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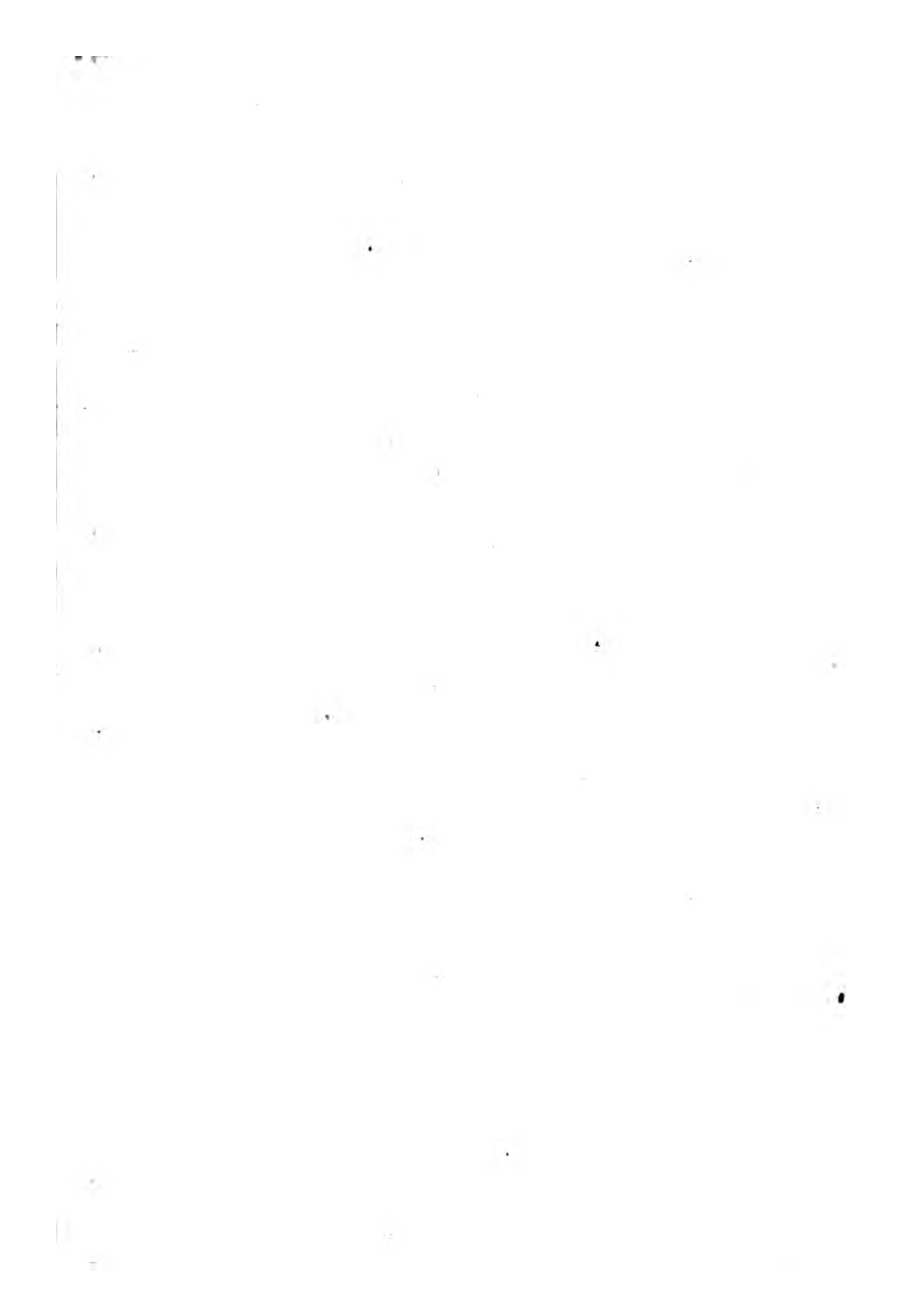
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Jessie S. Abbott -
Litchfield -



A BRIEFE
EXPOSITION
Of the whole Book of
CANTICLES,
O R,
SONG OF SOLOMON:

Lively describing the Estate of the Church
in all the Ages thereof, both Jewish
and Christian, to this day.

And modestly pointing at the Gloriousnesse of
the restored Estate of the Church of the Jewes,
and the happy access of the Gentiles, in the ap-
proaching dayes of Reformation, when the
Wall of Partition shall be taken away.

A Work very usefull and seasonable to every Christi-
an; but especially such as endeavour and thirst after the
settling of Church and State, according to the Rule
and Patterne of the Word of God.

Written by that Learned and Godly Divine *John*
Cotton, Batchelor of Divinity; and now Pastor of the
Congregation at *Boston* in *New-England*.

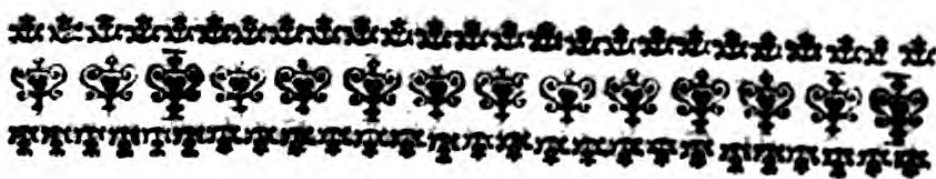
L O N D O N,
Printed by *J. Young* for *Charles Green*, and are to be
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THE
CANTICLES,
OR
SONG OF SONGS
opened and explained.

THE TEXT.
CHAP. I.



He Song of songs, which is Solomons.

*2 Let him kisse me with the kisses
of his mouth : for thy love is better
then wine.*

*3 Because of the savour of thy good
ointments, thy Name is as ointment poured forth, there-
fore doe the Virgins love thee.*

*4 Draw me, we will run after thee : the King
hath brought me into his chambers : we will be glad
and rejoyce in thee, we will remember thy love more
then wine, the upright love thee.*

*5 I am blacke, but comely, (O ye daughters of
Jerusalem) as the Tents of Kedar, as the curtaines
of Solomon.*

*6 Looke not upon me because I am blacke, because
the*

the Sunne hath looked upon me : my Mothers children were angry with me , they made me the keeper of the Vineyards, but my own Vineyard have I not kept.

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

8 If thou know not (O thou fairest among women) goe thy way forth by the footsteps of thy flocke, and feed thy kiddes besides the shepheards tents.

9 I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaohs chariots.

10 Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chaines of gold.

11 We will make thee borders of gold, with studs of silver.

12 While the King sitteth at his table, my spike-nard spendeth forth the smell thereof.

13 A bundle of myrrhe is my welbeloved unto me, he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.

14 My beloved is unto me , as a cluster of Camphire in the Vineyards of En-gedi.

15 Behold, thou art faire my love : behold, thou art faire, and hast doves eyes.

16 Behold, thou art faire, my beloved, yea, pleasant : also our bed is green.

17 The beames of our house are Cedar, and our rafters of firre.

THE EXPLANATION.

Cant. 1. ver. 1. *The Song of songs, which is Solomons.*

Ver. 2. *Let him kisse me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better then wine.*

IT was the manner of ancient times, at Espoufalls and Nuptialls to indite and sing * (*Epithalamia*) love-songs: a The title of the 45. Psalme may seeme to be penned by one of the chiefe singers of the Temple, (who now were all of them Prophets; † *Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun,*) upon occasion of *Solomons* marriage with *Pharaohs* daughter; for though shee was a stranger by birth from the common-wealth of Israel, yet his marriage was lawfull with her: And therefore, notwithstanding this marriage, his love to God is still commended, ^b *Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh King of Egypt, and* ^c *Solomon loved the Lord, &c.* For indeed herein *Solomon* was,

First, a type of Christ, admitting the Gentiles into the fellowship of his marriage-bed.

Secondly, this *Pharaohs* daughter became

* Ruth 4.
11, 12.
a 1st Sal. 45.

† 1 Chron.
25. 1. to 5.

b 1 King.
3. 1.
c verse 3.

1.

2.

d Psal. 45.
10. — 14.

came a Profelyte to the Jewish Religion,
d *Hearken (Oh Daughter) and consider, and
incline thine eare ; forget also thine owne
people, and thy fathers house, &c.*

Now, though that marriage song was
penned upon that occasion ; yet it ascen-
deth farre above all earthly respects of
worldly marriage, and by a divine and
heavenly workmanship sets forth a hea-
venly marriage-song betweene Christ
and his Church : of like Argument was
this song penned by *Solomon* himselfe ;
not to expresse his affections to *Pharaohs*
daughter, or hers to him, or the good
parts of either of them : no, nor the like
respects to any *Shunamite* amongst the
rest of his wives, as some have vainly
conceived ; for then how absurd and
monstrous were some of his comparisons,
likening his Spouse to a *company of horses
in Pharaohs Chariot, her Head to Carmel, her
Eyes to Fish-pooles, her Nose to a Tower ; her
Teeth to a flock of Sheep, her whole Selfe to a
terrible Army with Banners* : But his scope
is to describe the estate of the Church to-
wards Christ, and his respect towards
her, from his own time to the last judge-
ment, as afterward it shall appeare.

Now,

Now, through this whole marriage-song this *Decorum* it keepeth, that though the calamities of the Church be as well described throughout this song, as the comfortable condition of the same in all ages; yet such dismall passages are veiled and shadowed under some sweet and amiable resemblances, lest the joy of a marriage feast should be darkened by unseasonable mention of so sad occurrences; neither are all the passages of the estate of the Church in every age here described, (for how can that be in so short a song?) but the chiefe heads of things in every age are sweetly, and shortly, and lively, not onely pointed at, but decyphered. These verses contain,

First, the title of the whole book, ver. 1.

Secondly, the description of the estate of the Church in the dayes, First, of *Solomon*, ver. 2.—4.

Secondly, of *Solomon* and *Rehoboam*, verse 5.

Thirdly, of *Rehoboam*, verse 6.—9.

In the title we have

First, the form of the book, It is a *Song*.

Secondly, the excellency of it, A *Song of songs*.

A 4

Thirdly,

The title

1

2

1

2

3

Title.

1

2

3

Thirdly, the Author of it, *Which is Solomons.*

Col. 3. 6.

The Song of songs, &c. In *Coloff. 3. 16.* there is mention made,

1

First, of Psalmes.

2

Secondly, Hymnes.

3

Thirdly, spirituall Songs.

Psalmes.

Amongst the Hebrewes there were Psalmes made to be sung with Instruments, as well as with voyce, and contained arguments of all sorts, for Petition, Thanksgiving, and Instruction.

Songs.

Songs were chiefly made for the voice.

Hymnes.

Hymnes are properly praises of God: though any of these are sometimes put for all.

use 1.

First, this doth let us see, that it were to be wished, that this Booke were turned into verse or meeter in each language, that we might sing the Canticles as the Hebrewes did.

use 2.

Secondly, this teaches us to strive for such a gracious frame of spirit, that we might alwayes bee fitted to sing to God.

This Song containes the estate of the Church, as well in the worst as best times; yet *Solomon* can as well sing in the

the misery of the Church, as in her prosperity. And* *David* hath as well Psalmes of his deep waters and calamities, as of his greatest deliverances. And the holy Ghost saith, *c Rejoyce in the Lord alwayes*: And though singing be chiefly fit and requisite in mirth, yet we should be fit also for a Psalm in our affliction. But we commonly in our ill houres are too fullen to sing, and in our merry moods, our spirits vanish away in carnall mirth and jolity; but whatsoever the estate of the Church be, we should have our spirits as ready to sing as to pray.

Thirdly, is reprov'd that ancient law and custome of the Synagogue, which prohibited young men (under thirty yeares of age) the reading and use of this Booke; but what age fitter for Songs then cheerfull youth? And further, the amorousnesse of the dittie will not stirre up wantonnesse in any age, if the words be well understood: but rather, by inflaming with heavenly love, will draw out, and burne up all earthly and carnall lust; and even as fire in the hand is drawne out by holding it to a stronger fire, or as the light and heat

* Psal. 69.

2.

c Phil. 4. 4.

f Jam. 5.

13.

use 3.

heat of the Sunne extinguisheth a kitchen fire; so doth heavenly love to Christ extinguish base kitchen lusts.

Verse 1.

* Exod. 26
33.

1 King. 4.
32.

g 2 Sam.
23. 1.

h 1 King.
1. 47.

† Psal. 16.
56, 57, 58,
52.

i Psa. 12. 6

A Song of songs: That is, a most excellent Song, the chiefest of Songs: as when they would expresse the holy place, they say, The Holy of holiest, * *The Lord of lords, the King of kings, the Servant of servants*, an Hebrew superlative; so this is the chiefest Song, first of all *Solomons* other Songs, even of his thousand and five.

Secondly, of all Songs without exception; for though *David* was in his time the sweet singer of Israel, yet as *Solomons* Throne exceeded his in all other magnificence: ^h so did his Name exceed his also; yet this is no disparagement to the other Songs; so neither, that some of *Dauids* Psalmes should be stiled † golden Psalmes: ⁱ All purified gold; yet some gold wrought more exquisitely then others, and finer engraven then others; even some portion of the pure and holy Word of God, more exquisitely penned and polished then other.

Reason 1.

The first Reason why this Song is more excellent then others, is, because this Song speaketh not onely of the chiefest

chiefest matter, to wit, Christ and his Church; but also more largely then any of *Dauids* Psalmes, and with more store of more sweet and precious, exquisite and amiable resemblances, taken from the richest Jewels, the sweetest Spices, Gardens, Orchards, Vineyards, Wine-cellar, and the chiefest beauties of all the workes of God and man.

Secondly, this Song admitteth more varietie of interpretation then any other, and also of singular use: some have applied it to expresse the mutuall affection and fellowship between Christ and every Christian soule; some betweene Christ and the Catholique Church; some to particular Churches, from *Solomons* time to the last judgement. And there is an holy and usefull truth in each one of these interpretations; but the last doth exceedingly magnifie the wonderfull excellency of this Song, making it a divine abridgement of the Acts and Monuments of the Church. And that this book was chiefly penned to be such an historicall Prophecie or Prophetickall history, may appeare,

Reason 2

First, by the correspondency, or suitability

fitableness of the words of this Song, to the events of each age.

2

Secondly, by the repetition of the same description, and other occurrences in divers parts of this Song; which would be a needlesse tautologie, if it were spoken of the same persons in the same time; as you may see if you compare *Chap. 4. 2.* with *6. 6.* and *2. 7.* with *3. 5.* and *8. 4. 3. 6.* with *8. 5.*

Reason 3.

Chap. 3. 3.

with Ch.

1. 7, 8, 9.

Thirdly, by the diversities of descriptions of some persons, which would intimate and imply a contradiction, if they were not spoken of severall times and severall persons.

Reason 4.

Chap. 3. 6.

and 6. 10.

and 8. 5.

Ise 1.

Fourthly, by the sudden admiration of some new persons and occurrences.

First, wee may here see, the eldest sonne of Wisdome giveth the double portion of excellency to this Song above all others; yea, since the holy Ghost giveth it, it is not therefore onely Canonically Scripture, but an eminent portion of it. It were prophane blasphemy to preferre this Song above other Songs of holy Scripture, if it were not also given by divine inspiration as well as they: to preferre the invention of man

man before the wisdom of God were sacrilegious madness. And although none of Gods ten proper names in Hebrew be once mentioned in this Song, yet that impeacheth not the authority of this Booke more then it doth of *Hester*, where no name of God is mentioned at all. Besides, this Booke is full of such names of God as sute more with the arguments; as *Welbeloved, Brother, Shepherd, O thou whom my soule loveth, the chiefest of tenthousand.*

Secondly, this must exhort us to a more studious reading and meditating of this Booke, as of a most excellent portion of holy Writ.

Thirdly, this shewes us, that as this Scripture is Canonically, so the Pen-man of it is a Canonically Saint in Heaven; for hee must needs be so, according to that (not of *Peters* successor, as the Papists would have it) but of *S. Peter* himselfe: *⁂ Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Ghost: so that hee must needs be a Saint by S. Peters confession; and not he onely, but Christ himselfe saith, 1 All the Prophets are in the kingdome of God.* Now, all the Prophets came not neere this

Chap. 1. 7,
8, 9, and
5. 10.

use 2.

use 3.

1 2 Pet. 1.
21.

1 Luke 13.
28.

m 2 Sam.
7.14, 15.

this Prophet ; and there was no Scripture but it was penned by a Propheticall and Apostolicall spirit ; and though *Solomon* did fall , yet *m* *If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men , &c.* Verse 15. *But my mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul.* If some say, By this it was meant that God would not take away his kingdom ; to this it is answered, he did take it away , but he would not deale with him as he dealt with *Saul* : so then this telleth us *Solomon* is a Saint in Heaven.

The text
Ver. 1.

n 1 King. 4
29, 30.
Deut. 34.
1.—4.

[*Which is Solomons.*] *Solomon* the penner of it, but a wiser then *Solomon* indited it. The holy Ghost maketh choice of his Instruments according to the use he had to put them to ; to set forth the estate of his Church by the choicest treasures of nature : hee useth *Solomons* spirit , which *n* was as large as the sand of the sea shore. And as God led *Moses* to the top of mount Pisgah, to behold all the places and situations of Israel : so he lifted up *Solomons* spirit to the mountain of Activitie, (that I may so speake) where onely all times to come are present , to behold the estate of the Church throughout the present, and all after times.

This

This is to teach us, as it was said before, that *Solomon* is a canonized Saint, else he had not beene a Pen-man of Canonickall Scripture, canonized not by *Peters* pretended successors, who have shamefully erred in this kinde; but by * *Peter* himselfe, yea, by a greater then *Peter* or *Solomon*, even ° *Christ Jesus*: That promise reacheth further then to preferre *Solomon* before *Saul*, in reserving the kingdome to his posterity, which he tooke from *Saul*; for even from *Solomons* posterity, the kingdome was cut off in *Jechoniah*: the promise therefore of mercy to *Solomon* above *Saul*, reacheth to the bestowing of an heavenly kingdome upon him. Besides, in that place two blessings are promised,

First, Adoption, *I will be his father, &c.*

Secondly, establishment in Gods house and kingdome: so that if the latter promise should not evince his perseverance, yet the former doth.

Secondly, this is to stirre us up to the reading and meditation of this Booke, the more for the Pen-mans sake.

