form being reckoned the most perfect; and also the workmanship bestowed on them, the gifts and grace of the Spirit, a round goblet being turned and formed by some curious artist; and likewise their

capacity to hold and retain Gospel truths. And they are compared, not to an empty one, but to one

*[which] wanteth not liquor*; meaning the large and never failing supplies of gifts and grace from Christ; so that they never want the liquor, the oil and wine of Gospel truths, to communicate to others, (<sup><3042></sup>Zechariah 4:12). The word used signifies a “mixture”, or a “mixed liquor”<sup>f425</sup>, as of wine and milk, (<sup><2181></sup>Song of Solomon 5:1); or rather of wine and water, much used in the eastern countries; so the wine of Sharon used to be mixed, two parts water and one wine<sup>f426</sup>: and this designs, not a mixture of divine truths and human doctrines, which ought not to be made; but the variety of Gospel truths ministers deliver to others, and that in a manner they are most capable of receiving them. Some<sup>f427</sup> render the words as a wish, “let there not want”, etc. and so they declare the tender concern of Christ, that his church might have a continual supply in the ministry of the word;

*thy belly [is like] a heap of wheat*; which denotes the fruitfulness of the church in bringing souls to Christ, comparable to a pregnant woman; and whose fruit, young converts born in her, are compared to “a heap of wheat” for their number, choiceness, and solidity, being able to bear the fan of persecution: it was usual with the Jews to scatter wheat on the heads of married persons at their weddings, three times, saying, “increase and multiply”<sup>f428</sup>; (see <sup><2168></sup>Isaiah 66:8 <sup><4082></sup>Matthew 3:12). This heap of wheat is said to be “set about”, or “hedged, with lilies”<sup>f429</sup>; which suggests, that it was not a heap of wheat on the corn floor which is meant, but a field of standing wheat, enclosed and fenced, not with thorns, but lilies; and these lilies may signify grown saints, who are often compared to lilies in this book, by whom young converts are encompassed and defended; or the beauties of holiness, in which they appear as soon as born again, (<sup><3113></sup>Psalms 110:3).

**Ver. 3.** *Thy two breasts [are] like two young roes [that are] twins.* (See Gill on “<sup><2105></sup>Song of Solomon 4:5”).

**Ver. 4.** *Thy neck [is] as a tower of ivory*, etc.] Two things recommend the neck, erectness and whiteness; both are here expressed, the one by a “tower”, the other by “ivory”; hence a fine beautiful neck is called an ivory one<sup>f430</sup>; and for the same reason it sometimes has the epithet of “snowy”<sup>f431</sup>, and sometimes of “marble”<sup>f432</sup>. Of the church’s neck, as it may design either the ministers of the word, or the Scriptures of truth, (see Gill on “<sup><2104></sup>Song of Solomon 4:4”); where it is compared to “the tower of

David”, and here to “a tower of ivory”: Marckius conjectures that they may be the same, or that this is the name of, vine ancient structure known at this time; however, it is used as expressive of the purity of the lives of Gospel ministers, and the evenness of their doctrines, and of the purity, beauty, glory, axial harmony of the Scriptures;

*thine eyes [like] the fish pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim;* Heshbon was formerly the seat of Sihon, king of the Amorites, (<sup>4225</sup>Numbers 22:26); of which Bathrabbim was one of its gates; so called, either because it led to Rabbath, a city near it, and mentioned with it, (<sup>2493</sup>Jeremiah 49:3); or because of the great numbers that went in and out by it; for it may be rendered, “the daughter of many”, or “of great ones”<sup>f433</sup>: near this gate, it seems, were very delightful fish pools, to which the eyes of the church are compared. In the Hebrew language, the word for eyes and fountains is the same; the eyes having humours in them, and so fitly compared to fish pools. Of the eyes of the church, as they may design either the ministers of the word, or the eyes of her understanding, particularly faith, (see Gill on “<sup>2215</sup>Song of Solomon 1:15”); here they are said to be like “fish pools”, whose waters are clear, quiet, constant and immovable; and, seen at a distance, between trees and groves, look very beautiful: and, if applied to ministers, may denote the clearness of their sight in discerning the truths of the Gospel; and their being filled with the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ; and their being blessings to the churches of Christ, and to the souls of men the word for “fish pools” comes from a word which signifies “to bless”<sup>f434</sup>; and such being observed as were near the gate of Bathrabbim, may have respect to the multitude that attend their ministry, and receive benefit by it; in which they are constant and invariable, and all of a piece, and appear very beautiful to those to whom they are useful. And if applied to the church’s eyes of understanding, those of faith and knowledge, may denote the perspicuity of them, in the discernment of spiritual things; and the fixedness and immovableness of them on the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; looking alone to him, and off of every other object, and so very attractive to him, and beautiful in his sight, as well as their abounding with the waters of evangelic repentance and humiliation; (see <sup>2493</sup>Song of Solomon 4:9 <sup>2495</sup>Song of Solomon 6:5);