The 2, 3, & 4. verses sing and shew forth the estate of the Church in *Solomons* time.

Use 1.

* 2 Pet. 1.
21.
o Luke 13
28.
p 2 Sam. 7
14, 15.

2 Sam. 7.
12, 13, 14.

1

2

Use 2.

time. Verse 5. the estate of the Church as well in *Solomons* time as in *Rehoboams*. The verses following to the ninth, the estate of the Church in all the time of *Rehoboam*.

Solomons
time foure
things.

1

q Prov. 8.
34. 35.

2

Verse 3.

3

Verse 4.

4

Verse 5.

Verse 2.

In the Church of *Solomons* time, foure passages are chiefly observable.

First, *Solomons* choyce of heavenly wisdom, by which chiefly wee enjoy sweet and familiar fellowship with God, q 1 King. 3. 5. to 10. This is expressed, verse 2.

Secondly, the sweet savour and fame of *Solomons* gifts and graces, to the winning of the love and admiration of the sons of men.

Thirdly, the drawing and gathering of all Israel to the Kings chambers, the courts of *Solomons* Temple: or his care to bring on his people to the publick Worship of God, and their respect of him in regard thereof.

Fourthly, the fall and deformity of the Church, by Idolatrous worship, and toleration thereof in many; and yet the keeping of the native beauty of the Church in many others.

[Let him kisse me with the kisses of his
mouth,

mouth, &c.] It is a prayer of the Church, or (which is all one) some chiefe member of it, for a pledge of Christs sweet and familiar acquaintance, and love, and fellowship with her: *Kisses* are pledges and incentives of love. *Men shall kisse his lips that answereth upright words.* This is the effect of upright Answers, men kisse his lips; but God kissing a mans lips, is the cause of mans answering upright words; his breathing into our mouths a right answer, maketh us speake accordingly: as, on the contrary, when one answers perversly, unjustly, erroneously, Satan then hath kissed them with his kisses, hee hath fittten as a * lying spirit in their mouths.

r Pro. 24
26.

* 1 King
22, 23, 24

[*The kisses of his mouth,*] which is more then the *kisses of his lips*; the one is a silent gesture of love, the other implyeth also amiable speeches, when Christ,

First, by the voyce of his Word, or

1

Secondly, by the breath of his spirit, doth either,

2

First, put wisdom or grace into our hearts, or

1

Secondly, speake peace or comfort to our soules.

Psal. 119.
98.—110.
2

f Isa. 57.
19.

t Prov. 17.

u Eccles.
12. 13.

* Pro. 8.

22. 35.

Mat. 3. 17.

y Pro. 3. 17

* Psa. 104.

15. & 4.

6, 7.

Pro. 3. 13.

— 15. &

31. 6, 7.

Jud. 9. 13.

† 1 King. 3

5, 9, 11.

2 Chron.

1. 7, 10, 11.

Pro. 16. 10

*I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace, &c. Solomons wisdom is the grace of God, as wickednesse is folly; The beginning of this wisdom is the feare of God, the end of it is the keeping of Gods Commandments. This wisdom who so findes, findes Christ, * the wisdom of the Father, in whom God is well pleased with us, and in whom he (as it were) kisseth us: this wisdom doth not only enable us to walk godlily to our salvation, but likewise fits us to goe in and out before our families, before our people, and so enlarges us to all duties of our callings: And to walk in the wayes of this wisdom, brings peace to our soules, and to those that live under us. y All her paths are peace.*

*For thy love is better then wine.] The favour of God in giving wisdom, and thereby peace to a mans selfe and others depending on him, is more worth then wine; (that is) then whatsoever makes the heart of man * glad. This prayer was powred out by Solomon, the chiefeft member of the Church in this time, when he prayed for wisdom, † and preferred it before long life, riches, victory over his enemies, &c.*

Or

Or else this whole verse may expresse the desire of the Church to *Solomon*, that he would expresse his love to her by his divine Sentences, * and Bookes, and Songs, which are better then their civill peace, † then the sitting under their own Vine and Fig-tree.

Because of the savour of thy good ointments. } Good ointments are the gifts and graces of Gods Spirit, ^a *But the anointing which ye have received of him, &c.* so called, because they heale a broken heart as ^b oyle: the oyle of Gods grace heals the bruises of the soule.

Secondly, as oyle doth make the face to shine, ^c so doe they.

Thirdly, ^d as by the holy oyles all the vessels of the Tabernacle were consecrated; so by these graces all the vessels of mercy are consecrated to God.

Fourthly, by the ointment were anointed to their offices ^e Kings, ^f Priests, ^g and some Prophets; ^h so by these graces are we anointed to God our Father in Christ, ⁱ Kings, Priests, and Prophets. Savour is the manifestation of these graces, as ointments are manifested by their savour.

Thy name is as an ointment powred forth. }

* Eccles.
12.9.

† 1 Kin.4.
25.

Verse 3.

a Joh.2.27

b Luke 10.
34.
Isa.61.3.

c Psa.104
15.
Eccles. 8. 1.
d Exo.10.
23.31.

e 1 Sam.
16.3. &
10.1.

f Exod.40
13,15.

g 1 King.
19.16.

h Act.1.8.
& 2.4,7.

i Rev. 1.6.
Joh. 12.3.
Verse 3.

k Can. 8. 8

l Can. 6. 8

Verse 3.

m 1 King.

28. & 4.

31, 34. &

5. 7. & 10.

1, 7, 8, 9.

n 1 King.

10. 1, 2.

o 1 King.

5. 7.

Verse 4.

That is, precious, sweet, and famously renowned; *Therefore doe the Virgins love thee.* The Virgins in this Song are such as Christ hath not yet espoused to himselfe, nor spoken for in way of marriage; such as carnall Jewes, or the Gentiles.

Love thee.] That is,

First, honourably esteem thee.

Secondly, affect thy sight and fellowship.

Thirdly, seeke after thee. ^m This was fulfilled in *Solomon*: his owne people revered him, even all of them; his name was famous in all nations round about him: all the Kings sent to him, and of all people, some came to hear his wisdom. ⁿ The Queen of Sheba cometh from the uttermost parts of the earth to heare it, & counteth his people happy under it: *Hiram* King of Tyre blessed God for his wisdom.

Draw me.] It may well be the speech of *Solomon* to Christ, praying that Christ would draw him to the Father, neer unto him in holy duties, and promising to bring all the People to run with him after God. Or it may be the speech of the Church to *Solomon*, desiring him to draw them together, by publick edicts and pro-

proclamations, to the solemn duties of Gods worship, and promising to come freely, to runne together willingly in the times of such assemblies; which was done P.

The King hath brought me into his chambers.] That is, into those bride-chambers, where Christ familiarly converseth with them; which were three.

First, the Tabernacle at Gibeon.

Secondly, the Ark at Jerusalem.

Thirdly, the Temple.

Into these, ⁹ *Solomon* brought the whole congregation of Israel to solemn sacrifices.

The words following in this verse, shew a three-fold respect which the people beare to *Solomon*.

First, they rejoyced in him.

Secondly, they remember his love better then wine.

Thirdly, the upright love him.

Their rejoycing in him, is recorded: their remembrance of his love more then wine, is there also implied; for departing from the meeting with such glad hearts, they afterward remembered the comfort thereof, as more blessed then the peace-

p 2 Chro.
2. 2, 3.
Verse 4.

q 2 Chro.
1. 2. — 6.
1 King. 8.
5. — 14.
— 63.

r 1 King.
8. 66.

able living under their owne Vine and Fig-tree. The love of the upright to him continued all his time, even when his wives, and hollow-hearted subjects flattered him, and enticed him to toleration of Idolatrie.

Verse 2.

But consider further, that *Solomon*, when hee is here set forth as the desire, praise, and blessednesse of all his people, he is then a type of Christ, greater then *Solomon*; whose heavenly fellowship and instruction, the Church desires above wine: whose graces are excellent, and procuring him love and renowne, of whom the Church prayeth to be drawn, and who leadeth us to fellowship with God in holy worship; whom therefore the people rejoyce in, and remember his love above wine: the upright love him.

Use 1.

This, first doth shew us the happy estate of a Church or Common-wealth, when men of place labour not for preferments or worldly profits, for honour or long life, but for wise and understanding hearts, that may go in and out before the people in their callings; when they desire to be kissed with the kisses of Gods mouth, that he would breath into them
such

such graces as be needfull for their places.

Secondly, this sheweth what procures a Magistrate love and reputation; when, being enriched with Gods graces, as sweet oyntments, hee manifesteth the sweet savour thereof in all his administrations. If any man desire a good name, if any man desires love and respect, this is the way to get it; fill your hearts with the good gifts and graces of God; let Gods grace shew forth it selfe in your speeches, in your answers, in your practices; this oyntment will be stronger to get a good name, then any other noysom thing to hinder it. The Virgins will love you, for they rejoyce at your faith; *And by faith our elders were well reported of.* By these, *Solomon* got a good name all the world over.

Use 2.

Heb. 11.2

Thirdly, this is to teach a Magistrate to draw on the people to holy duties, by all meanes he can, by his Proclamations, Lawes, and Examples.

Use 3.

Fourthly, to shew that the greatest comfort of subjects, and the strongest love to knit them in all hearty affections to their Prince, is his forwardnesse in drawing them on, and leading them an

Use 4.

end to the holy duties of Gods worship.
 Verse 4. *Draw me, and I will runne after thee.*]

If *Solomon* once be drawne, all the people will come after rejoycing, when they shall see the Magistrate come.

Use 5. Fifthly, to shew us a signe of a true spouse of Christ; such a one preferreth

Verse 2. fellowship with him above all things, delighting in his company, in his ordinances.

d Phil. 3. Thus did *Paul*, *d I count all things losse*
 7, 8. *and drosse for Christ.* So *David*, *e Whom*
 e Psal. 73. *have I in heaven but thee?*

25. *I am blacke, yet comely, &c.*

Text Ver. In these verses is described the estate
 5. to 9. of the Church.

Verse 5. First, of Israel and Judah, in the last dayes of *Solomon*, and then of *Rehoboam*.

Verse 6. Secondly, of Judah alone.

Ver. 7, 8. Thirdly, of Israel alone after the Apostasie of the ten tribes.

Verse 9. Fourthly, of Judah alone, in respect of his civill condition under the service of the King of Egypt.

Verse 5. *I am blacke, &c.*] The Church is set forth by a double adjunction, the one contrary to the other; *I am black, yet comely*; and both these by comparison:

3 blacke. First, *black, as the tents of Kedar.*

Secondly,

Secondly, *comely*, as the curtaines or hangings of Solomon.

First, *black*, by the fall of Solomon g.

Secondly, by the folly of Rehoboam h.

Thirdly,

1. By Profanenesse.

2. By Schisme.

3. By Apostasie.

4. By the Rebellion of the ten tribes i.

Yet comely,]

First, by the present purity of Gods ordinances in the Temple k.

Secondly, the constancy of the upright in cleaving to God, to the King, to the house of God, and *David*; the which was done in profession by whole Judah and Benjamin, and the Israelites inhabiting in the Cities of Judah, but in truth, by the upright l.

Yee Daughters of Ferusalem, &c.]

Children of the Church are called Daughters rather than Sons, as being prepared as a pure Virgin for Christ their husband m.

As the tents of Kedar, &c.] That is, of the Arabians, who were called Scenith, or Nomede, for that they wandred up and downe, feeding their flockes in tents,

g 1 King.

11.4,9.

h 1 King.

12.14,15.

i 1 Kin. 12.

16,18,19.

Comely.

k Psal. 48.

1,2.

2 Chr. 13.

10,—12.

l 1 Kin. 12.

17,20,23.

m 2 Cor.

11.2.

degrees, though they made her the keeper of the vineyards.

Verse 6.

Look not upon me.] That is,

First, with a scorching eye, Sun-burning me, making me still more blacke by your disdain and separation; as the Sun is said to looke upon, that is, with a scorching eye.

o Job 28.7

Secondly, with a piercing eye, as the Vultures doe, whereof *Job* speaketh, using the same word here used of the Sun, which spieth out what he may fasten upon, any corruption or carrion.

Verse 6.

p Psal. 84.
11.

q 1 Kin. 11
9. & 12. 24

The Sunne.] That is, God hath looked upon me with a scorching eye, in displeasure; for he was angry with *Solomon*. It came not by chance, or civill causes in polity, but by divine procurement; and therefore the daughters of Jerusalem to make such an use of it as not to alienate themselves the more from God by it: that which cometh from God should draw us neerer to God; He did it to set us more Kings in the Common-wealth, as *Solomon* had more Gods in the Church.

Verse 6.

r 1 King.
12. 16.

The sonnes of my mother were angry with mee.] That is, the ten tribes were offended: yea this anger of the tribes was excessive,

cessive, when it brake forth into such extremity, and therefore they rather to be reprov'd, then the Church disdained.

They made me the keeper of the Vines.]

First, God ^s.

Secondly, all the tribes ^r.

Of the Vines.] That is, of all the Churches ^u.

But mine owne Vineyard have I not kept.]

That is, not the Churches of Judah and Jerusalem, Idolatry and Superstition creeping in.

No not the Vines of mine own house, my wives * from falling to Idolatry, and seducing my selfe to toleration of it.

Tell me, Oh thou, &c.] This verse containeth,

First, a Prayer of the faithfull disperfed throughout the ten tribes, and commanded by *Jeroboam* to goe no more to worship at Jerusalem, but to goe to Dan and Bethel, desiring to know whither to resort to find Christ feeding his sheep ^a *that beare his voyce.*

Secondly, a Reason to prevent her turning aside to superstitious worship, by following such Teachers as will not be subordinate to Christ, depending upon his

f 1 Chron.
28. 4.— 6.
r 2 Sam. 5.
3.

u Ps. 80. 8.
Isa. 5. 1.
Mat. 21. 33

* Ps. 128. 3

Verse 7.

a John 10.
27, 28.

b 1 King.
12. 28, 31.
Verse 8.

his direction ; but companions with him, usurping to prescribe with like authority as himselfe in his worship ^b.

If you know not.] This verse containeth Christs answer : where observe,

First, a Compellation, *Oh thou fairest amongst women.*

Secondly, a Supposition, *If thou knowest not* : as if he should say, it is much thou shouldest not know.

Thirdly, a Direction to follow in this case,

c 2 Chro.
11. 13, 14,
16.

First, the footsteps of the true sheep of Christ, who went up all to Jerusalem ^c.

d 2 Chro.
13. 10, 11.

Secondly, the tents of the Shepherds, the lawfull Priests, who were there also : ^d There they feed the kids and young ones, who else might in time grow ramish and rank with superstitious and bad Ministers.

Verse 9.

I have compared thee.] Here the civill estate of the Church of Judah is described ; for after that the recourse of the faithfull Priests and Levites had strengthened the hand of *Rehoboam*, * he fell away, and most of Israel with him : wherefore God sent *Pharaoh Shishak* (for all the Kings of Egypt were called *Pharaohs*) to subdue

* 2 Chro.
11. 17. &
12. 1, 2.
2 Chro. 12
2, 8, 9. ver.
8, 9.

subdue them to his service. So then the Church of Judah is here set forth,

First, by her service to *Pharaoh*, as if, like horses, they drew in *Pharaohs* triumphant chariot d. *Iosephus* saith, this *Shishak* was *Sesostris*, of whom *Herodotus* speakes: yea, of him saith *Diodorus Siculus*, that he caused Kings as horses to draw in his chariots.

d 2 Chro.
12.8.

Secondly, by her acceptance to God in this service; *I have compared thee to the company of my horses*: and so in the Hebrew, because they had submitted themselves under Gods just hand e. If *Solomon* had spoken of any of his wives or concubines, it had been a monstrous and absurd comparison to liken them to coach-horses. Also because this is a marriage-song, he setteth downe expressly no dismall thing to interrupt bride-chamber joy, but vaileth the service under this magnificent comparison darkly.

e 2 Chro.
12.6, 12.

This shewes us what it is that makes the Church blacke, wherein the deformity of it stands, in the fall and sins of the people, and of the Princes, in declining to Idolatry in their folly, schismes, and rents from their mother; profanenesse, apo-

use 3.

stasie, and rebellion in the Church and Common-wealth. These doe darken the fairest Churches.

If *Solomon* shall set up other Gods, God will set up forain Princes in his kingdome. If he and his people will serve other gods, God will cause his Princes to draw in forain Princes chariots: if we be at unity with other gods, God will be at enmity with us.

use 2.

Secondly, this doth shew us there may be a true comely Church in the midst of such deformities, yet the true Church of God in the greatest darkness is alwaies comely. It is not the sins of Princes and people that can take away the Churches comelineffe; they may bring blacknesse upon her, like *to the tents of Kedar*: but draw these curtaines aside, and you shall finde that Gods Church is comely, like to the *curtains of Solomon*. Run we not therefore from the Church because of her blacknesse, but run to her, and embrace her in her most sad defections.

use 3.

Thirdly, to teach the children of the Church not to separate from the Church for corruption sake; not to looke onely at her corruptions, but to see her comelineffe

nesse also; and not adde affliction to the afflicted: much lesse are we to think they in Bohemia, and in the Palatinate, are no Churches, for that they are now sunne-burnt. The sun, even God, hath looked upon them; and it is not their mothers children, but the bastards of the Roman Harlot have been angry with her. Let us not then look at them with a vultures eye, as though we would behold nothing, but corruption and carrion: nor with a scorching eye, make them more black: but with a child-like eye, to pity them for their calamity and blacknesse which is befallen them.

Fourthly, observe that the calamities of the Church spring not out of the dust, but it is God that causeth darknesse upon the Church: yea, to speake reverently, it is he that lookes at her with a scorching eye; he searcheth her sinnes, and, finding them out, doth blast her that she is tann'd and sun-burnt. If then it be Gods hand, let us pity the Church so much the more, and strive with God to renew the light of his countenance upon her.

Fifthly, it was a sin in them to be angry with the Church, as some of the Se-

use 4.

use 5.

paration are, and doe depart from us ; and it is not a little sinne and fault in us to despise other Churches in distresse. What and if some cast off England, shall we reject it because some of the sons of her mother do so ? How much lesse then when the sons, not of a mother but of a harlot, hate the Churches beyond the seas ? shall we then reject the Church ? God forbid.