*thy nose [is] as the tower of Lebanon, which looketh towards Damascus;* a tower on that part of Mount Lebanon which faced Damascus, which lay in a plain, and so open to view, as well as exposed to winds; hence called, by

Lucan<sup>f435</sup>, Ventosa Damascus; which tower was so high, as Adrichomius<sup>f436</sup> says, that from thence might be numbered the houses in Damascus: by which also may be meant the ministers of the word; nor need it seem strange that the same should be expressed by different metaphors, since the work of ministers is of different parts; who, as they are as eyes to see, so like the nose to smell; and having a spiritual discerning of Gospel truths, both savour them themselves, and diffuse the savour of them to others; and are both the ornament and defence of the church: the former is signified by the “nose”, which is an ornament of the face, and the latter by the “tower of Lebanon”, and this is looking towards Damascus, the inhabitants of which were always enemies to the people of Israel; and so may denote the vigilance and courage of faithful ministers, who watch the church’s enemies, and their motions, and, with a manful courage, face and attack them. Moreover, this description may respect the majesty and magnanimity of the church herself; the former may be intimated by her nose, which, when of a good size, and well proportioned, adds much grace and majesty to the countenance; and the latter by its being compared to the impregnable tower of Lebanon, looking towards Damascus, signifying that she was not afraid to look her worst enemies in the face: or the whole may express her prudence and discretion in spiritual things: by which she can distinguish truth from error, and espy dangers afar off, and guard against them.

**Ver. 5.** *Thine head upon thee [is] like Carmel*, etc.] Set with hair, thick and long, as Carmel with plants and trees. Now Christ is the church’s Head in various senses; he is her federal and representative Head in eternity and time; her political Head, as a King to his subjects; an economical Head, as the husband to the wife, as parents to their children, and a master to servants; and, as such, may be compared to Carmel; for the multitude dependent on him, whom he represents, and is connected with under various relations; for his height, being higher than the kings of the earth, and all other heads; and for fruitfulness, all the fruits of the church, and of all true believers, coming from him. Some render the word, “as crimson”, or “scarlet”<sup>f437</sup>; which may set forth his royal dignity and majesty, this colour being wore by kings and great personages; or the ardent love of Christ to his body, the church, and the members of it; or his bloody sufferings for them;

*and the hair of thine head like purple*; purple coloured hair has been in great esteem. Of this colour was the hair of King Nysus, according to the fable<sup>f438</sup>; and so the hair of Evadne, and of the Muses<sup>f439</sup>, were of a violet

colour; the hair of Ulysses is said<sup>f440</sup> to be like to the hyacinth flower, which is of a purple or violet colour; and Milton<sup>f441</sup> calls the first Adam's hair hyacinthine locks; and here, in a figurative sense, the second Adam's hair is said to be like purple. By which believers that grow on Christ, the Head of the church, may be meant, who have their dependence on him, and their strength and nourishment from him; (see <sup><2100></sup>Song of Solomon 4:1 <sup><2151></sup>Song of Solomon 5:11); and these may be said to be like "purple", because of their royal dignity, being made kings unto God by Christ; and because of their being washed in the purple blood of Christ; and because of the sufferings they endure for his sake; and especially such may be so compared, who have spilt their blood and laid down their lives on his account;

*the king [is] held in the galleries*; the same with the Head of the church, the King of Zion, and King of saints, whose kingdom is a spiritual and everlasting one: and by the "galleries" in which he is held may be meant the ordinances of the Gospel; where Christ and his people walk and converse together; where he discloses the secrets of his heart to them, leads them into a further acquaintance with his covenant, and the blessings and promises of it; and from whence they have delightful views of his person and fulness; see the King in his beauty, and behold the good land which is afar off: the same word as here is rendered "rafters", and by some "canals", in (<sup><2117></sup>Song of Solomon 1:17). Now Christ being said to be "held in [these] galleries" may signify his fixed habitation in his house and ordinances; where he has promised to dwell, and delights to be; and where he is as it were fastened to them, and hatred in them.