Use 6.

Sixthly, this teacheth us concerning *Solomon*, that,

First, he repented of his fall, acknowledged his being wanting of keeping his owne Vine : and,

Secondly, he wrote this Song after his fall and repentance : else, if he had foretold his fall, and repentance before it was done, it might seem like the Jesuites Popish repentance, who confesse to their Priests their sinne before they commit it. But he penned it after his fall, to assure us the more of his salvation, which some make doubt of.

Use 7.

Seventhly, this shewes us, such soules are the fairest and most beautifull in Christs eyes as (not resting in the commandements of governments touching matter of Religion, but) doe seeke for the
true

true Church and pure worship of God, and follow it, though with neglect of their * suburbs and possessions. Christ calleth those the fairest among women who here enquire after him, and sell † all to follow him: so these that want meanes of saluation at home, are desirous to seek after them, and where they finde them, there they goe; and part with any thing to enjoy the purity of Gods worship and ordinances: these in Gods account are the worthiest Christians.

Eightly, here is shewed two markes of the true Church of God; doe any doubt whether God be God or Baal, and do halt between two opinions, not knowing whether to joyn with Rome or England? Goe then out by the foot-steps of the flockes; where the faithfull hearing Christs voice resort, and will not heare any voyce but Christs, follow those: now times are such (blessed be God) as every one may finde out where the Church is; but in the case of blackness and darkness, enquire then,

First, for such as will heare no voyce but Christs, and follow then the foot-steps of the flocke; see where they feed, there joyne your selves.

* 2Chron.

13. 14. 16.

† Mat. 19.

21. 27.

Luke 18.

22. 28.

Mark 10.

21. 28.

Ulc 8.

1 Kin. 18.

21.

Verse 8.

Secondly, where you find faithfull Ministers, Priests, as *Aarons* sons, and Levites anointed with heavenly graces; thither carry your kids, there plant your families to be fed under such shepherds.

Use 9.
Verse 9.

Lastly, wee may see here when the Church neglects Gods service, God gives her up to the service of forain Princes, to draw as horses in *Pharaohs* chariots: and yet being humbled for this, God wil have mercy on her, and so dispose of it, that her service shall not be base, for God will make them to draw his yoke, though they draw it in the yoke of forain Princes, as *Rehoboam* and his people did f.

f 2 Chro.
12. 2, 4,
8, 9.
Verse 10.
to end.

Thy cheeks are comely with rowes of jewels.] The estate of the Church is here described, as it was in the dayes of *Abijam*, in these words, *Thy cheekes are comely with jewels*; and as it was in the dayes of *Asa*, both in the same words, and in the words following to the end of Verse 11.

Thy cheeks.] That is, the outward face of the Church are comely with rowes of jewels: that is, with keeping their right place and order, and manner of Gods owne ordinances.

This *Abijam* proclaimeth himself to all
the

the house of Israel: ^g But as for us (saith he) the Lord is our God, we have not forsaken him; the Priests which minister unto the Lord are the sons of Aaron; and the Levites waite upon that businesse, and they burne unto the Lord every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense: the shew-bread also they set in order upon the pure table.

g 2 Chro
13.10, 11
12.

It was not so with the House of Israel, though *Abijahs* heart was not so upright as *Dauids* ^h; yet the outward face of the Church, her cheekes (as it were) were comely with the orderly keeping and observing the ordinances of God: yea, and comely also was the face of the Church looking up to God in distresse, ⁱ which moved him to deliver you from *Ieroboam*.

Verse 8, 9
h 1 King
15. 3.

Thy neck with chaines of gold.]

i 2 Chro
13. 12, 18

Chaines of gold are wholesome lawes, binding like chaines, to keep the worship of God and true Religion pure as gold; such lawes are called chaines. ^k This was done in the dayes of *Asa*, when he removed the Altars of the strange gods, pulling down the high places, breaking the Images, and cutting down the Groves; commanded Judah to seeke the Lord God of their fathers, and the people willingly

Verse 10

k Ps. 145
8.

l 2 Chro.
14. 2, 3, 4,
5. & 15.
12. — 15.
Verse 11.

submitted themselves ^l to enter into a covenant or law, that upon pain of death all the people should seek the Lord onely.

We will make thee.] This sheweth the forwardnesse of the people to joyne with *Asa* in reforming Religion, and adorning the Church, as is recorded ^m.

m 2 Chro.
15. 10, 16.
Verse 11.

Borders of gold.] That is, the borders of the kingdome, pure as gold by cleansing and putting away all the Idols out of all quarters of Judah, yea, and of Benjamin also, and mount Ephraim, the very skirts, and frontiers, and borders of the kingdome ⁿ.

n 2 Chro.
15. 8.
Verse 11.

Studs of silver.] In workes of gold, are such eminent knobs as adorne the workes with variety of colours, and metall, and workmanship ^o.

o Pro. 15.
11.

Such like eminent works which did adorn *Asa's* reformation of the Church, even to the very borders, were these three.

3. Things.

First, his renewing of the Altars of the Lord before the Porch ^p.

p 2 Chro.
15. 8.

Secondly, the deposing of his mother from her Regency, for her Idolatrie sake, and defacing her Idoll ^q.

q 2 Chro.
15. 16.

Thirdly, the consecrating, and bringing into Gods house, his fathers and his own dedi-

dedicated Vessels of gold and silver ^r.

While the King sitteth at his table.] That is, whiles *Iehosaphat* sits at rest and peace, refreshing himselfe at home, ^r God establishing his kingdome in his hand, and giving him riches & honors in abundance.

My spikenard.] An ointment of all others most precious, * of all other spices *spikenard* is of greatest estimation. This the Apostle *Iohn* calleth very costly, wherewith our Saviour Christ was anointed by *Mary*.

By *spikenard* is here meant the preaching of the Word, which is of all favours the most precious, even the favour of life unto life.

When *Iehosaphat* was established in rest and peace, he sent forth the Priests and Levites, to carry the sweet favour of the word throughout all the cities of *Judah* [†].

A bundle of myrrh.] Myrrh is an odoriferous tree, that sweateth out a sweet gumme called *Stacte*, which is preferred before all others.

This gum is also called from the tree Myrrh, his smell is strong and fragrant; and fit to preserve from putrefaction; and it is of much use in embalming, and God himself recounteth it amongst the principal spices ^r.

^r 2 Chro.
15. 18.
Verse 12.

^r 2 Chro.
17. 15.

Verse 12.
* Plin. lib
11. ca. 12.
Idem ibid.

2 Cor. 2.
16.

[†] 2 Chro.
17. 8, 9.
Verse 13.
Plin. lib.
12. ca. 16.

^r Exod. 30.
23.

Verse 13.
1 1st. 2. 2.

t 2 Chro.
17. 7.

u 2 Chro.
19. 5.
— 12.

* 2 Chro.
19. 3, 4.
Verse 14.

Betweene my breasts.] The breasts are those that give milk, the sincere milke of the Word to the Churches children, to wit, the Priests and Levites. These when *Jehosaphat* sent forth to give milke to the cities of Judah, he sent with them a company of Noblemen, religious Princes, who added the more authority to the Priests and Levites, and are therefore themselves said to teach in the cities of Judah^t. Thus these Princes were as a bundle of Myrrh amongst the Priests and the Levites, to decide all controversies amongst the people, both in matters concerning God and the King; to preserve the people, and one another free from corruption in all matters, whether of Religion or civill Justice^u. Yea, and *Jehosaphat* himselfe representing Christ the Churches welbeloved upon earth, he rested in the bosome of the Church as a bundle of Myrrh, sweet, and strongly preserving the people from corruption: from Beersheba to mount Ephraim hee went about, throughout all the people, to bring them backe againe to the purity of Gods worship^{*}.

As a cluster of camphire.] Camphire is
a

a shrub for smell like unto spikenard, wa-
sting the obstruction of the spleene, and
by the very smell of it making men *vege-
getiores*, and *firmiores*, more lively and
more strong; yea, and available also a-
gainst the biting of serpents: such was
Christ to his Church, when the children
of *Moab* and *Ammon*, and mount *Seir*, ga-
thered themselves together against the
children of Israel in Engedi; for by the
ministry of *Jehaziel*, he made *Jehosaphat*
and his people,

Plin. lib.
21. ca. 18

2 Chron.
20. 12.

First, more strong in faith, to rest on
God and his Word.

2 Chron
20. 14, 15,
16.—20.

Secondly, more lively and heartily to
praise God: yea, and he saved them from
their enemies, themselves not striking a
stroke; though their enemies the breed of
the old serpent put them before in great
feare.

verse 21,
22, 23, 24

verse 3, 11

*Behold, thou art faire my love, behold, thou
art faire.*] The doubling of the words ex-
presseth the superlative degree, by an usu-
all Hebraisme, *faire faire*, that is, very
faire: which sheweth the estate of the
Church in *Hezekiah's* time, who returned
and set the Priests and Levites in their
courses, restored their burnt sacrifices and
obla-

Verse 15.

2 Chron.
29. & 30.
& 31. ver.
1, 2.

Verse 15.
Plin. lib.
10. cap. 34.

2 King.
18. 4.

Verse 16.

oblations, sanctified the Priests, called all the people to the Pasfeover, prayed for their healing, tooke away all the Images, Groves, and high Places.

Thou hast doves eyes.] That is, chaste and loathing uncleannesse, as *Pliny* reports the doves to be. *Hezekiah* loathed even the monuments of Idolatry, even the brazen Serpent, (though sometimes Gods ordinance) when once the people went a whoring after it: so by this means, abuses crept into the Church, in the dayes of *Foram*, *Uzziah*, *Jotham*, *Ahaz*, are not recorded till they come to be cleansed, lest the joy of the marriage-song should be darkened by the mention of so sad occurrences; whence also it is, that the abuses that crept in after the death of *Hezekiah*, in the dayes of *Manasseh* and *Ammou*, are not mentioned till their cleansing came, recorded in the dayes of *Iosiah*.

Behold, thou art faire my beloved, yea pleasant, also our bed is green.] This is the estate of the Church in the dayes of good *Iosiah*, who reformed it to the like estate of purity and beauty as in the dayes of *Hezekiah*, yea, in this he excèded him, in taking away the high places which

Solomon

Solomon had built for his wives Idols, as also some other corruptions of *Ahaz*, ver. 12. and besides, he made all the people to worship the Lord onely, and to serve him *.

2 King.
23.13.

Yea pleasant.] It being more then faire, so young a man to work so great a worke of reformation.

* 2 Chron.
34.32,33.
2 Chr. 34.
1.—7.

Our bed is greene.] The house of God was the Temple, the bed in the house were the ordinances of God, wherein God was wont familiarly to embrace his spouse, and she him.

These in *Josiah's* time flourished in greatest purity, † so that there was no Passcover like unto his.

† 2 Chron.
35.18.

Our bed is green.] It is an allusion to the spring time, when the worship of God began to flourish againe, after a winter time of miry and dirty pollutions.

The beames of our house are cedar, and our rafters (or walls, or galleries) of firre.] These words set out the beauty of the Church, in regard of the repaires of the Temple made by *Josiah*.

Verse 17:

2 Chro. 34
8, 14.

The use is to observe the severall beauties and ornaments of the Church, which are,

Use 1.

First,

First, to enjoy each ordinance of God in his ranke and place : it is as if the cheekes , or open face of the Church were decked with rowes of jewels. *Fero-boam* made Priests of the basest of the people ; and such defect or corruption of Gods ordinances , is a blemish conspicuous in the face of the Church.

use 2.

Secondly , good Kings ought to put upon their people wholesome Lawes, and strait binding to the purity of Religion and the worship of God : it is no impeachment to their Christian liberty as Anabaptists dote , but an ornament to their beauty, making their necks comely as with chaines of gold. It was the commandement of *Aſa*, * *Whoſoever would not ſeek the Lord God of Iſrael , ſhould be put to death.* † *And Joſiah took away all the abominations out of all the Countries that pertained to the children of Iſrael , and made all that were preſent to ſerve, even to ſerve the Lord their God.*

* 2 Chro.
15.13.

† 2 Chro.
34.33.

use 3.

Thirdly , people to be ready to binde themselves by ſolemn covenant and oath to keep ſuch Lawes , and to aſſiſt their Princes in cleaſing their uttermoſt borders and corners of the kingdome from
Super-

Superstition and Idolatry ; and it is no impeachment of Christian liberty to bow to Christian Lawes : yea, it is the beauty of a Christian Church to weare those chaines, those Lawes, which were made for the good of the Church , and it was their profanenesse and rebellion that say,
** Let us break their bands asunder , and cast away their cords from us.*

* Psa. 2. 3.

Use 4.

Fourthly, Princes to send forth favoury and gracious Ministers into all quarters of their dominions , that all their people may taste and feele how sweet the preaching of the Word is. This is the ornament of a Church, when Christian Princes so provide, that all places may be furnished with preaching Ministers ; this is to open a box of spikenard that the smell thereof may flow forth; but to leave them relished with the dregs of Superstition, this is a blemish.

Fifthly, to see that the Nobles and Magistrates countenance Priests and Levites, and by their authority to give the free passage to the Word , and to prevent disturbances which else might be offered to Ministers in their Churches , yea, all Magistrates to prevent corruptions in matters,

Use 5.
 Verse 13.

matters, whether of Religion or civill Justice, is as if a bundle of Myrrh should lodge in the breasts of the Church.

Use 6.

* 2 Chro.
20. 12.

Verse 22.

Sixthly, the Lord Jesus to refresh and strengthen the hearts and spirits of his people in publicke calamities; and to save them from the malignity and venome thereof, he is then as a cluster of camphire to the Church in the vineyards of Engedi, as he was to *Iehosaphat* and his people * when they knew not what to do. Christ is an ornament, and encourageth both Priest, Prophet, and Prince, to sing a Psalme of Thanksgiving. And suppose enemies should be as a cluster in the border of the Church, how easie a thing is it for God to strengthen, and be as a cluster of camphire, to strengthen and encourage them against these biting serpents.

Use 7.

2 King.
18. 4.

Seventhly, not to foster and tolerate inveterate corruptions, though received from worthy Ancestors, but to hate all abuses in Gods worship, even the very monuments of Idolatry, and to take them away, as *Hezekiah* did the brazen Serpent, and to set each ordinance of God in his place: the Church then is very fair, she hath doves eyes.

Eightly,

Eightly, young Princes to begin betimes to lift up their hearts to redresse abuses in the Church, to imitate the best of their predecessors; yea, and to go beyond them, as *Josiah* did, and to restore Gods worship to her native beauty and integrity. It is a faire, yea, a pleasant thing to behold this forwardnesse in any; much more in young Princes.

use 8.

Ninthly, to enjoy the worship of God, purged from all Superstition, Idolatry, and from all devices of men; it is as if a bed were greene, fresh, flourishing and fruitfull: in such worship Christ delights to reveale and communicate himselfe familiarly with his people, and loveth not to come into a harlots bed, decked with the laces of tapestrie of Egypt.

use 9.

Pro. 7.16.

Tenthly, suppose the Church againe and againe be laid wast, so that in stead of camphire is Masse and Idolatry, it is an easie thing with God to send a *Josiah*, to root out such Superstitions, that though abuses crept into the Church for three or four Princes lives, yet God can cleanse and reform her, as he did in *Josiahs* time. God lookes not at the corruptions of his Church, thereby to loath her, but to heal her.

use 10.

her, and thereby to glorifie his grace in her recovery, rather then his holinesse in the discovery of her pollutions.

The bed is here mentioned in the spring of her flourishing, when it began to wax green, not in the winter season of her dirty pollutions; and before, the chaste eyes of the dove recorded, abhorring uncleannesse, not the eyes full of adultery, bringing spirituall pollutions into the Church: when there is any Superstitious worship, there it is overspread with winter, but when it is purged, then is the bed green; when Gods ordinances are kept pure, there Christ delighteth to be.

Eleventhly, it is an ornament of the Church to restore her with beames of cedar, and her walls or galleries with firre: cedar is famous for durablenesse, enduring even to eternity, saith *Pliny*: firre is acceptable for his sweetnesse, and while he groweth, for his heighth, streightnesse and perpetuall greennesse: *Solomon* house or Temple was of old a lively type, partly,

First, of the humane body of Christ, the Temple of the Deity,

Secondly, of the mysticall body of Christ,

2. Pet. 2.
14.

Vse 4.

Plin. lib.
13. cap. 5.
16, 41.

Joh. 2. 19.
21.
Col. 2. 9.

Christ, his Church or congregation,
 1 Cor. 3. 16. Christs humane body never
 decayeth, and therefore needeth no repai-
 ring: his mysticall body the Church, if
 it fall into decay through corruption of
 Doctrine or Worship, it may be most
 fitly repaired,

1 Cor. 3.
 16. & 6.
 19.

First, by laying in the walls of the
 Church such solid and eternall truths of
 God, as may hold up the walls of the
 building.

Thus *Luther* restored the Church by
 laying this beame of cedar, the Doctrine
 of free Justification by Christ.

Luther.

Secondly, by setting up such worship
 and workes for the people to walke in, as
 are truly sweet and amiable in Gods sight,
 springing from fresh and green sincerity,
 growing up to the heavens; these are like
 galleries of firre, whereas vowes of per-
 fection, and works of supererogation, and
 all other reliques and rags of Popery, are
 no better then rotten and moth-eaten
 wood, fit fuell for the fire.



THE
CANTICLES,
OR
SONG OF SONGS
opened and explained.

THE TEXT.

CHAP. 2.

I Am the rose of Sharon, and the lilly of the vallies.
2 As the lilly among thornes, so is my love among the daughters.

3 As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sonnes; I sate downe under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

4 He brought me to the banquetting house, and his banner over me was love.

5 Stay me with flaggons, comfort me with apples, for I am sicke of love.

6 His left hand is under my bead, and his right hand doth embrace me.

7 I charge you, O yee daughters of Ferusalem, by
the

the Roes, and by the Hinds of the field, that ye stirre not up, nor awake my love till he please.

8 The voyce of my beloved, behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountaines, skipping upon the hills.

9 My beloved is like a Roe, or young Hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the window, shewing himselfe through the lattice.

10 My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up my love, my faire one, and come away.

11 For loe, the winter is past, the raine is over and gone.

12. The flowers appeare on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voyce of the turtle is heard in our land.

13 The figtree putteth forth her greene figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise my love, my faire one, and come away.

14 O my dove! thou art in the clefts of the rocke, in the secret place of the staires, let me see thy countenance, let me heare thy voyce, for sweet is thy voyce, and thy countenance is comely.

15. Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoile the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.

16 My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lillies.

17 Untill the day breake, and the shadowes flee away: turn my beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or a young Hart, upon the mountaines of Bether.

THE EXPLANATION.

Cant.2.verse 1. *I am the rose of Sharon, and the lilly of the vallies.*

THe estate of the Church from *Josiah's* repaire of the Temple, (in the last verse of the last chapter) is described here,

First, before the captivity, verse 1, 2. under the last dayes of *Josiah*, *Jehoahaz*, *Jehojakim*, *Jehojachin*, and *Zedechiah*.

2 Kin. 23.
30, 34. and
24. 6, 17.

Secondly, in the captivity,

1. At home, the remnant, ver. 3.

2. Abroad, in Babylon, ver. 4.—7.

Thirdly, in the end, after the captivity, where is described,

1. Her calling out of captivity, to returne and worship in Jerusalem, verse 8.—13.

Secondly, her estate at Jerusalem till the dayes of the Maccabees, verse 14.—17.

I am the rose.] The rose is,

First, lovely for beauty,

Secondly, sweet for smell; comforting both heart and braine.

Thirdly, wholesome for use and medicinal.

of

of Sharon.] Sharon was a fruitfull field lying under Bashan, where the heards were wont to feed, excellent for fatnesse and fruitfulness.

1 Chro. 5.
16, 17. &
27. 29.
Isa. 33. 9.
& 35. 2.

And the lilly.] The lilly is, first, fragrant. Secondly, faire, yet of the vallies, where the heards use to feed, as in Sharon.

Matth. 6.
28, 29.
1 Chro. 27
29.

These words then set forth the Churches complaint of that time, as some Interpreters of chiefe worth have conceived it; though the words may as fitly be uttered by Christ himselfe, to set forth both his owne disposition and the Churches estate.

The first, hee was then the rose of the field, the lilly of the vallies, to shew, that when the Church despised him, to converse with her in the Temple, and the Worship there celebrated: * Hee was now ready to leave his Temple, and to be a Sanctuary to his Church abroad.

* Chap. 1.
ver. 16, 17.
Ezek. 9. 3.
& 10. 4, 9.
& 11. 23.
16.

Secondly, Christ is here described according to the estate of the Church of that time, which wanted culture, ordering and dressing, thornes and bryars growing up in the Church, and not weeded

^a 2 Sam.
13. 6.
Mic. 7. 4.

ded out : * The wicked are as thornes and bryars, † and store of them growing up in the Church.

ⁱ Cant. 4.
127

^b Mat. 6.
28, 29.

Verse 2, 3.

When the Church is as a garden inclosed ^a, then bryars and thorns are weeded out ; but neither Magistrate nor Minister did his duty in removing offences in those dayes : ^b so lillies of the field are taken for lillies neglected, which neither take care for themselves , nor others take care for them.

Thirdly, as the rose of the field, or lillies of the vallies , or lilly amongst the thornes, is continually,

First, subject to be prickt and rent with thornes.

Secondly , trodden under-foot by the heards of beasts, so the Church was then subject,

1. To be vexed with the wicked growing up with her.

2. To be trodden under-foot by the beasts of the field , the Babylonians, the Egyptians.

^c 2 Chro.
35. 22, 23,
24.

2 Chro. 36.
17.

^c *Josiah* , how sweet a Roe ! how faire a Lilly ! yet how untimely trodden down by *Necho* ? The other Kings were placed, displaced , imprisoned , and the whole kingdome

kingdome with them, at the pleasure of the Babylonians and Egyptians: and in the end, the whole Church laid waste by the Babylonians.

Againe, Christ is the rose and lilly, as being,

First, sweet with the favour of his graces.

Secondly, beautifull.

Thirdly, medicinable.

When the Church is corrupt in it selfe, it is yet faire and sweet in Christ; d In him our life is hid in our worst taking: he being white as a lilly by the purity of his righteousness, we likewise are white as lillies in him cloathed with his righteousness.

d Col 3.3

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sonnes, I sate mee downe under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.]

Verse 3.

A tree first, not tall as the Cedar of Lebanon, not strong as the Okes of Bashan; but a tree of middle stature, implying an inferiour Magistrate, not so high and mighty as the Monarchs of the world, yet such whose shadow yeelds,

First, refreshing to a man wandering

and fainting in a wilde forrest.

* 2 King.
25.22.

Secondly, whose fruit is sweet and comfortable, such was Christ to his Church, dispensing himselfe in *Gedaliah*, whom * *Nebuchadnezzar* made governour over the remnant of the people that were left in the land.

e 2 Kin. 25.
23.—25.

First, under him, as under a shadow, they were fearelesse and safe: but after he was cut down, they were driven from under his shadow, and durst stay no longer in their own countrey, which was left as a wilde forrest f.

f Verse 26

* Jer. 40.
10.—12.

g Jer. 40.6
& 43.6.

Verse 4.

† Eccles.
7.2.

Secondly, they gathered,
First, much sweet summer fruit *.
Secondly, much good instruction and direction from *Ieremiah* and *Baruch* g, who both lived with him.

Wine-cellar.] *Heb.* House of wine; not so fitly termed banquetting house, which *Solomon* expresseth by another name †. A wine-cellar is a low vault, under the ground, darke, cold, raw and gloomy; yet replenished with vessels of liquor, which refresheth and enlargeth the heart, and openeth the mouth.

This house, to the Church, was Babylon, whither God brought his people
into

into captivity, which at first view seemed dolefull and heavy, but afterward yeelded to them many sweet tastes, yea deep draughts of Gods favour: Gods Spirit coming upon men, makes them seeme as full of new wine^h. It refresheth and enlargeth the heart, and openeth the mouth,

^h Acts 2.
13.

First, to the praise of God.

Secondly, to the edification of his Church. Such a spirit God powred upon *Daniel, Ezekiel, Shadrach* and his fellowesⁱ in the captivity.

ⁱ Dan. 1.
19, 20.

And his banner over me was love.]

Banner;

First, for an ensigne of defence to the Church.

Secondly, for a flagge of defiance to their enemies: How lovingly and gloriously (as with a banner of love displayed) did God defend the three children and *Daniel* himself^k?

Dan. 3. 25.
^k Dan. 6.
22.

How did God offer defiance to Idolatry in the three children^l?

^l Dan. 5.
16. — 18.
& 6. 10.
Verse 5.

Stay mee with flaggons and comfort mee with apples, for I am sicke of love.] I, the Church is here faint and sicke, and ready to swoone, for desire of further fellowship

ship with Christ, and for her owne help desireth,

First, Flaggons of wine to stay her.

Secondly, Apples to comfort her; as indeed apples doe comfort the heart and stomach, prevents swooning, and restraines poyson*: Thus *Daniel*, through abundance of Revelations was faint and sicke, and desirous of more cleere knowledge of his visions, and of the Churches deliverance, and found the † Angel ready to refresh and strengthen him: And the other members of the Church feeling such sweet taste of Christs presence amongst them in the captivity, were (doubtlesse) earnestly desirous of more full enjoying him perfectly,

First, by the ministry of the Prophets, as by flaggons of wine.

Secondly, by the magistracy of *Daniel* and his fellowes, whom the King set up for inferiour Magistrates, as by apples, the fruit of the apple trees.

His left hand is under my head, his right hand doth embrace me.

The words may be either a narration how it is, or a prayer that it may be; so in the originall, the blessings of Gods
left

*Fernelius
a Physi-
an.

† Dan. 8.
27. & 10,
12. ver. 15.
19.

Dan. 2.
48, 49

Verse 6.

left hand are riches and glory, * and of his right hand, length of dayes, or immortality. Riches and honours God conveyeth to us by the hand of the Magistrate, immortality by the hand of Ministers.

* Pro 3.16

The Church therefore desireth God in her captivity, (which thing also God granted) that,

First, Princes should be the lifters up of her head, her nursing fathers and mothers.

Secondly, Prophets and Priests might deliver to her the sweet testimonies of Christs embracing love; this was done † by *Evil-merodach* to *Jehojachin*, and by the ministry of *Daniel* and *Ezekiel*.

† 2 King.
25.27, 30.
Dan. 2.48,
49.
* Jer. 29.
5, 6.

The Princes allowed them great liberty, * the Prophets dispensed heavenly and comfortable doctrine.

I charge you, O yee daughters of Jerusalem, by the Roes, and by the Hindes of the field, that yee stirre not up, nor awake my love till he please.] Heb. I adjure you, that is, I cause you to sweare by the Roes, and by the Hindes of the field, not by them as the persons thou art to sweare by, but by those for whose sake, and by whose meanes they are to take themselves bound as by a solemne oath (not to stirre up

Verse 7.

up or awake my love) that is, not to provoke Christ to exercise his Church by any change of their estate, till it shall please himsele.

These Roes and Hindes are wilde, and fearfull creatures, easily and swiftly running away, yet otherwise willing to feed with the sheep: such were then the Gentiles, willing to converse with the Jewes, and to come towards Religion: yet if the estate of the Church should have proved more troublesome by any indiscreet or offensive carriage of the Jewes, they would soone have started backe from fellowship with them; for their sakes therefore the Church chargeth her daughters, as by an oath, not to disturb the peace of Babel, not to seeke preposterously deliverance from thence, before the time that Christ had appointed, lest it turned to the disturbance of her peace; and to the * carrying away such Gentiles as were coming on to be Profelytes.

* Jer. 29.
4.—9.

use 1.

This may first let us see, that notwithstanding the reformation of Religion, Christ may be pleased rather to live abroad in the fields, then at home, where
the

the people would willingly assemble. The house of God was now repaired, and the bed greene *: and the Church invites Christ to come in unto her, in it, yet hee disposeth himselfe so, as more willing to call her abroad. So wee may see, that notwithstanding the purity and simplicity of Christs worship, yet Christ is not bound to any place; if things were never so reformed, yet he might leave us, and goe into the wilde field. Rome hath long doted on *Peters Chaire*, and Jerusalem might as well have bragged of her Priviledges as any other place, but Christ leaves them: never rest wee then in any outward estate, for Christ may leave us. The Palatinate hath been as reformed as any Church for Doctrine, and though they might say, their bed was greene, and their beames were of cedar, and their rafters of firre, yet God hath left them: for doe we thinke that if God had beene there, these things had befallen them that now are?

Secondly, this lets us see, that though Magistrates and Ministers should both neglect their duties in ordering and dressing the Church, so that the wicked were

* Cant. 1.
16, 17.

Use 2.

tolerated to grow up with them ; yet God keepes the spirits of his children sweet and pure , as roses and lillies in the midst of bryars and thornes : be not deceived then , for there may be roses and lillies growing , where is nothing but bryars and thornes to scratch them : It is not straight no Church , when it is there ; for Christ can see his Church though she be there.

use 3.

Thirdly, we may here observe against the Separatist , that it is not straight no Church , that is commingled (as they speake) with notorious wicked ones : the Church may be Christs love, yea, and a fragrant and pure flower in his sight and nostrils, and yet live amongst bryars and thornes.

use 4.

Fourthly , observe, the state of the Church is sometimes exposed to opportunity of treading under-foot , no wall nor hedge to fence them : It may lie open,

First , to scratching and rending of thornes.

Secondly, to treading under-foot of the wild beasts *.

* Psal. 80.

12, 13.
use 5.

Fifthly , this serves to direct inferiour
Magi-

Magistrates, how to carry themselves towards the Church, to be as Apple-trees in a wood, wherein the Church travailling may finde,

First, shadow of protection.

Secondly, sweete fruit of loving mercy.

Sixthly, we may here see the wonderfull power of God, and goodnesse to his Church, in turning their house of bondage into a house of wine, in spreading also his banner of love over them in their greatest distresses and dangers: What more dolefull times of his Church then captivity? when men would thinke God carries his Church into a dungeon, then he carries her into a Wine-cellar. This may be a ground of solid comfort to us in our worst takings, for though wee be in the greatest extremity, yea, in the deepest dungeon of darknesse, God can sustaine and uphold us here, and refresh us with many comforts.

use 6.

Seventhly, this ought to stirre us up to more ardent and longing affections after Christ, so that as wee be ready to faint and swoone through earnest affections, after more full and familiar fel-

use 7.

lowthin

Esay 49.
23.
Use 8.

lowship with him : It was *Daniels* case, hee was sicke of love, so let it be with us for want of Gods presence; and pray that God would refresh us with his presence, and send good Ministers and good Magistrates to be as nursing fathers to his Church.

Eighthly, this serves to teach, and straightly to charge the children of God, when they enjoy Gods presence and favour in the Ministry and Magistracy, sustaining and comforting them, to take heed of disturbing their peace,

1. By any indiscreet : or

2. Offensive carriage : for it is,

First, a disturbance to Christ himselfe, he is stirred up and awaked, (as it were) before he please.

Secondly, the Roes and Hindes of the field, young comers on in Religion, are soone scared away by dangers and troubles arising against the Church; therefore we should be carefull and take heed wee provoke not any dog to barke, for then they will be gone. Let us therefore walke wisely, and inoffensively, that none bee discouraged, that Christ, who doth sustaine us, and refresh us, may

may dwell with us for ever.

The voyce of my beloved, behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountaines, and skipping upon the hills.]

Ver. 8. to
the end.

In these words are described,
First, the Churches deliverance out of
captivity: where is laid downe,

First, the preparation to the deliverance
in the causes of it; which were,

First, the voyce of the beloved.

Secondly, the coming of the beloved,
and that swiftly,

First, leaping and skipping.

Secondly, as a young Hart or Roe *.

Thirdly, his besieging Babel and over-
coming it, set forth in three actions:

First, standing behinde the wall.

Secondly, looking out at the windows.

Thirdly, shewing himself through the
lattice †.

* Ver. 8, 9.

Secondly, the calling out of captivity:

† Ver. 8, 9.

First, to goe out of Babylon into their
owne countrey; whereunto there are
motives,

Ver. 10, —
13.

First, from removall of impediments,
verse 11.

Secondly, from store of opportunities,
verse 12, 13.

E

Thirdly,

Ver. 14.

Thirdly, to worship God in publicke meetings in their owne countrey ^h.

Secondly, the state of the Church returned into their owne countrey, in regard,

Ver. 15.

First, of opposition of enemies; subtil and ravenous: where is set forth,

First, their nature; they are foxes, little foxes.

Secondly, the harme they doe, they spoile the vines.

Thirdly, there take us the foxes.

Secondly, of their communion with Christs outward enemies, and inward abuses restrained, partly, more plentiful and intire.

First, *My beloved is mine, and I am his.*

k Ver. 16.

Secondly, *Feedeth amongst the Lillies.*

Secondly, interrupted, and yet by turnes Christ often and speedily visiting and succouring them, and that to the time of the coming of Christ, and the abolishing of the shadowes of the ceremonial Law ^l.

l Ver. 17.

Verse 8.

The voyce of my beloved.] This was the report of Cyrus coming to besiege Babel,

Babel, and his mustering together of many Nations to that service; which rumour was discerned by the faithfull, to be the accomplishment of the Prophecies given them before, of deliverance by *Cyrus* *. And therefore the Church hearing this rumour, suddenly acknowledgeth in it the promise and voyce of Christ †: and so it was no lesse gratefull to them, then dolefull and dreadfull to the Babylonians.

* Isa. 44.
28. & 45. 1

† Jer. 50.
42, 43, 46.

He cometh leaping upon the mountaines.

My beloved is like a Roe, or a young Hart, behold, he standeth behinde our wall, he looketh forth at the window, shewing himselfe through the lattice.]

Verse 9.

These words expresse the great expedition and speed which *Cyrus* made in his journey against Babel, all the Nations lying in the way,

First, either of themselves setting open their gates to him, as weary of the Babylonian yoke.

Secondly, or speedily surpris'd and subdued.

Hee standeth behinde the wall.] Laying siege to the walls of Babylon.

Hee looketh forth at the windowes.] That

should now sing and praise God in their owne countries ; which they thought unseasonable to doe in a strange land †.

Psa. 137.
3, 4.

The voyce of the turtle is heard in our land.] That is, of Christ the faithfull spouse of his Church, who is mourning in Judea, because he findeth not his Mate (the Church) there.

Verse 13.

The figtree putteth forth her greene figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.] That is, the chiefe of the Fathers and Elders of the people, they shew themselves forward to countenance the journey, and to prepare for it.

* Ver. 10,
13.

Arise my love, my faire one, and come away.] Being twice repeated*, it argueth the people were slacke to leave their states, which they had planted themselves in at Babel ; and therefore stood in need of calling on againe and againe.

Verse 14.

O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rocke, in the secret place of the staires, let me see thy countenance, let mee heare thy voyce, for sweet is thy voyce, and thy countenance comely.

O my dove.] That is, my chaste, innocent and faire spouse.

That art in the clefts of the rocke, in the secret place of the staires.] That now dost worship me in holes and corners.

Let mee see thy countenance, let me heare thy voyce.] Let mee see thee assembled into the face of a Church, in my Sanctuary, let mee there heare thee calling upon mee, singing praise to mee, speaking my word.

For sweet is thy voyce, and thy countenance comely.]

First, the voyce of the Church, at one and the same time.

First, rejoycing in Gods wonderfull mercy.

Secondly, weeping and bewailing, partly,

First, their owne unworthinesse.

Secondly, the decayes of the Church, in regard of former times ^a.

Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoile the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.] That is, restraine (the foxes, the little foxes) the enemies of the Church, of greater or lesser power; ^b such as were the Samaritans. These spoiled the

E 4

vines,

^a Psa. 14. 6
1, — 3.
with Jer.
50. 4, 5. &
Ezra 3.
11. — 13.
Verse 15.
^b Ezra 4.
2. — 4.
& 5. 3.
Neh. 4.
1. — 3.
Heft. 3. 8, 9

c Ezr. 4. 4.
5, 23, 24.

d Neh. 4. 3

e Ezra 6.
11, 13.

f Heb. 7.
10. & 9.
14, 16.
Verse 16.

* Neh. 8.

g Ezr. 10.