**Ver. 6.** *How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!*] These are the words of the King in the galleries, wondering at the church's beauty, it being incomparable and inexpressible, it could not be said well how great it was; and expressing the strength of his love to her, which was invariably the same as ever. Of the "fairness" of the church, and of this title, "love", (see <sup><2109></sup>Song of Solomon 1:9,15 <sup><2117></sup>Song of Solomon 2:7); and here she is said also to be "pleasant" to him, as his spouse and bride, in whom he takes infinite delight and pleasure, loving her with a love of complacency and delight; and therefore adds, "for delights", which he had in her before the world was, (<sup><2135></sup>Proverbs 8:31). She was all delight<sup>f442</sup> to him; her words, her actions and gestures, her comely countenance, her sweet and pleasant voice in prayer and praise, her ravishing looks of faith

and love, her heavenly airs, and evangelic walk; in all which she appeared beautiful and delightful, beyond all human thought and expression.

**Ver. 7.** *This thy stature is like to a palm tree*, etc.] Made up of the above parts commended, and others had in view, as appears from the relative “this”. The word for “stature” properly signifies height, tallness, and erectness; and which were reckoned agreeable in women, as well as men; (see Gill on “<sup><4000></sup>1 Samuel 9:2”); hence methods are often made use of to make them look taller, as by their head dresses, their shoes, and by stretching out their necks, (<sup><21816></sup>Isaiah 3:16); and the simile of a tree is not an improper one: and so Galatea is, for height and tallness, compared to an alder and to a plane tree<sup>f443</sup>; and Helena, to a cypress tree in a garden<sup>f444</sup>, on the same account; and here the church to a palm tree: the Egyptian palm tree is said to be the best<sup>f445</sup>; and if Solomon here has any reference to Pharaoh’s daughter, his wife, he might think of that, which is described

“of body straight, high, round, and slender<sup>f446</sup>,”

and fitly expresses a good shape and stature. The church’s stature is no other than the “stature of the fulness of Christ”, (<sup><4013></sup>Ephesians 4:13); which will be attained unto when all the elect are gathered in, and every member joined to the body, and all filled with the gifts and graces of the spirit designed for them, and are grown up to a just proportion in the body; and in such a state Christ seems to view his church, and so commends her by this simile: saints are oftentimes compared to palm trees in Scripture on other accounts; (see <sup><4922></sup>Psalms 92:12);

*and thy breasts to clusters [of grapes]*; on a vine which might be planted by and run up upon a palm tree, as Aben Ezra suggests: though rather clusters of dates, the fruit of the palm tree, are designed, since this fruit, as Pliny<sup>f447</sup> observes, grows in clusters; and to clusters of the vine the church’s breasts are compared in (<sup><2108></sup>Song of Solomon 7:8). And by these “breasts” may be meant either the ministers of the Gospel, who communicate the sincere milk of the word to souls; and may be compared to clusters for their numbers, when there is plenty of them, which is a great mercy to the church; and for their unity, likeness, and agreement in their work, in their ministrations, and in the doctrine they preach, though their gifts may be different; or else the two Testaments, full of the milk of the word; and comparable to “clusters” of grapes or dates, because of the many excellent doctrines and precious promises in them; which, when pressed by hearing, reading, meditation, and prayer, yield both delight and



nourishment to the souls of men. Some think the two ordinances of the Gospel, baptism and the Lord's supper, are intended, which are breasts of consolation; and, when the presence of Christ, and the manifestations of his love, are enjoyed in them, they afford much pleasure and satisfaction; and as those breasts are full in themselves, they are beautiful in the eye of Christ, and as such commended; (see Gill on "<sup>2045</sup>Song of Solomon 4:5").