† Neh. 13.

Verse 17.

vines, c hindered the proceeding of the building of the Temple, and the peace of the Church. And therefore *Tobiah* said truly of himselfe and his fellowes, that they, as foxes, going upon the weake foundation of the walls of Jerusalem, might easily demolish the same d: Yet these foxes in the end were taken and restrained, First, partly by the Edict of *Darius* e: Secondly, partly by the hanging of *Haman* and his sonnes, and the destruction of some other of the Jewes enemies f.

My beloved is mine and I am his.] The Church enjoyeth familiar and comfortable communion with Christ, these enemies being quelled *.

Shee feedeth among the lillies.] That is, among pure and faire Christians, all corruptions being weeded out, both of strange wives g, of usury, of right of the Levites maintenance and ministrations, † and prophanation of the Sabbath.

Untill the day breake, and the shadows flee away: turne my beloved, and be thou like a Roe or a young Hart, upon the mountaines of Bethel.

Turne

Turne my beloved.] That is, returne often to visit and succour me.

As a Roe, or a young Hart upon the mountaines of Bether.] That is, swiftly and speedily, * Bether being neere to them on the other side Jordan; as who should say, Though thou sometime turne from us, yet be not farre, but ready ever and anon to returne and succour us.

* 2 Sam. 2
29.

Untill the day breake, and the shadowes flee away.] That is, till Christ come, and the Ceremoniall shadows vanish.

First, this teacheth us that in all the instruments of the Churches deliverance, we should see and discern Christ speaking and working in them: See here the Church lookes not at *Cyrus* so much, but at Christ in him. Doe they heare a rumour of a deliverance? It is the voyce of Christ, and it must needs be a strong voyce which Christ is the author of. The wisest *Daniel*, *Shadrach*, *Meshach* and *Abednego*, they say it is Christ, and all the rest yeeld; and the Church sees Christ come skipping: Doth it see *Cyrus* about the wals? She sees Christ there. Doth she see *Cyrus* shewing himselfe through the lattice? She sees Christ there. Doth she
see

Use 1.

Verse 13.

see when he is possessed there, and makes proclamation to them to goe up againe to Jerusalem: She lookes at it as Christs voyce, saying, *Arise my love, my fair one, and come away.*

So the holy Ghost teacheth, what favour any doth shew to the Church, it is Christ that doth it; so take it, that if any good befall the Church, it is Christ that doth it: If any lead into captivity, *Nebuchadnezzar*, or any other, it is Christ that leads her into a Wine-cellar: If there be any noise or worke of deliverance, it is Christ that comes leaping and skipping: So in all the calamities, and in all the blessings that befall the Church, ascribe all to Christ. * The same hand that gave, the same hand hath taken away: † God turned the captivity of *Job*, and God turned againe the captivity of his people. This is a wonderfull stay to Gods Church, and to every member of it; for man cannot bring it into captivity, and bring it out againe. Mans hand cannot bring hard things upon the Church, nor bring her out againe of them; for if it were in mens hands, or in Satans, or in our owne hands, it would not goe well with

* Job 1.21
& 42.10.
† Psal. 12.
6, 11.

with us; but being in Christs hands alone, it may be a stay and a comfort.

Secondly, this teacheth us, that when the time of the Churches deliverance is come, Christ will come quickly and speedily for her deliverance, leaping and skipping as a Roe or a Hart. The winter shall not alwayes remain on the Church, no, not when she deserves a black winter. *The patient abiding of the Saints shall not alwayes be forgotten.* Suppose God leads his Church into captivity seven yeares, yea seventy years; yet it will not alwaies continue. This may serve to comfort us in the distresses of the Church, at home or abroad; God will not alwayes punish with reproach or desolation, but the time will come these will be gone and flee away.

Thirdly, this lets us see the Church profiteth by calamities; shee comes out better from them, then shee went into them: she entred and went into captivity hating God, defiled with many abominations; she returnes out, *My love, my faire one.* The Church of God, and the members of it are more lovely in Gods sight by the hard times that passe over them.

use 2.

Psal. 9. 18.

use 3.

Jer. 12. 7, 8

them : when this Church had beene seventy yeares in captivity , (a hard time it was, yet) they lost nothing by it ; they kissed his rod , and sought God ; and now hee stiles them lovely. He loathed them because they loathed him ; they were now tried and purified ; before they were loathsome , but now are lovely ; before hated , but now loved. But see what a blessed use chastisements are of to the Church : how loathsome soever wee goe into captivity , when wee defile our selves with lusts and sins , yet when wee have beene throughly humbled with some crosses , how faire come we out !

* Pro. 3.
11.

** My sonne despise not the chastening of the Lord , neither be weary of his correction.*

† Ps. 119.
71.

And why doth God say, *Deut. 8. 16. He proved them to doe them good ;* when hee saith, my love, it is more then lovely, it is love , it is love it selfe ; and faire one is more then faire ? So , † *It is good for mee (saith David) that I have been afflicted : so the Church before her affliction was loathsome, foule, hated ; but now she is faire and lovely.*

Use 4.

Thou art faire, Oh my love.]

Fourthly , this lets us see, the Churches

ches winter : storms shall not alwayes lie upon her, but they shall in the end blow over ; * *The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous.*

* Pl. 125.

3.

use 5.

Fifthly, we may see that outward comforts are easily able to drowne in us a longing after Gods ordinances : the contentment that some found in captivity, made them stand in need of often calling to returne to Sion.

use 6.

Sixthly, wee may learne here, that the face of the Church is not alwayes visible and conspicuous in the eyes of men, but alwayes in the eyes of God : for they meet under the staires, and worship God in holes and corners. And a while after Christ saith, Why dost thou lie thus under the staires, and in clifts of rocks ? let me see thy face, and heare thy voyce. The Church of Rome advanceth her selfe, that she hath alwayes been conspicuous ; but this is no true signe of a true Church, for the true Church is not alwayes conspicuous : though Christ alwayes sees some to meet in corners and holes, yet not alwayes in solemne assemblies. The Dove of Christ Jesus sometimes makes her rest in the rockes, and builds

builds under the stairs, where Christ sees her, but not publickly.

Use 7.

Verse 14.

* Joh. 16.
26, 27.

Seventhly, see here the Church needs not Angels and Saints to mediate for her, her owne voyce is sweet, and countenance comely in Gods estimation: * *At that day yee shall aske in my name; and I say not to you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himselfe loveth you because yee have loved mee.* Christ tells us, he shall have no great need to pray for us, for God himselfe loveth us, to heare our voyce, and to see us; let us then not be afraid to put forth our voyces: labour then for such a spirit as to grieve for our finnes, and to rejoyce in Gods mercies; for God is pleased with that: hee is a true citizen of Sion, that when hee abounds in Gods mercies, yet hee weepes for his sins; and when hee weeps for his finnes, yet hee is thankfull for Gods mercies.

Use 8.

Verse 16.

Againe, observe, the Church shall alwayes be troubled with some enemies, *Take us the foxes that spoile the vines:* There shall be ever some *Sanballat*, or *Tobiah*, or some other to be nibbling at the Church of God: wonder not at this, for

for this will be so ; but observe touching these enemies of the Church,

First, they shall deale subtilly and craftily with her.

Secondly, they may disturb and hinder her peace and proceedings ; but,

Thirdly, they shall in the end be restrained ; as in *Revel. 19.20. And the Beast was taken, and with him the false Prophet that wrought miracles before him, &c. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.* Therefore let such foxes know the time will come when Christ will either take them, and chaine them, and binde them up, as he did *Sanballat, Tobiah, Shether-boznai** : or else hang them up, as hee did *Haman* and his sonnes. Let men then take heed that they doe not push at the Church, for God will either chaine them up, or hang them out of the way.

* Ezra 6.
6,7.

Lastly, here wee may see, when the enemies of the Church are restrained or destroyed, and corruptions weeded out of it, the Church then enjoyeth sweet, and safe, and full fellowship with the Lord Jesus, and hee with her. Hee gives her pledges of his favour, and shee gives him

use 9.

him pledges of pure worshipping him: he feeds them with his ordinances, they him with their sacrifices. And they that would procure Christ this, let them provide for weeding out of their sinnes; as, usury, wicked marriages, profanations of Gods Sabbaths, &c. Such Churches shall be sweet, and much sweet solace shall they enjoy one with another, Christ with them, and they with him.



THE



THE
CANTICLES,
OR
SONG OF SONGS
opened and explained.

THE TEXT.

CHAP. 3.

BY night on my bed I sought him whom my soule loveth; I sought him, but I found him not.

2 I will rise now, and goe about the city in the streets, and in the broad wayes, I will seeke him whom my soule loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.

3 The watch-men that goe about the city found mee, to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soule loveth?

4 It was but a little that I passed from them but I found him whom my soule loveth: I held him, and would not let him goe, untill I had brought him into my mothers house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

5 I charge you, O ye daughters of Ferusalem, by the Roes, and by the Hindes of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please.

6 Who is this that cometh out of the wildernesse like pillars of smoake, perfumed with myrrh, and frankincense, with all the powders of the merchant?

7 Behold his bed, which is Solomons: threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.

8 They all hold swords, being expert in warre: Every man hath his sword upon his thigh, because of feare in the night.

9 King Solomon made himselfe a charet of the wood of Lebanon.

10 Hee made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottome thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the middest thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Ferusalem.

11 Goe forth, O ye daughters of Sion, and behold King Solomon with the crowne wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals: and in the day of the gladnesse of his heart.

THE



THE EXPLANATION.

Cant. 3. verse 1. *By night on my bed I sought him whom my soule loveth, I sought him, but I found him not, &c.*

THIS Chapter setteth forth the estate of the Church from after the dayes of *Nehemiah*, to the time of Christs sojourning here on earth, in a two-fold period:

First, under the *Maccabees*, ver. 1.—6.

Secondly, in *Fohn Baptist's* time, verse 6.—11.

The state of the Church in the *Macca-*
bees time was, partly, full of calamities,
as a time of darknesse, *By night I sought*
him, and partly sweetned with some more
comfortable issue.

Verse 1.

This calamity is set forth,
First, by resemblance to night, *By night*
I sought him.

Secondly, by the absence of Christ,
whom she sought in vaine.

Verse 2.

First, *In her bed*, verse 1.

Secondly, *In the streets of the city*,
verse 2.

Thirdly, *Amongst the watchmen*, ver. 3.

The comfortable issue of her seeking Christ is set forth,

First, *By her finding of him*, verse 4.

Secondly, *By her holding of him*, verse 4.

Thirdly, *By her bringing of him into her mothers house*, verse 4.

Fourthly, *By her charge to the daughters of Ferusalem*, to walke circumspectly, that this estate be not interrupted, ver. 5.

Ver. e 1.

By night.] That is, in time of darknesse, and publicke calamity; when *Antiochus Epiphanes*, the little horne waxed exceeding great, wasted the pleasant land, cast some of the host and starres of heaven to the ground; when hee tooke away the daily sacrifice, and trode downe the Sanctuary, and cast downe the truth to the ground; when hee robbed the Temple, murdered the people, spoiled the City, made lawes for profaning the Sabbath, for offering Swines flesh, for neglecting Circumcision, when he set up the Statues of *Jupiter Olympius*, the abomination of desolation in the holy place, when hee burnt the Bookes of the Law, and made it death to have a Testament; when he brake downe the Altar and set up another, when hee put women to death

Dan. 8.
9.—12.

death who had caused children to be circumcised, and hanged children upon the neckes of their mothers, 1 Mac. 1. 23. to the end.

In my bed.] Not in my bed of ease and sloth, (as some take it) for what ease could the Church take in the night time of calamity? But in my bed, that is, in the place and duties of Gods worship, the temple and the ordinances.

Cha. 1. 16
& 3. 7.

I sought him whom my soule loveth.] I desired and endeavoured to have fellowship with Christ, but I found him not, the Sanctuary being polluted, and the daily sacrifice taken away, and profane Idols set up in the place.

In the streets of the city.] That is, in the open Assemblies of the faithfull, in the Synagogues, in the cities of Judea and Jerusalem; but behold there Altars erected to Idols, and incense burned, and the books of the Law cast into the fire*: Yea, behold, the citizens of Jerusalem all fled and gone†: and the rest went in procession to *Bacchus**.

Verse 2.

* 1 Mac. 1.

57.—59

† 1 Mac. 1.

40.

* 2 Mac.

6. 7.

Verse 3.

The watch-men that goe about the city.] To wit, the Levites, who answered her with silence; but a little after shee found

* 1 Mac.
2.42, 43.

† 1 Mac.
3.5.—8.

m 1 Mac.
4.42, 46.

succour at Modin, for the Priests, *Mattathias* and his sonnes, *Judas*, *Jonathan*, and *Simon*, and the rest that went about to repaire the ruines of the Church and Common-wealth; to these the faithfull Church repairing, * and finding deliverance and comfort, by *Judas* especially, or rather by Christ in him †, shee left him not till shee had brought him into the Temple, where shee soone after cleansed the Sanctuary, and restored the purity of Gods worship, and offered sacrifice according to the Law, so that shee found great comfort and joy in the duties of Gods worship^m. Thus againe found they Christ in a typicall Saviour, held him by faith, and, with courage and zeale, brought him into the temple and Sanctuary, the house and chamber of her mother: that is, of the former Church of Israel, or of the Catholique Church, for the Church of the former ages is the mother of the latter; or the whole Church is the mother of each part in usuall phrase of Hebrew speech: The Temple is the house of both, the Sanctuary is the chamber of her that bare her.

I charge you, O yee daughters of Ferusalem, by the Roes and by the Hindes of the field, that yee stirre not up, nor awake my love till he please.

Verse 5.

I charge you, &c.] See the same words opened, Chap. 2. 7. The Church chargeth all her daughters, all her members, to take heed, lest by their undiscreeet dealing, or any wicked practise, they stirre up the neighbour Princes of Syria and Egypt; not to disturb the peace of the Church, and to provoke Christ againe to leave them desolate; which though *Fa-son* and *Menelaus* and *Alcimus* broke †, yet they prevailed not so far, but Christ was still found in the temple of the faithfull till his coming in the flesh.

† 2 Mac.
14. 14.

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoake, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?

Verse 6.

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness.] This is a description of *John Baptist*, and of the Church gathered by his Ministry in the wilderness: which is set forth,

First, by the admiration and inquisitiveness of the old Synagogue after him

1 Joh. 1. 19.
Luk. 3. 15

and his baptisme : Who is this that cometh, or ariseth, &c. which was fulfilled : to whom the Jewes sent Priests and Levites to aske him, Who art thou ? and all men mused whether hee were not the Christ.

m Lukc 3.

2.—4.

Mar. 1. 3, 4.

Secondly, by the place of his arising, and the Church with him, in the wilderness.

Thirdly, by the manner of arising, like pillars of smoake, which,

First, ariseth from fire, as the Church arose from zeale and fervency of *Johns* Ministry.

1 Mat. 3.
1, 6.

Secondly, ascendeth on high, as the propagation of this Church did, even to Jerusalem.

1 Mat. 3.
1, 6.

Thirdly, fills the countrey, as the Church did with rumour and increase of it.

1 Chap. 1.
3.

Fourthly, by the excellent fragrancy and sweetnesse of the graces thereof perfumed, preserving from putrefaction : such was the powerfull zeale of *John* and his Ministry, strongly fragrant as Myrrh, and preserving his hearers from Pharisaicall hypocrisie : Frankincense is of like strong fragrancy, and of chiefe use

1 Mat. 3. 7,
—10.

in

in making of the holy Incense ^q; by which prayer was signified ^r, to intimate the fragrancy and fervency of his prayers, who taught all his disciples to pray ^s.

With all powders of the merchant.] To wit, perfumed with the sweet graces of God, ^t filled with the holy Ghost above all Prophets, yea, above all that were borne of women ^u; whence also hee seasoned all sorts of his hearers with graces and directions fit for their severall callings ^x.

Fifthly, by the doctrine of *John*, who expressly preached the Lord Jesus manifested in the flesh.

Behold his bed which is Solomons, three-score valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.]

Behold his bed which is Solomons.] This Doctrine the Church of that time received and beleaved: In which Doctrine, that first Church first discerned and beleaved,

First, the Temple of Christs body; for the bed ^y was taken, as also it is here, for the Temple, which was the type of Christs body ^z.

Now, this as *John* pointed ^a, *Behold the Lamb*

q Exod. 30

34.

r Psa. 141.

2.

s Luke 11.

1.

t Luke 1.

15.

u Mat. 11.

9, 11.

x Luke 3.

10.—14.

Verse 7.

y Chap. 1.

16. & 3. 1.

z John 2.

19, 20.

a John 1.

29, 30.

Col.2.9.

Lamb of God; as here it is said, *Behold, his bed*. This Temple it is the Temple of *Solomon*, of *Christ*; in him the Godhead dwelleth bodily.

Joh. 1.51.

Mat.2.13,

19.

Secondly, the guard of Angels attending it, to prevent the feare of *Herods* enmity and others.

Thirdly, the maker of his humanity, verse 9. King *Solomon* made himselfe a Couch, the word may bee translated Goach or Couch: this latter I rather take, partly for the Etymologe of *Apirion*, fol. 38. to be fruitfull as the brides bed is, and partly for agreement with the former word bed, ver.7.

i Luke 1.

35.

No earthly father, but *Christ* by his owne Spirit made his own body, and his own bed in his mothers womb i.

Fourthly, the matter of it, the wood of *Lebanon*, for the Virgin *Mary* dwelt in *Nazareth* of *Galilee* at the foot of *Lebanon*.

Hos.1.

k Psal.16.

10.

As *Solomons* Temple, the type of *Christs* body, was made of the wood of *Lebanon*, the cedar which is free from corruption; so was the body of *Christ* sound from seeing corruption k.

Fifthly, the ornaments of it, which were, First,

First, partly his offices :

1. Priestly , as pillars of silver abiding the fire of Gods wrath, and pure as silver tried in the fire.

Heb. 7. 26.

2. Prophetically , delivering us a word precious as gold, even as fine gold ¹.

1 Psal. 19.
10.

3. Kingly, whence it is said, verse 10. *The covering of it of purple*, the royall ornament of Kings.

Secondly, partly, the affection wherein he undertooke and executed these offices, love of the daughters of Jerusalem, ver. 10. All these *John* declareth ^m.