**Ver. 8.** *I said, I will go up to the palm tree*, etc.] Which is easy of ascent; having, in the bark of the trunk or body of the tree, rings like steps, whereby the eastern people climb it with incredible swiftness, as Pliny<sup>f448</sup> relates: these steps are made by the lower boughs being lopped off, whose knots, or "pollices", as Dr. Shaw<sup>f449</sup> calls them, being gradually left upon the trunk of the tree, serve, like so many rungs of a ladder, to climb up the tree; either to fecundate it, or to lop it, or to gather the fruit; and Lucian says<sup>f450</sup>,

"those that have seen how men get up into palm trees, in Arabia, Egypt, and other places, must needs understand what he says about climbing the Phalli, in the temple of Hierapolis in Syria, he is describing."

By the "palm tree" may be meant the church militant, who yet gets the victory over all her enemies, of which the palm tree is an emblem; and Christ's "going up" to it is expressive of his right to it, and property in it, which he has by his Father's gift, his own purchase, and the power of his grace, and may go up to it when he pleases; also of his presence with his church, and of the delight he takes in her, viewing her stature, fruit, and flourishing circumstances;

*I will take hold of the boughs thereof*; either to crop them, the tops of them, which, of the first year's growth, are very tender and sweet, and may be eaten<sup>f451</sup>; the top of the palm tree is said to be very sweet<sup>f452</sup>; and which some call the "cerebrum", or brain of it, and is spoken of as very pleasant and nourishing<sup>f453</sup>: or to gather the fruit on them; his own grace in exercise, and good works performed under the influence of it; (see <sup>2046</sup>Song of Solomon 4:16 <sup>2047</sup>Song of Solomon 5:1); or to prune them; which he does by the ministry of the word, reproving sin, and refuting error; and, by afflictive providences, purging away sin; and by suffering persecution to befall his churches, whereby he clears them of carnal professors, and lops off withered and fruitless branches;

*now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine*; round, full, soft, and succulent, like the berries of the vine tree, the grapes that grow in clusters on it; of these, (see Gill on “<sup>2107</sup>Song of Solomon 7:7”);

*and the smell of thy nose like apples*; (see Gill on “<sup>2104</sup>Song of Solomon 7:4”). Here it may denote the inward constitution and outward conduct of the church, which were sound and healthful; she had an inward principle of grace, from whence proceeded a savoury conduct, a savoury breath, a holy breathing after divine and spiritual things: or it may intend the things she had a savour of, as divine truths and excellent doctrines, comparable to “apples”, (<sup>2105</sup>Song of Solomon 2:5 <sup>2151</sup>Proverbs 25:11); and all spiritual and heavenly things, when they have the presence of Christ, and the quickening influences of his Spirit.

**Ver. 9.** *And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine*, etc.] Which may intend, either her taste, as the word is rendered in (<sup>2108</sup>Song of Solomon 2:3); by which she can distinguish good wine from bad, truth from error; or her breath, sweet and of a good smell, like the best wine; the breathings of her soul in prayer, which are sweet odours, perfumed with the incense of Christ’s mediation; or rather her speech, the words of her mouth; the roof of the mouth being an instrument of speech; the same word is sometimes rendered “the mouth”, (<sup>2106</sup>Song of Solomon 5:16 <sup>2108</sup>Proverbs 5:3 <sup>2107</sup>Proverbs 8:7); and may denote both her speech in common conversation, which is warming, refreshing, comforting, and quickening; and in prayer and praise, which is well pleasing and delightful to Christ; and especially the Gospel preached by her ministers, comparable to the best wine for its antiquity, being an ancient Gospel; for its purity, unadulterated, and free from mixture, and as faithfully dispensed; its delight, flavour, and taste, to such who have their spiritual senses exercised; and for its cheering, refreshing, and strengthening nature, to drooping weary souls. It follows,

*for my beloved, that goeth [down] sweetly*; is received and taken down with all readiness, by those who have once tasted the sweetness and felt the power of it. Or, “that goeth to righteousness”<sup>f454</sup>; leading to the righteousness of Christ for justification, and teaching to live soberly and righteously: or, “that goeth to my beloved, straightway” or “directly”<sup>f455</sup>; meaning either to his Father, Christ calls his beloved, to whose love the Gospel leads and directs souls, as in a straight line, as to the source of salvation, and all the blessings of grace; or to himself, by a “mimesis”,

whom the church calls so; the Gospel leading souls directly to him, his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, for peace, pardon, justification, and atonement: or, “that goeth to my beloved to uprightnesses”<sup>f456</sup>; that is, to the church, who is Christ’s beloved, consisting of upright men in heart and life, whom Christ calls his beloved and his friends, (<sup>2181</sup>Song of Solomon 5:1); and whom Christ treats with his best wine, his Gospel; and which is designed for them, their pleasure, profit, comfort, and establishment:

*causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak*; either such who are in the dead sleep of sin; who, when the Gospel comes with power, are quickened by it; and it produces in them humble confessions of sin; causes them to speak in praise of Christ, and his grace, and of the salvation which he has procured for lost sinners; it brings them to Zion, to declare what great things God has done for them: or else drowsy professors, in lifeless frames, and much gone back in religion; who, when aroused and quickened by the Gospel, and brought out of their lethargy, are ready to acknowledge their backslidings with shame; to speak meanly and modestly of themselves, and very highly of Christ and his grace, who has healed their backslidings, and still loves them freely; none more ready to exalt and magnify Christ, and speak in praise of what he has done for them. Some render the words, “causing the lips of ancient men to speak”<sup>f457</sup>; whose senses are not so quick, nor they so full of talk, as in their youthful days: wherefore this serves to commend this wine; that it should have such an effect as to invigorate ancient men, and give them a juvenile warmth and sprightliness, and make them loquacious, which is one effect of wine, when freely drunk<sup>f458</sup>; and softens the moroseness of ancient men<sup>f459</sup>: wine is even said to make an ancient man dance<sup>f460</sup>.

**Ver. 10.** *I [am] my beloved’s*, etc.] These are the words of the church, strongly expressing the assurance of faith she had of her union to Christ, and interest in him; which shows that “that” grace is attainable, and that there may be a continuation of the exercise of it; it may be expressed again and again, as it is by the church in this Song, (<sup>2126</sup>Song of Solomon 2:16 <sup>2183</sup>Song of Solomon 6:3); and that the exercise of it often follows, upon the enjoyment of Christ’s presence, as here, upon his going tap to the palm tree; and that this grace has no tendency to licentiousness, but excites to duty, and makes more careful in it, of which (<sup>2171</sup>Song of Solomon 7:11) is a proof, “Come, let us go forth”, etc. Moreover, these words may be considered as a modest acknowledgment of the church’s, that all she were

and had were Christ's, and came from him; all the beauty he had commended in her; all fruitfulness in grace, and strength in the exercise of it; her light and knowledge in divine truths; her zeal and courage to defend them; her upright stature, and holy walk and conversation, and every good thing else, were owing to his grace. And here she also makes a voluntary surrender of all to him again; as she received all from him, she devotes all to him:

*and his desire [is] towards me*; and only to her, as his spouse and bride: it was towards her from everlasting, when he asked her of his Father, and he gave her to him; and so it was in time, to procure her salvation; hence he became incarnate, and suffered and died in her stead: his desire is towards his people before conversion, waiting to be gracious to them; and, after conversion, to have their company, and their grace exercised on him, and to behold their beauty; nor will his desires be fully satisfied until he has got them all with him in glory. And this phrase not only signifies the conjugal relation of the church to Christ, he being her husband, and she his wife, the desire of his eyes, as a wife is called, (<sup>2246</sup>Ezekiel 24:16,18); but takes in the whole care and concern of Christ for her, as her husband; who sympathizes with her under all her distresses; protects her from all dangers and enemies; and provides everything necessary for her, for time and eternity. Some render the words, "seeing his desire is towards me"<sup>f461</sup>; therefore she expresses her faith in him, and gives up herself to him.

**Ver. 11.** *Come, my beloved*, etc.] The word *come* is often used by Christ, and here by the church, in imitation of him; (see <sup>2110</sup>Song of Solomon 2:10,13 <sup>2048</sup>Song of Solomon 4:8). This call is the call of the church upon Christ, to make good his promise, (<sup>2008</sup>Song of Solomon 7:8); and is an earnest desire after the presence of Christ, and the manifestations of his love; which desire is increased the more it is enjoyed; and it shows the sense she had of her own insufficiency for the work she was going about: she knew that visiting the several congregations of the saints would be to little purpose, unless Christ was with her, and therefore she urges him to it; not that he was backward and unwilling to go with her, but he chooses to seem so, to make his people the more earnest for his presence, and to prize it the more when they have it; and it is pleasing to him to hear them ask for it. The endearing character, "my beloved", is used by the church, not only to express her affection for Christ, and faith of interest in him, but as an argument to engage him to go along with her. Her requests follow;