Verse 10.

Secondly, hee exhorteth and stirreth up the faithfull to behold,

^m John 3.
29. to the
end.

First, Christ ⁿ.

ⁿ John 1.
29.—end.
^o Ver. 11.

Secondly, ^o *The ornaments wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals.* The day of his espousals was the day when God the Father contracted him with the Church ^{*}; whence after hee is called the bridegroom ^p, and *John* the Bridegroomes friend, his Disciples the children of the Bride-chamber: And the Church henceforward in this Booke is called the Spouse, not before. *The crowne wherewith his mother crowned him*, is the testimony of Christs soveraignty,

^{*} Mat. 3. 17
^p John 3.
29.

q John 1.
33, 34, 35,
49. & 3.
29. — 36.
Use 1.

raignty, which *John* and the faithfull gave him 9.

First of the estate of the Church under the Maccabees.

First, this doth teach us with what intent wee are to come before God in the publicke Assemblies, namely, to seeke Christ the love of our soules; not to shew our fine garments, wantonly to gaze at beauties; not to satisfie the Law or friends, for fashions sake, but to seeke Christ instructing us in temptations: Some come to catch something from Christ to entrap him, &c. but it is our duty to come unto him, as a Spouse to her Husband, for seed; so we must come to Christ, that hee may cast the seeds of grace into our soules, that we may bring forth fruit unto him.

Use 2.

† Cant. 2.
16.

* Verse 1.

2, 3.

* Psal. 119

24, 25. &

30. 6, 7, 8.

Secondly, this lets us see the changeable estate of the Church; shee that rejoyced in the presence and fellowship of Christ, and could say, * *My beloved is mine, and I am his*, now seekes him every where, and with much difficulty and anguish †. And so it is oft with every true member of the Church, as wee may see it was with *David**: so it is now with

our

our brethren beyond the seas, whom you might have commended a yeare or two agoe, and have found Christ there; but now he is gone, shee seekes him but findes him not: See the Church of God sometime enjoyes all the ordinances of God, sometimes none; so a Christian soule sometimes hath Christs left hand under her head, and his right hand to embrace her, soone after shee findes him not so. Wee must not condemne the Church for this; for they that are tenderly beloved of Christ may sometimes seeke him and not finde him.

Cant. 2. 6.

Thirdly, this may comfort such as seeke Christ in all his ordinances: they shall either finde him in them; or, after the use of them, in some unexpected or extraordinary help. The Church here that found not Christ in the Temple, nor in the Assemblies and recourse of Christian people, nor in conference with the Priests, found him soone after in an unexpected and extraordinary help, even *Judas Maccabews*, verse 4. for indeed it was extraordinary for the tribe of *Levi* to take up the Sword and Scepter, which indeed belonged to *Judah*: so you see
when

use 3.

when ordinary meanes faile, God will be found in extraordinary: Whosoever then would finde Christ, and seeke him every where, they shall surely finde him either in his ordinances, or out of them.

use 4.

Fourthly, this lets us see the affectionate cleaving of such to Christ, as have long sought him and not found him till at last: such lay hold on him, and will not let him goe, *verse 4.* which is one Reason why Christ sometimes hides himselfe from us, that wee might seeke him the more diligently, and, having found him, cleave to him more stedfastly; and this God lookes for at the hands of his.

use 5.

Fifthly, this doth exhort Christians that live among bad neighbours to walk the more circumspectly, as the daughters of Jerusalem are here charged upon oath to doe, *ver. 5.* being betweene the Syrians and Egyptians. It is a charge given by the Church to her daughters, to take heed they stirre not up her love, nor awake Christ till he please.

Two Reasons are given for it.

First, it may provoke Christ to bring another estate upon the Church which

which will not be good for it.

Secondly, in regard of fearefull Christians, for they will start away; many are willing to come into the Church, but if the profession of Christ be troublesome and hot, they will not abide it: therefore this charge is needfull that wee may walke holily, that Christ be not stirred up, nor these fearfull Christians discouraged. See this handled, *Chap. 2. verse 7.*

Thus farre the first part, in the time
of the *Maccabees*: Now,
Secondly, of the estate of the Church
in John Baptist's time.

This is first to shew us, that God can raise up a Church even in the wilderness, to the admiration of observers: and so hee can raise up our neighbour Churches, now brought to a wilderness. This may comfort us in regard of them; for though they be now desolate, yet we may hope a time will come when they shall rise againe.

Use 1.
Verse 6.

Secondly, see here is a part of the duty of ancient Christians, not to maligne the graces of God in those that come after them, but to admire them*, *Who is it that*

Use 2.

* Verse 6.

that cometh out of the wildernesse like pillars of smoake, perfumed with Myrrh and Frankincense, &c.

Use 3.

Verse 6.
* Luke 3.
10, — 14.

Thirdly, this shewes what gifts and graces are most requisite in a Minister, and doe most adorne him, even zeale in his Ministry, and fervency in prayer, and all forts of sweet graces to season and direct all sorts of his people in their severall callings, as *John* did *, when the people came and said, *What shall we doe?* He answered and said, *He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none, &c.* So *John* was perfumed with graces for all men: for men must not come into the Ministry with judgement and learning alone, for these may come from nature; but they must come perfumed with graces, to keep themselves and others from putrefaction; yea, they must labour for those graces which will give a strong sent to save themselves and others.

Use 4.

Verse 7, 9.

Fourthly, this shewes us the Manhood and Godhead of Christ; Christs humane nature is the temple, or bed wherein the Godhead resteth bodily; and the Godhead made this temple or bed for himselfe, no earthly father for him.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, see here the protection and gardiance the Angels give to Christ, and in him to the Church and all his members, ver. 7, 8.

Sixthly, wee may here see in Christ whatsoever is behoovefull for all our salvations. In regard of his Priestly office hee is pure as silver, to cleanse our impurity, and to abide the fire: In regard of his Prophetical office hee is precious as gold, to enrich our poverty: In regard of his Royall and Kingly office, he is glorious as purple, and cloathed with it, to advance our basenesse: His heart, or middest, is even paved with love of us: His heart is an hearth (for so the word signifieth) whereon the fire of his love towards us burneth continually; let us then love the Lord Jesus againe, and receive the seeds and fruits of his grace, and then shall wee see his heart flaming with love to us: and then whatsoever befalls, bloudshed, warre, captivity, &c. all comes from love; his whole heart is paved with love.

Seventhly, let us take up our thoughts and meditations about Christ; let us goe forth and behold him; let his

G abundant

Use 5.
Psal 91.
11, 12.
Psal. 34. 7.
2 King. 6.
16, 17.
Heb. 1. 14.
Rev. 5. 11.
& 7. 11.
Use 6.

Verse 10.

Use 7.

use 8.

abundant graces fill our empty soules.

Eighthly, if thou beest a daughter of Sion, thou art contracted to Christ; and know it by this, Dost thou read his letters? art thou delighted with them? and dost thou rejoyce to speake to him againe by prayer? If thou dost, it may be the joy of thy heart, for thy estate is good.

use 9.

Lastly, this doth exhort us all to give up our selves as spouses to Christ, and that with all gladnesse of heart, since he is affected to us, who yet hath nothing from us but debts and beggery: and they that do give themselves up to Christ, need not fear wanting comfort; for no spouses shall finde such comfort as they. Shall hee be glad to have us, a company of beggers: yea, as I may say, a company of deaths? And was it the gladness of his heart to be espoused to us, which was when his Father contracted him to us, and shall wee think it a day of deading to set our feet into Christs bed? All the merchants cannot set forth our excellency, when hee shall pay all our debts, and adorn us with all his graces; therefore let us go forth, and bring him home to us, wee shall then finde him comfortable to us in the day of espousals.

THE

THE
CANTICLES,
OR
SONG OF SONGS
opened and explained.

THE TEXT.

CHAP. 4.

BEhold, thou art faire my love, behold, thou art faire, thou hast doves eyes within thy lockes: thy haire is as a flock of goats, that appeare from mount Gilead.

2 Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing: whereof every one beare twins, and none is barren among them.

3 Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.

4 Thy neck is like to the tower of David, builded for an armory, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.

5 Thy two breasts are like two young Roes, that are twins, which feed among the lillies.

6 Untill the day breake, and the shadowes flee away; I will get me to the mountaines of Myrrh, and to the hill of Frankincense.

7 Thou art all faire, my love, there is no spot in thee.

8 Come with me from Lebanon (my spouse) with me from Lebanon: looke from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the Lions dens, from the mountaines of the Leopards.

9 Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chaine of thy necke.

10 How faire is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love then wine! and the smell of thy oyntments then all spices!

11 Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the boney-comb: boney and milke are under thy tongue, and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.

12 A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountaine sealed.

13 Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits, camphire, with spikenard.

14 Spikenard and Saffron, Calamus and Cinnamon, with all trees of Frankincense, Myrrh, and Aloes, with all the chiefe spices.

15 A fountaine of gardens, a well of living waters, and streames from Lebanon.

16 Awake, O Northwind, and come thou South, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out: let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

THE EXPLANATION.

Cant. 4.1.—6. *Behold, thou art fair my love, behold, thou art fair, thou hast doves eyes within thy lockes: thy haire is as a flocke of goats, that appeare from mount Gilead, &c.*

THis Chapter describes the estate of the Church in her periods:

First, in Christs time, under his Ministry, verse 1.—6.

Secondly, after his Ascension, under the Apostles, verse 7.—11.

Thirdly, after their departure, during the first ten Persecutions, ver. 12.—16.

The Church in Christs time is commended and described,

First, by her beauty in generall, *Behold, thou art faire my love, behold, thou art faire.*

Secondly, the beauty of her severall parts, at that time most conspicuous: as,

First, *Of her eyes*, verse 1.

Secondly, *Of her haire*, verse 1.

Thirdly, *Of her teeth*, verse 2.

Fourthly, *Of her lips*, verse 3.

Fifthly, *Of her temples*, verse 3.

Sixthly, *Of her necke*, verse 4.

Seventhly, *Of her breasts*, verse 5.

Secondly, the death of Christ falling out in her time, verse 6.

Behold, thou art faire.] Faire twice repeated implies, by an usuall Hebraisme, that she was very fair: and beloved twice repeated, argues her eminent beauty was very conspicuous; such was the estate of the Church gathered by his Ministry and flocking after him.

First, it was faire and beautifull, partly in her flocking after him^a.

Secondly, leaving all to follow him, * hanging upon his mouth, and wondring at the gracious words and deeds coming from him.

Secondly, in his both,

First, presence with her, as her light^b.

Secondly, decking of her by his Ministry.

This beauty of the Church was well knowne, yet ought to have beene better observed:

First of all, by the children of wisdom^c.

Secondly, of all the^d Greekes, even strangers^e of the Pharisees and Elders.

Thou hast doves eyes within thy lookes.] Doves (as before, Chap. 1. 15.) are noted,

First,

^a Mat. 4.

25.

* Mat. 19.

19, 27.

Luke 19.

48. & 9.

43.

^b Job. 3. 29

Joh. 12. 35

^c Mat. 11.

19.

^d John 12.

20, 21.

^e John 12.

19.

First, for their chastnesse.

Secondly, loathing of uncleannesse, but there is withall in their eyes,

1. Cleannesse.

2. Simplicity.

This implies that the Church at that time,

First, saw more clearely sundry truths about Christ then the Fathers had done ^f, or the present Governours ^g.

Secondly, was of a simple and innocent looke and demeanour ^h.

Thirdly, looked with a chaste eye, after Christ alone ⁱ.

Fourthly, loathed the uncleannesse of Pharisaicall superstitions ^k.

Within thy locks.] For their knowledge, though cleare in many things, yet perceived not sundry plaine points: as,

First, the Death and Resurrection of Christ ^l.

Secondly, the leaven of the Pharisees ^m.

As the eye within lockes of haire is hindred from discerning things lying open before it.

Thy haire as a flocke of goats that appeare from mount Gilead.]

^f Luke 10.

23, 25.

^g Joh. 9. 39

^h Mat. 10.

16.

Joh. 1. 47.

ⁱ Joh. 6. 68

^k Mat. 15.

1, 2.

^l Luke 18.

32, 33, 34.

^m Mar. 8.

15.

Luke 12. 1

Mat. 16. 6.

Haire, though it hang long upon the head, yet it may in time either,
First, fall of it selfe.

Secondly, bee cut off: so were the common Christians of that time (as it were) haire,

1. For multitude.

2. Hanging on Christ the Head.

3. Falling many of them from him:

^a Joh. 6. 66

First, either of themselves ^a, or,

^b Mat. 27.
20.

John 12.

42, 43.

^c John 2.

13.—25.

Secondly, cut off by the practises of the ^b Priests: hence it was that Jesus durst not commit himselfe to them ^c.

As a flocke of goats.] Which are wont,

First, to assemble themselves in companies; so did the people gather after Christ.

¹ Mat. 9.
16.

Secondly, to be without a shepheard, as this people were ^d.

Thirdly, to feed afarre off, and that somewhat dangerously, upon rocks.

Mar. 8. 3.

Joh. 9. 22

So the people came from farre to hear Christ ^e, and were in danger for feeding on him ^f.

^{er}se 2.

Thy teeth are like a flocke of sheep that are even shorne, which came up from the washing: whereof every one beare twins, and none is barren among them.]

The

The sheep whereto these teeth are likened, are set forth,

First, by their even-shornnesse.

Secondly, by their cleannesse, coming up from the washing.

Thirdly, by their fruitfulnessse, *Every one bringeth forth twins, none barren.*

First, even set, none gaping out.

Secondly, white and cleane.

Thirdly, each answering to his fellow in the other jaw, none wanting, as it is a praise to the teeth to be. The teeth are such as chew the meat, and prepare it for the rest of the body; such in that Church were the Apostles, whom our Saviour calls a little flock ^g: they were all,

First, even set, and even shorne, none bursting out beyond his fellowes: *Peters* supremacy stretched not beyond the rest of the Apostles ^h.

The teeth of innocent sheep are even set: They that have tusshes longer then the other teeth are hurtfull and ravenous beasts; as Dogs, Beares, Lions, &c. Ten of the Apostles disdained the motion of supremacy.

Secondly, came up from *Johns* Baptisme, and therefore when *Judas* tell away

^g Luke 12
32.

^h Mat. 16.
19. compared with
Joh. 20. 23
& Mar. 18
18. Mat.
20. 20, 25.
Mark 10.
40, 42.
Luke 22.
24, 25.

A^{ct}. 1.21,
22.

away, they must needs supply his place out of the number of such as had continued with them from *Iohns* Baptisme.

* Luk. 10.
1.

Secondly, they were futable each one to his fellow, and therefore the seventy were sent out by couples *.

† Luk. 10.
17, 18.

But especially they were fruitfull in bringing home many lambs to Christ; & hence the seventy returned with joy to Christ †; and Satan is said to fall downe from heaven before them like lightning.

Verse 3.

Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.

Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely.] Both signifying the delivery or utterance of the Doctrine of the Church at that time, which was,

First, as a thread, slender, (*tenui filo*) not plump or swelling with humane eloquence, but favouring of Fisher-like tenuity and simplicity.

Secondly, as a thread of scarlet; for as scarlet or purple is a princely and royall weare, so their Doctrine was,

* Mat. 10.
7.

First, touching the kingdom of heaven*.

Secondly, though tender, yet deeply dyed in graine with royall Majesty and autho-

authority of the Spirit of God.

Thy temples are like a piece of Pomegranate within thy lockes.] Temples of the head are they by which the whole body watcheth or resteth; they are such therefore as watch over the body, and for it. The Pomegranate was of much use in the old Tabernacle and Temple: * *Aarons* coat was hanged with Pomegranates and Bells; Bells for sound of Doctrine and Prayer, Pomegranates for restraining and healing the distempers and diseases of the people. Pomegranates are commended by *Fernelius* †,

* *Exod.*
28.34.

† *Fernel.*
p.26.

First, for repressing the heat of choler.

2. The malignity, rottenness, and acrimony of feavers.

3. The looseness of the belly.

Secondly, for comforting and strengthening the stomack and bowels, to the keeping backe all fainting *. This office, the Ecclesiasticall governours of the Church doe performe to it; they repress the heat of fallings out among brethren, the notorious abuses, the looseness, or distemperedness of the people; they comfort the feeble, and binde up the weake, and are therefore fitly resembled by

* *Fernel.*
Method.
medend.
lib. 5. ca. 3.

by Pomegranates, yea, by a piece of a Pomegranate: for it is not the whole body of the Pomegranate that doth this; but it, broken in pieces, by his juice and rinde is medicinable.

Within thy lockes.] Because though Christ established Discipline, and delivered it to the Church in his time^k; yet it was not displayed, nor shewed it selfe in open execution till after his Resurrection^l.

^k Mat. 18.

15.—17.

1 ^l Cor. 5.

1.—6.

Verse 4.

Thy necke is like the tower of David, &c.] The necke is that part that joyneth head and body together; now that which joyneth Christ and his Church together, is our Faith: which Faith in some of the members of that Church in Christs time, was observed to bee strong and great^{*}; and therefore is here fitly compared to the tower of David, for an *Armory*, (whereof wee read) *† whereon there hanged a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.* It seemes Davids mighty men hanged up their shields in this Armory against times of warre; and so in like manner all the Worthies of Israel; all the faithfull before Christ, hanged their shields of faith upon Christ, in whom

^{*} Mat. 8.

10. & 15.

28.

[†] Neh. 9.

25, 26.

whom the faith of his Church was as a strong Armory*. Faith is not so much a tower of strength in it selfe, as in Christ whom it apprehendeth.

* Heb. 11.
13.

Thy two breasts are like two young Roes that are twinnes, which feed among the lillies.

Verse 5.

Thy two breasts are like two young Roes that are twinnes.] The breasts give milke: now the breasts that give milke to the Church, the sincere † milke of the word, are the Ministers, which in the Church of Christs time were first the Apostles; secondly, the seventy: and are therefore here called two breasts, and both as Roes, because not tyed to any certaine place within all the people of the Jewes; for Roes stay not long in a place: And both as twins, because of equall commission, being both sent alike to the whole house of Israel, though, after the Resurrection, the Apostles commission was enlarged further then that of the seventy.

† 2 Pet. 2.2

Which feed among the lillies.] For they were sent not onely among the Gentiles or Samaritans, but amongst,

First, the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Mat. 10.

Secondly

Mat. 10. 11.

Secondly, the true-hearted or well-affected of the Israelites.

These faithfull are here compared to the lillies,

First, for their whitenesse and purity of innocency.

Secondly, for their amiableness.

Verse 6.

Untill the day breake, and the shadowes flee away: I will get mee to the mountaines of Myrrh, and to the hill of Frankincense.

Untill the day breake, and the shadowes flee away.] That is, untill the light of the Gospel breake forth, and the shadowes of the Mosaicall Ceremonies vanish.

I will get me to the mountaines of Myrrh, and to the hill of Frankincense.] That is, to the Mounts,

First, of *Olivet*, } where hee suf-

Secondly, of *Golgotha*, } fered in the Garden, and on the Crosse, and nailed to his Crosse all the shadowes of the Law, and, in fulfilling them, * abolished them.

* Col. 2.
14.

John 19.

39, 40.

Luke 23.

46.

Myrrh and *Frankincense*, are wont to be used in embalming, and with such like Christ himselfe at his death was to have beene inbalm'd, if his Resurrection had not prevented the women. Besides, the passion

passion of Christ was a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour to God, and therefore the place thereof is fitly called the *Mountain of Myrrh, and Hill of Frankincense*; though otherwise the mountain of Myrrh may well be mount Calvary, or Golgotha, the place of his death: and the hill of Frankincense mount Olivet, in regard of his Ascension into Heaven; yea, even Heaven it selfe, whither he ascended, may be well called the hill of Frankincense for sweetnesse.

This first doth teach us that a Church may be beautifull in Gods sight, though consisting,

use 1.

First, of meane persons.

Secondly, of such as were sometimes notorious offenders, as Publicans and Harlots: and from hence,

First, poore people.

Secondly, sinners, yea, ugly sinners are to be exhorted to repentance and seeking after Christ: It makes them truly amiable in Christs eyes, though otherwise in themselves never so meane and foule.

From hence also poore sinners may take comfort; though loaden with the sense of their deformities, they in
Christs

Mat. 23.
23.

Christs eyes are very beautifull.

From hence also the Separatists may learne, that notwithstanding many abuses in their Teachers, or others of the Church, as the Scribes and Pharisees whom the people were to heare, yet the Church may be denominated from the better part very faire, as a heape of wheat, though covered over with abundance of chaffe.

Secondly, this may teach Ministers how to frame themselves to be amiable in Gods sight, *viz.*

First, by carrying themselves evenly with their brethren.

Secondly, by cleansing their hearts and lives by the power of Baptisme.

Thirdly, by fruitfulnessse, and faithfulnessse in their Ministry.

Fourthly, by not affecting carnall eloquence, but gracious and deep-dyed powerfull utterance; for swelling words of humane wisdom make mens preaching seem to Christ (as it were) a blubber-lip Ministry.

Fifthly, by restraining abuses and offences amongst the people, and strengthening and comforting the feeble minded.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, by feeding their people with
* sincere milke, and not being drie
nurses.

* 1 Pet. 2.
2.

Seventhly, by taking most delight in
conversing among lillies, their well-af-
fected people, though seeking also to
winne all, and therefore sometimes con-
versing with them as the Physicians a-
mong the sicke.

— This may teach Ecclesiasticall Gover-
nours their office in the former vertues of
the Pomegranate, to repress the heat of
abuses, the looseness and distemperednesse
of the people, to comfort the feeble, and
binde up the weakē, &c.

Use 3.

Verse 3.

Fourthly, this may teach the people
how to approve themselves to Christ, in
looking after Christ in knowledge, sim-
plicity, chastity of spirit, loathing super-
stitions, and places of bad resort.

*Aspicias ut veniunt ad candida tecta Co-
lumba.*

Thou seest how Pigeons take their
flight,

To houses that be faire and white.

For, what should Christians doe in
filthy Tavernes, Ale-houses, Stews, &c.
in strength of faith rooting and buil-
ding

H

Cant. 4. 7,
— 11.

ding themselves upon Christ.

Thou art all faire my love, there is no spot in thee.] In these words wee have a description of the estate of the Church soon after Christs ascension, gathered and built up by the Ministry of the Apostles, which they call the Apostolick or primitive Church.

This Church is here set forth,
First, by her compleat beauty, her full fairenesse, *vers. 7.*

Secondly, by Christs calling her to behold the calling of the Gentiles, *ver. 8.*

Thirdly, by the ravishing beauty of a sister Church at that time :

1. In one of her eyes.
2. One chaine of her necke. } *vers. 9.*

Fourthly, by her love, which is set forth,

1. By the fairenesse of it.
2. By the sweetnesse of it above wine. } *vers. 10.*

Fifthly, by the flowingnesse, sweetnesse, and wholsomnesse of her doctrine, *v. 11.*

Sixthly, by the smell of her garments, like that of Lebanon, *ver. 11.*

Thou art faire.] The fairenesse of the Church was acknowledged before, but never

never till now the perfect fairenesse. All compleat fairenesse or beauty standeth in these three things:

First, in the integrity of all the parts and members of the body; for if any be wanting, it is a maimed, a blemished body.

Secondly, in the Symmetry, or fit proportion of all the members one to another.

Thirdly, in the good complexion, or colour of them all. Look what parts are requisite for the compleat integrity of a faire Church, they are all found in the Apostolick Church in comely proportion of beauty; for look,

First, at their doctrine, and it was,

1. Free from all errour, so farre as it was dispensed by the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists of that time *, who likewise suffered no weeds of false doctrine to grow under them *.

2. Their doctrine was compleat, even the whole counsell of God †.

3. It was dispensed in powerfull simplicity *.

Secondly, look at their worship, and you may see,

1. The purity of Gods ordinances,

H 2 without

* A. 28.

22, 27.

* Rev. 2. 2.

† A. 20.

27.

* 1 Cor. 2.

4.

A. 2. 37,

44. & 4. 4.

* 1 Cor.
11. 23, 34.
& 14. 26,
48.

* A&t. 4.
31. & 13.
1, — 3. &
14. 23.

* A&t. 4.
32.
† A&t. 4.
32.
* Gal. 4.
14, 15.

* A&t. 14.
23.

1 Cor. 5.
3, — 5.
wth 2 Cor.
2. 6, — 8.

without mixture of humane inventions*.

2. Order, decency, edification of all aimed at in all the duties administred,

3. Fervency and frequency in prayer* and fasting.

Thirdly, looke at their Christian communion, and you may see,

1. Their unity one with another*.

2. Love, and large-heartednesse one towards another †, especially to their Ministers*.

Fourthly, looke to their Discipline, and you may see the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Presbyters, Pastors, Teachers, first, teaching; secondly, exhorting; thirdly, ruling: and all by, first, preaching; secondly, writing; thirdly, private conference; fourthly, good examples: (No Churches unprovided of Presbyters, in the plurall number*.)

Thirdly, the Deacons providing for the poore, *A&t. 6. 3. — 6.*

Fourthly, both sorts chosen by the Church, *A&t. 6. 3, 5.*

Fifthly, Excommunications dispensed upon weighty occasions, and with great reverence, and with good successe.

Sixthly, Synods imposing no other but

but necessary things, either in themselves, or for the present use of the Church, *Acts* 15. 26.

This comely frame and order of the Church *Paul* beholding, joyed in it *. The Church was now called a Spouse after Christ had taken our nature upon him.

* Col. 2. 5

Come with me from Lebanon, (my Spouse) with mee from Lebanon : looke from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the Lions dens, from the mountains of the Leopards.

Verse 8.

Come with me from Lebanon.] It is a famous hill in the uttermost border of Israel northward: *Amana* a hill more northward on the west of Syria, looking into Syria, Mesopotamia, Cilicia, & all Asia the less.

Hermon and Shenir.] Two names of the same hill, though happily given to divers parts, called also *Syrion* or *Sien* *.

* Deut. 3. 9. & 4. 48.

The Lions dens and mountaines of the Leopards.] Jerusalem † and the Temple in our Saviours time was made a den of thieves and robbers; but in the Apostles time, after the Ascension, the Rulers grew more fierce and cruell, spilling the bloud of *Stephen*, and making havocke of

† Mat. 21. 13. Mar. 12. 17. Luke 19. 46.

the Church : So then, in this verse, Christ calls his Church of the Christian Jewes,

First, to behold from *Lebanon, Hermon, Amana*, the Church of the Gentiles gathered in *Antioch, Phenice, Cyrene, Cyprus, &c.*

Secondly, to come out from those dens of ravenous persecutors at Jerusalem, and to prepare her selfe to dwell among the Gentiles. Upon the persecution of *Stephen* the faithfull wandred into these parts, and preached the Gospell partly to the Jewes, and after to the Gentiles also *; whereupon great numbers of the Gentiles beleaved †: Which when tydings thereof came to Jerusalem, it was as the voice of Christ calling the Church of Jerusalem to send *Barnabas* to them, to see the Churches there and to establish them *. Afterwards when the Church of the Gentiles increased in number and grace, and the Jewes increased and grew up in blasphemy and rage against the Gospell, Christ called his Church at Jerusalem to leave those dens and mountaines of Lions and Leopards.

My sister.] This implieth that Christ
now

* A&A. 11.
18. — 20.
† A&A. 11.
21.

* ver. 22.
— 24.

A&A. 22.
21. & 13.
46.
Verse 9.

now speaketh not to the mother Church of the Jewes, but to a sister Church, the Church of the Gentiles; such a sister as is also a spouse, a true Church, now first called a sister by reason of the accession of the Church of the Gentiles.

Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chaine of thy neck.

Thou hast ravished my heart, thou hast ravished my heart.] This implies that Christ was overcome exceedingly with the love of the Church: for such repetitions imply, in the Hebrew Phrase, a superlative excellency.

This Church so affecting Christ was *Antioch*, the first Church of the Gentiles, seated between *Amana* and *Lebanon*: for *Barnabas*, seeing the grace of God upon them, was not a little glad of it, so that his spirit was stirred up to exhort them to continue and grow up *: yea, hee went out and sought *Saul*, to bring him among them*; and they both spent a whole yeare there, and did winne much people, so that that Church was first called Christian, they first had their husbands name, the name of Christ first put

* Act. 11.
23, 24.
* ver. 25,
26.

upon them, for the forwardnesse of his love to them, and theirs to him.

With one of thy eyes.] The eyes of the Church are severall, according as the Church may be severally considered: for if the Church be considered as assembled together to publike duties, so the Ministers of the Church are the eyes, amongst whom they at Antioch excelled, as *Agabus* † and others; among whom the Lord was especially delighted with *Barnabas* and *Saul*, who were sent immediately by the Spirit of Christ to enlighten all the neighbour countries*. So they two, joyned in one office, were as one eye to enlighten all the parts. But if the Church be considered in the members apart, the eyes thereof are knowledge and faith †: In this Church faith excelled, resting upon Christ alone without *Moses* his Ceremonies, which the Jewes would have thrust upon them*.

With one chaine of thy necke.] Chaines signified Lawes † binding as chaines. Now the Church of Antioch sending up *Paul* and *Barnabas* to Jerusalem, about the contention which *Cerintbus* (as the stories thinke) and others raised at Antioch

† Act. 11.
27. 28. &
13. 1.

* Act. 13.
2. to Act.
14. 27.

† John 8.
56.

* Act. 15.
1, 2, 3.

† Cant. 1.
10.

Antioch concerning the necessity of the Ceremoniall Lawes ; * the Apostles or Elders made a Law or decree to abrogate the Ceremonies , and yet enioyne some things , partly necessary in themselves, as to avoid fornication ; partly necessary to avoid the offences of the Jews, as to abstaine from bloud , &c. This Law the Apostles and Elders hanged as a chaine upon the necke of the Church of Antioch and other Churchest:whence that Church received great consolation*, and the other Churches establishment and increase*.

* A&. 15.
2.

† A&. 15.
23,—29.
* Ver. 31.

* A&. 16.
45.
Verse 10.

*How faire is thy love my sister, my spouse !
how much better is thy love then wine, and
the smell of thine oyntments then all spices !*

How faire is thy love, my sister !] Sister implies the same , and such like Gentile Churches, whose love is here set forth,

First, by the fairnesse of it.

Secondly, by the strength, sweetnesse, cheerfulnesse , implied in the preferring it above wine.

How faire, and strong, and sweet, and cheerfull was the love of the Church of Antioch ; which aforehand prepared a contribution of their owne accord for the

* Aet. 11.
29, 30.

* 2 Cor. 8.
1, — 5.

the poor Saints at Jerufalem, even * *every man according to his ability* ! The like or greater love seemed in the poore Churches of Macedonia *. A faire love for poore men to send reliefe to others : A strong love for deeply poore to send rich liberality ; yet more strong and sweet to pray the messengers with much intreaty to receive it, and a cheerefull love to doe all this in abundance of joy, and beyond the Apostles owne expectation.

* Phil. 4.
18.

This kinde of benevolence the Apostle calleth an odour of a sweet smell * ; it was sweeter and better then wine. All this love shewed to the poore Saints Christ takes here as done to himselfe, as he will also take it at the last day. The decayes of this first love shewes how great this love was at the first †.

Mat. 25.
35, — 40.
† Rev. 2. 2,
— 4.

Verse 10.
* Cha. 1. 3.
† Rom. 1. 8.
Col. 2. 5.
1 Thes. 1.
6, 7, 8.

The smell of thine oyntments then all spices.] Oyntments, are the graces of Gods Spirit * : These gave a sweet report farre and neare in those Primitive Churches †.

Ver. 11.

Thy lips O my Spouse, drop as the honey-combe : honey and milke are under thy tongue, and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.

Thy

Thy lips, O my Spouse, drop as the honey-comb : honey and milk are under thy tongue.]

This commendeth the Doctrine and Ministry of those first Churches, in these foure respects :

First, for the readinesse and flowingnesse of it ; it dropped forth of it selfe, it needed not to be prest and constrained, as an honey-combe.

Secondly, for the sweetnesse of it, as the honey or the honey-combe.

Thirdly, for the wholsomnesse of it, as milke.

The smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.] Lebanon is full of sweet trees of spices growing in it, which yeeld a fragrant smell even afarre off. Garments are,

First, partly the wedding garments of Christs righteousnesse.

Secondly, partly the gracious carriage wherewith they cloathed themselves in their outward conversation : They cloathed and decked themselves with Christ, not onely to their Justification, but with his Spirit to their Sanctification ; which shewes forth it selfe in their humility, meeknesse, patience, honesty, faithfulness, diligence,

*Phil. 4. 8.
 1 Thes. 4.
 9, — 11.
 1 Pet. 2.
 12.
 1 John 3.
 22, 24.
Euseb. lib.
 3. cap. 30.
Plin. Epist.
lib. 10.
Epist. 97.
 Use 1.

diligence, serviceablenesse of their outward carriage, so farre forth as that the Heathen smelled a sweet favour in their whole course; * yea, even in *Trajan's* time, when the smell of garments was not so strong: yet what a sweet testimony doth *Pliny* himselfe (though a persecutor) give of them, when hee said, hee could finde no fault with them, but that they rose early, and went into the woods to sing Hymnes to one *Jesus*?

This first is to reforme their judgments who speake of the Apostolicall Church as an infant and rude Church, whereas Christ, whose eyes were as a flame of fire, and who best knew it, commends it for perfection of beauty, and saith it was faire: So that if a Church were such, Christ might imbrace it with both his armes.

This is the Church excellent for her Ministers, excellent for common Christians, which had pure eyes of knowledge and faith; so that by how much neerer any Church comes to this, by so much the fairer it is; and by how much any Church comes short of it, by so much the fouler it is.

Secondly,

Secondly, this doth teach us that not abuses, but the toleration of them doth blemish a Church, and detract from the perfect beauty of it; for otherwise in the Primitive Churches were found Schisms, Heresies, a denying the Resurrection, uncharitable going to Law, Incest, love-feasts in the Lords Supper, strange tongues in the publicke worship; and yet because the Apostles stood out against these and reformed them, the Church still retaines her perfect beauty. In the Church of Ephesus there were false Apostles *, yet it was a Church; so it is, corruptions not cut off defile a Church: As we then desire the Church should be pure, leave we all our finnes and corruptions which may any way blemish the beauty of the Church.

Thirdly, this teaches us to be ready to extoll and acknowledge (as occasion serveth) other mens labours above our owne. Christ gathered a Church in his owne time which hee called, Faire *; but this Church gathered by his Apostles hee calleth, All faire *. It grieveth him not to ascribe thousands to himselfe, and ten thousands to them; yea, hee foretold

Use 2.

1 Cor. 11.

13, 14.

19.—22.

& 14. &

15. Chap.

* Rev. 2. 2

Use 3.

* Cant.

4. 1.

* Cant. 4.

7.

it

Joh. 14. 12.

* 1 Cor.
15. 10.

Use 4.

it, and promised it freely aforehand: How farre was hee from a Spirit of envie and emulation, though indeed all their successe was by his grace and blessing, as Paul said, * *By the grace of God I am that I am*. The contrary Spirit of emulation hindereth Churches from taking that which is their own from one another.

Fourthly, hence we learn in what cases one Church may step from another, to wit,

First, when Christ leaveth a Church, and goeth away with us from it; *Come with me from Lebanon (my spouse,) with me*: So when Christ leaves and forsakes a Church, wee may leave it and goe out with him.

Secondly, when a Church is become an universall spotted Leopard, and a cruell Lion, blaspheming and persecuting the Gospell of Christ, as *

* A. & 19. 9.
& 13. 50,
51.

These things were found in *Rome*, from whence wee departed not in *England*, (blessed be the Lord) from whom the Separatists would have us to depart: But Christ still vouchsafes to be with us, converting soules, feeding his lambes, hearing our prayers; wee may also worship Christ

Christ in trueth without feare of lawes, yea with acceptance. When Christ goes, let all his faithfull spouses goe with him; when there are dens of Lions, and men cannot keep the profession of Christ, but fall into their mouthes, then it is time to goe: But are there these causes now? Doth not Christ dwell here in the simplicity of his ordinances? As long as Christ is here in *England*, let us not goe away: but say, as *Peter* and * *John*, Lord, to whom shall we goe? thou hast the words of eternall life. As long as Christ is pleased to feed us, to drop milke and honey into our soules, let us not depart.