*let us go forth into the field*; from the city, where she had been in quest of Christ, and had now found him, (<sup><2187></sup>Song of Solomon 5:7); into the country, for recreation and pleasure: the allusion may be to such who keep their country houses, to which they retire from the city, and take their walks in the fields, to see how the fruits grow, and enjoy the country air. The church is for going abroad into the fields; but then she would have Christ with her; walking in the fields yields no pleasure unless Christ is there; there is no recreation without him: the phrase expresses her desire of his presence everywhere, at home and abroad, in the city and the fields; and of her being with him alone, that she might tell him all her mind, and impart her love to him, which she could better do alone than in company it may also signify her desire to have the Gospel spread in the world, in the barren parts of it, which looked like uncultivated fields, the Gentile world; and so, in one of the Jewish Midrashes <sup>f462</sup>, these “fields”, and the “villages” in the next clause, are interpreted of the nations of the world;

*let us lodge in the villages*; which, though places of mean entertainment for food and lodging, yet, Christ being with her, were more eligible to her than the greatest affluence of good things without him; and, being places of retirement from the noise and hurry of the city, she chose them, that she might be free of the cares of life, and enjoy communion with Christ, which she would have continued; and therefore was desirous of “lodging”, at least all night, as in (<sup><2113></sup>Song of Solomon 1:13). Some <sup>f463</sup> render the words, “by”, “in”, or “among [the] Cyprus trees”; (see <sup><2114></sup>Song of Solomon 1:14 <sup><2113></sup>Song of Solomon 4:13); by which may be meant the saints, comparable to such trees for their excellency, fragrancy, and fruitfulness; and an invitation to lodge by or with these could not be unwelcome to Christ, they being the excellent in the earth, in whom is all his delight.

**Ver. 12.** *Let us get up early to the vineyards*, etc.] After a night’s lodging in the fields, or among the “Cyprus trees”. By which “vineyards” may be meant particular churches, gathered according to Gospel order, and distinguished from the world, planted with fruitful vines, and fenced by almighty power: hither the church proposes to “get up early”, very early in the morning; being willing to take the first and most seasonable opportunity of visiting the saints, to know their state and condition; and, that her visit might not be in vain, she is for taking Christ along with her;

*let us see if the vine flourish*; true believers in Christ; who, though weak and worthless in themselves, yet being ingrafted in Christ, the true vine, bring forth fruit, and become flourishing in grace and good works; of the flourishing or flowering of the vine, (see Gill on “<sup>(2113)</sup>Song of Solomon 2:13”);

*[whether] the tender grape appear*; or when “the flower of the vine opens”<sup>f464</sup>, and goes off, and the small grape appears: by which young converts may be meant, who are tender, and have but a small degree of faith and knowledge; and yet these are not overlooked, much less despised, by Christ and his church, but are delighted with the promising appearance they make;

*[and] the pomegranates bud forth*; stronger believers, taller and more fruitful than the former; (see <sup>(2143)</sup>Song of Solomon 4:13); the actings and exercise of whose grace are signified by “budding forth”, in an open and visible manner: the church is concerned for the good and welfare of the saints of all ranks and sizes; of vines and pomegranates, as well as tender grapes; and of the budding of the one, as well as of the opening and flowering of the other. And seeing these ends proposed by her are the same with Christ’s, (<sup>(2161)</sup>Song of Solomon 6:11); she might conclude they would prevail upon him to go with her, particularly what follows:

*there will I give thee my loves*; in the fields, villages, and vineyards, when alone, and observing the state and condition of particular churches and saints; and having communion with Christ, the church might hope and expect to have her heart enlarged, and drawn forth in love to Christ more abundantly; and that she should be able to manifest it more largely to him, and give clearer and fuller proofs of it: and this she observes in order to gain her point, and get him to go along with her; knowing that her love, in the actings and exercise of it, was very acceptable to him, (<sup>(2140)</sup>Song of Solomon 4:10); I see not why the word for “loves” may not be rendered “my lovely flowers”; as a word nearly the same, in (<sup>(2173)</sup>Song of Solomon 7:13), is by some rendered, “these lovely flowers give a good smell”, which seems to refer to the flowers here; such as were to be met with in plenty, in fields and vineyards, among vines and pomegranates, as lilies, violets, etc. and may be an allusion to lovers, who used to give to those they loved sweet smelling flowers<sup>f465</sup>; and here may signify the graces of the Spirit, and the actings of them, which are fragrant, and acceptable to Christ.

**Ver. 13.** *The mandrakes give a smell*, etc.] Or, “those lovely flowers”, as Junius and Tremellius, and Piscator, translate the words; even those the church proposed to give to her beloved, when in the fields Some take them to be violets; others, jessamine; others, more probably, lilies<sup>f466</sup>; as the circumstances of time and place, when and where they flourished, and their fragrant smell, and figure like cups, show. Ravius<sup>f467</sup> contends, that the word signifies, and should be rendered, “the branches put forth their sweet smelling flowers”; and thinks branches of figs are meant, which give a good smell, agreeably to (<sup>-2013</sup>Song of Solomon 2:13); and which he supposes to be the use of the word in (<sup>-2201</sup>Jeremiah 24:1); and to his sense Heidegger<sup>f468</sup> agrees; only he thinks the word “branches” is not to be restrained to a particular species, but may signify branches of sweet smelling flowers, and fruits in general. Ludolphus<sup>f469</sup> would have the fruit the Arabians, call “mauz”, or “muza”, intended; which, in the Abyssine country, is as big as a cucumber, and of the same form and shape, fifty of which grow upon one and the same stalk, and are of a very sweet taste and smell; from which cognation of a great many on the same stalk he thinks it took the name of “dudaim”, the word here used, and in (<sup>-0304</sup>Genesis 30:14-16). But the generality of interpreters and commentators understand by it the mandrakes; and so it is rendered by the Septuagint, and in both the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, on (<sup>-0304</sup>Genesis 30:14); but it is questionable whether the same plant that is known among us by that name is meant, since it is of a strong ill scented and offensive smell; and so Pliny says<sup>f470</sup> of it: though Dioscorides, Levinus, Lemnius<sup>f471</sup>, and Augustine<sup>f472</sup> (who says he saw the plant and examined it), say it is of a very sweet smell; which though it does not agree with the plant that now bears the name, yet it does with that here intended; for though it is only said to give a smell, no doubt a good one is meant, and such Reuben’s mandrakes gave. And by them here may be intended, either the saints and people of God, compared to them for their fragrancy, being clad with the garments of Christ, which smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, and are anointed with the savoury ointments of the grace of the Spirit; whose prayers are sweet odours; and their works, with their persons, accepted with God in Christ: or rather the graces of the Spirit in lively exercise may be meant; such as those lovely flowers of faith, hope, love, repentance, patience, self-denial, humility, thankfulness, and others;

*and at our gates [are] all manner of pleasant [fruits]*; in distinction from the mandrakes and flowers in the fields (<sup>-0304</sup>Genesis 30:14); and in allusion

to a custom, in many countries, to garnish the posts of the door of newly married persons with branches of trees, and fruits, and flowers; and at other festivals, besides nuptial ones<sup>f473</sup>, which made it inviting to enter in: and these “all manner of pleasant [fruits]” may denote the plenty, variety, and excellency of the blessings of grace, and of the graces of the Spirit, believers have from Christ; and of the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, which are for their use; and may be said to be “at our gates”, as being ready at hand, in the hearts of saints, and in the mouths of Gospel ministers; and open and visible, held forth to public view in the word and ordinances; and which are administered at Wisdom’s gates, the gates of Zion, where they are to be met with and had. And which are

*new and old*; denoting the plenty of grace and blessings of it, of old laid up in Christ, and from whom there are fresh supplies continually: or rather the doctrines of the Old and New Testament; which, for matter and substance, are the same; and with which the church, and particularly her faithful ministers, being furnished, bring forth out of their treasure things new and old, (~~418~~ Matthew 13:52);

*[which] I have laid up for thee, O my beloved*; Christ, whom her soul loved; for though the above fruits, the blessings, promises, and doctrines of grace, which she laid up in her heart, mind, and memory, to bring forth and make use of at proper times and seasons, were for her own use and benefit, and of all believers, yet in all for the honour and glory of Christ, the author and donor of them. Respect may be had to a custom with lovers, to lay up fruits for those they love; at least such custom may be compared with this<sup>f474</sup>.