* Joh. 6. 68.

Use 5.

Fifthly, this may teach us how to knit the heart of Christ to us in ravishing affection, by cleaving to Christ with settled purpose *, by abounding in helpfulnesse to the Saints, by procuring and keeping faithfull shepherds, by burthening the Church not with many chaines of lawes, but onely with few, and those necessary: all these are formerly mentioned in the Church of *Antioch*. As ever we desire to have the Lord Jesus Christ to love us, let us grow in knowledge, faith, and all saving graces of his Spirit, and hereby shew

* A& . 11.
23.

Verse 9.

shew our love to him , and then we shall
~~find~~ Christ ravished with our love.

Use 6.
 Verse 10.

Sixthly , this doth teach us what kind
 of love Christ acknowledgeth and em-
 braceth ; to wit , faire , strong , sweet ,
 cheerfull , in an enlarging our selves to the
 reliefe of his poore Saints.

Use 7.
 Verse 11.

Seventhly , this doth teach Ministers
 how to make their Ministry amiable to
 Christ, (not to preach once a moneth, or
 quarterly , by the preaching of the Law,
 but) to be full as the honey-combe drop-
 ping out of it selfe , to preach sweet Do-
 ctine as honey, and wholesome as milke,
 for the nourishment of Christs lambs.

The Pastors and Ministers of the Pri-
 mitive Church did this without help of
 Universities; what a shame then is this for
 us to come short of them in such abun-
 dance of outward helps and meanes?
 Wouldest thou be a faithfull Minister?
 let thy Doctrine drop as honey , preach
 willingly, freely, sweetly, comfortably.

Use 8.

Lastly, this may learne and stirre up
 Christians so to walke , and so to furnish
 our selves with inward graces , and with
 outward commendable carriage , as may
 yeeld a sweet favour and smell to God
 and

and man, that it may be like the smell of Lebanon, that men may smell a sweet favour that come neere them : let our hearts be inwardly furnished with the graces of God as with sweet oyntments ; and our outward garments, our outward conversation so directed with honesty, integrity, humility, meeknesse and love, &c. that our names be not dishonoured, much lesse God by our meanes. Cast we aside stinking drunkennesse, whoredome, malice, covetousnesse, &c. And thus doing wee shall take away all offence ; so doing, Christ shall look at us as his faire spouse, and say, *Thou are all faire my love*, ver. 7.

* *A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse.*]

After the Church gathered by the Ministry of the Apostles, next followeth that under the ten persecutions, which is here described,

First, by her restraint, *verse 13.*

Secondly, by her privacy, *verse 14.*

Thirdly, by her fruitfulness, refreshing and watering others, *verse 15.*

Fourthly, by her prayer in this estate : wherein consider,

I

i. The

Rom. 13.
13, 14.

* Cant. 4.
12. to cha.
5. 2.

1. The Petitions ; which are three,
First, for the arising of the winde, and
coming into the South, *ver. 16.*

Secondly, for favourable blasts of it,
and that for this end, the flowing forth of
her spices.

Thirdly, that Christ would come in-
to his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits,
verse 16.

2. Christs answer thereunto :

First, he cometh into his garden.

Secondly, he gathereth and enjoyeth
the fruits of it.

Thirdly, he fills his Churches friends
with a large measure of plenty, *Chap. 5. 1.*

verse 12.

A garden :] The Church is here so
called, as *verse 13. an orchard*; or as it is
in the originall, *a Paradise*, as if this were
the garden of *Eden*. All the world is as a
wildernesse, or at least a wilde field;
onely, the Church is Gods garden or
orchard, in these three respects :

First, as the garden of Paradise was the
habitation of *Adam* in the estate of inno-
cency, so is the Church of all those who
are renewed into innocency.

Secondly, as in that garden were all
manner of pleasant and wholesome
herbs

herbs and trees growing, so in the Church are all manner of usefull and favoury spirits.

Thirdly, as a man walketh in his garden to refresh himselfe; so doth Christ walke in his Church, yea and calleth his friends thither to walke with him.

A spring, a fountaine:] Not because the Church is the fountaine of grace; but because, Christ being in it, it is the spring or fountaine of the waters of life unto all *.

* Zach.

13.1.

Psal. 87 7.

A garden, spring, fountaine, inclosed, shut up, sealed:] Not by a pale or wall of defence by Christian Magistrates, but rather shut up by restraint; for the word signifies to inclose or shut up, as with lockes and fetters.

Againe, the Church prayeth for the enlargement of the flowing of her spices, *ver. 16.* and therefore her present shutting up was uncomfortable to her.

The Church was then said to be shut up,

First, because under the persecutions it was shut up in prisons, and other places of punishment, as under lockes and fetters.

Secondly, because the Church then assembled in private close places, woods, dens, &c. and not in the open places of townes or cities.

Thirdly, because it was shut up from free access of forainers, men without; neither were the Emperours willing their Subjects should repaire to them, nor the Church willing to admit all promiscuously.

Verse 13,
14.

Thy plants :] That is, thy children or members, as an orchard of *Pomegranates, Camphire, verle 14. Spikenard, Safron, Calamus, Cinnamon.* The children of the Church are compared to these wholesome and sweet fruits, trees, herbs, in a double respect:

First, because the vertues of these fruits and spices are especially seen when they are cut and powred out, or beaten, or burned, or bruised: So it is with the graces of Gods children; they are chiefly exercised by the hard dealing of persecutors.

Secondly, there was in the faithfull then persecuted a resemblance of the vertues of these fruits and spices.

P. megra-
nates.

Pomegranates repress and restraime
the

the heat of choler, the malignity of fevers, the loosenesse of the belly ; they also comfort the stomack and bowels, and prevent faintings and swoonings.

Camphire, with his sweetnesse of smell, delighteth and strengthneth the spirits, cheereth up the minde, helps the stone, restraines ulcers.

Camphire.

Spikenard stayeth distillations from the head, strengthneth the stomack, digesteth cold humours, helpeth conception.

Spikenard

Safron thinneth flegme, helps lethargies, coughs, and plurisies, furthereth digestion, comforteth the heart, redresses the rottennesse of the other parts, which also are strengthened.

Safron.

Calamus helps the passages of the urine, and the faults of the reines, helpeth also the womb and conception.

Calamus.

Cinnamon strengthneth and cheereth the spirits and minde, dryeth up rotten matter, helpeth against poyson, warmth and strengthneth the stomacke to digestion.

Cinnamon

Frankincense restraineth and helpeth ulcers, gouts, fluxes of bloud, cleanseth and glueth up wounds and ulcers.

Frankincense.

Myrrh.

Myrrh refresheth the braine, drieth up superfluous humours, helpeth straitnesse of breath, restraineth ulcers and itchinesse, filleth ulcers and wounds with flesh.

Aloes.
Fernelius
de method.
medend. lib.

4. cap. 7, 9,
19, 21, 22,
26, 27. lib.
6. cap. 12,
13, 14, 12.

Aloes cleanse tough flegme and choler, drie up raw and cold humours, preserve the rest from putrefying, open obstructions, strengthen the stomach strongly.

Sutable to the vertues of these fruits and spices, persecution bred and stirred up in the faithfull graces of like efficacy, to restraine heats of emulation, contention, ambition, to repressse ulcers of malignity and dis-affection one to another, to heale the coldnesse, hypocrisie, and rottennesse of their spirits; to stay distillations of cold raw matters, dropping from the head Bishops of Rome; as also to strengthen appetite to the Word, to comfort the faint-hearted, to knit the members together.

Verse 15.

A fountaine of gardens, &c.] For the Church, pouring out her confessions and martyrdomes for the truth, propagated and watered many Churches; for, *sanguis martyrum* was *semen Ecclesie*, a *Well of living waters*. The Church was not then

Joh. 4. 10.

then dried up, but plentifully stored with the graces of the spirit, *Streames from Lebanon*: The Churches were stored with such graces of the Spirit, as streamed and issued out from the mountaines of Israel, the writings of the Prophets and Apostles.

Awake, or arise, O Northwind, &c.] The Churches desire that a winde might arise in the North, and come into the South: to wit, that *Constantine*, born in *York*, would come into the southerne parts, and take the Empire upon him, (*and blow upon my garden*) driving away the blasts of Easterly persecutions, and breath favourably and wholesomly upon the Church, cooling the tempestuous heats of the persecutions which the Church endured. The Church prayeth not the South to come, but the North to come into the South, else

Verse 16.

First, the word *blow*, if it had reference to both winds, should have been of the plurall number.

Secondly, Northwinde and Southwinde blowing together, would interrupt and crosse one another by their contrariety.

Verse 16.

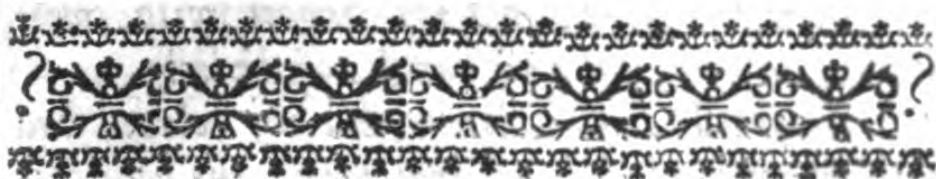
That the spices thereof may flow forth :]
 That the Gospell and Ordinances of
 Christ and the graces of his children,
 which were there restrained from their
 free manifestation by the persecutions,
 might have free passage.

*Let my beloved come into his garden, and
 eat of his pleasant fruits.]* Let Constantine
 come to them, and partake of the benefits
 of the Churches serviceable graces to
 God and him.



THE





THE
CANTICLES,
OR
SONG OF SONGS
opened and explained.

THE TEXT.

CHAP. 5.

I Am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse, I have gathered my Myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milke: eate, O friends, drinke, yea drinke abundantly, O beloved.

2 I sleep, but my heart waketh, it is the voyce of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to mee my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my lockes with the drops of the night.

3 I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?

4 My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore, and my bowels were moved for him.

5 I rose up to open to my beloved, and my hands
dropped

dropped with Myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling Myrrh, upon the bandles of the locke.

6 I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had with-drawn himselfe, and was gone: my soule failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.

7 The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me, the keepers of the wals took away my vaile from me.

8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that yee tell him, that I am sick of love.

9 What is thy beloved more then another beloved, O thou fairest among women? What is thy beloved more then another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?

10 My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefeft among ten thousand.

11 His head is as the most fine gold, his lockes are bushy and black as a Raven.

12 His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of water, washed with milke, and fitly set.

13 His cheekes are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lillies, dropping sweet smelling Myrrh.

14 His hands are as gold rings set with the Beryl: his belly is as bright Ivory overlaid with Saphires.

15 His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold, his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars.

16 His mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether

*ther lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.*

THE EXPLANATION.

Cant.5.verse 1. I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse, I have gathered my Myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey, I have drunke my wine with my milke : eat, O friends , drinke , yea drinke abundantly, O beloved.]

Constantine came into the Church, enjoyed the fellowship of it, did partake in all the parts of it, yea and richly endowed it; so that the Church and all her friends did eat and drinke, yea and did drink abundantly of wealth, preferments, &c. whence it was that she fell into a deep sleep.

First, this serves to stirre us up to thankfulness and fruitfulness to God, who hath planted us not in the wilderness of the world, but in the garden of his Church. If wee now transgresse as *Adam* did, eating of the forbidden fruits, * God will take his garden from us, and cast us out of it.

Chap.5.
verse 1.

Ch.4.12.

Use 1.

* Gen.3.6,
11,12,24.
& 2.17.

Secondly,

use 2.

Secondly, this lets us see, all the goodly situations of the earth are but dunghils and deserts, in comparison of the Church; the Church is a garden, and in it are fountaines of living waters for every thirsty soule.

use 3.

Mat. 5. 14.

Thirdly, though the Church be sometimes in open view of all, as a City set on a hill; yet it is sometimes also otherwise, inclosed, shut up, sealed.

use 4.

Fourthly, when the Church is shut up in corners and conventicles, the members of it hatch not treasons, schismes, factions; but still remaineth as a garden, orchard, fountaine, yeelding sweet waters, savoury and wholesome fruits.

use 5.

Fifthly, see the wonderfull use of afflictions and persecutions to the Church; what savoury, and wholesome and precious graces are thereby exercised; yea, how mightily doth the Church then spread when it is most restrained?

use 6.

Sixthly, see then what the weapons of the Church were against their persecutors; not daggers, darts, powder, pistols, rebellions, treasons, &c. but prayers for more seasonable times.

use 7.

Seventhly, wee are to be stirred up to pray,

pray, that God would now stirre up a wholesome Northwinde, to blow favourably upon the Churches beyond the seas, and strongly against their enemies.

Eightly, this may teach us whilest we enjoy at home these faire blasts, not to streame forth the unfavoury corruptions of our owne spirits, but the sweet graces of God; else wee abuse these sweet opportunities wee doe enjoy.

use 8.

Lastly, it is a time of much rejoycing when God stirreth up Kings and Princes to come into the fellowship of the Church, and to partake of Gods ordinances in the same.

use 9.

I sleepe, but my heart waketh, it is the voyce of my beloved that knocketh, saying, &c.]

Cant. 5. 2.
to Chapt.
6. ver. 4.

Now followeth the description of the estate of the Church from *Constantines* time to the time of restoring of the Gospell, and reforming of the Church by the Ministry of *Luther*, and other late Divines.

After that *Constantine* had largely endowed the Church with peace, and wealth, and honour; it fell into an estate
of

of carnall security; which carnall security is described,

First, by a comparifon, refembling it to fleep; which fleep of hers is amplified by the divers conditions, yet *my heart waketh.*

Secondly, by the carriage of Chrift towards her in this her fleepe; where obferve,

1. The meanes he ufeth to awake and ftirre her up: which were,

First, calling to her and knocking, as *verfe 2.*

Secondly, putting in his hand by the hole of the doore, *verfe 4.*

2. The fucceffe of thofe meanes, or the refpect ſhe gave to them, or the ufe ſhee made of them; which was double,

First, his calling and knocking ſhe neglecteth wholly, upon very flight pretences and excuses, *verfe 3.*

Secondly, his putting in his hand by the hole of the doore;

1. She is affected with it: *My bowels were moved for him, ver. 4.*

2. She upon it fought him: which is further fet forth,

First, by the degrees of her ſeeking him:

1. She

1. She arose to open to him, *verse 5.*

2. Her hands and fingers dropped Myrrh upon the handles of the locke, *verse 5.*

3. She opened to her beloved, *ver. 6.*

Secondly, by the fruits or successe of her seeking, where is interpreted the fruit or successe of these two degrees of her seeking, in regard,

1. Of Christ, *he was gone, he had withdrawn himself, &c. ver. 6.*

2. Of the watchmen, of whom shee asketh not for her beloved; but they finding her seeking Christ, they

First, smote her.

Secondly, wounded her.

Thirdly, tooke away her vaile from her, *verse 7.*

Fourthly, she, not discouraged with this bad dealing and hard usage of the watchmen, added a fourth degree in her seeking of Christ; shee chargeth the daughters of Jerusalem to move Christ for her, *ver. 8.* The successe or fruit whereof is added; for upon this charge,

1. The daughters of Jerusalem are stirred and occasioned to enquire of her, who Christ is, *verse 9.*

2. She

2. She by their enquiry is occasioned to describe him,

First, by his colours, *verse 10.*

Secondly, by his eminency, *verse 10.*

Thirdly, by his severall members and parts, *verse 11, — 16.*

Fourthly, by his amiableness, *verse 16.*

3. The daughters of Jerusalem by this her description of him, are stirred up to affect him, and to promise their fellowship in seeking of him with her, *Chap. 6. 1.*

Verse 2.

I sleepe.] The Church surfeiting with abundance of prosperity in *Constantines* time, neglected the purity and power both of doctrine and worship, and received corruptions; of which were prayers to Saints, building of Temples to them, Superstitious regard of their reliques, Images, and their worship, Ceremonies annexed to their Sacraments, choice of meats, affecting and applauding Monkish life, Purgatory, &c.

My heart waketh.] The Church was still awake,

First, to hearty devotion, according to their knowledge, and beyond it.

Secondly,

Secondly, to discerne some such grosse heresies as quenched the heart and life of Christianity; as the impiety of *Arius*, denying the Godhead of Christ; *Macedonius* and *Eunomius*, denying the person of the holy Ghost; of *Nestorius*, dividing the person in Christ; of *Eutyches*, confounding their natures: other straw and stubble built upon the foundation they neglected.

It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open.] Christ used good meanes to awaken his spouse, and to raise her up from this carnall security.

First, he calleth to her in the voice of sundry good Divines, who complained of the intolerable burthen of humane inventions, wherewith the common Christians were defiled and dabled, as Christ here complains: His locks and haire were full of the drops of the night; drops with coldnesse of Religion and darknesse of ignorance ingendred.

August. ep.
119.

Secondly, he knocked by the raps and blowes which *Constantius*, *Valens*, and *Julian* gave to the Church; the two former persecuting the orthodox Bishops and Ministers and other Christians, in favour of the *Arians*; and *Julian* making flat

K

Apostasie

Apostasie from the Church, and subtly supplanting the nursing of Religion.

Verse 3.

I put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?

I have put off my coat.] I hus upon sleight pretence the Church refuseth to open to Christ: shee pretends Religion and the worship of God would appear too naked, if it were not cloathed with goodly and comely humane inventions; how then should shee in so naked a manner open to Christ? Humane inventions do not clothe Religion, or the Church professing it with any comely ornaments; but, as it were with warme blankets, lap her and lull her asleep in the bed of perfunctory worship and carnall security.

I do not here conceive that the Church acknowledgeth she hath cast off her garments of Christs righteousness; for then how should shee remaine the spouse of Christ? yea, how then should her heart have beene otherwise then asleep too? but onely shee pleadeth shee should appeare too naked if shee should open to Christ, if she should worship him in the simplicity and nakednesse of his simple ordinances.

I have washed my feet.] Not with the laver of regeneration, for that would have been no impediment, but a furtherance to the pure worship of God; but shee had washed her feet, shee had freed and cleansed her conversation from defilements of secular affairs: shee had taken up a devout regard of virginity, or hermitish or monkish solitary retiredness; shee being cleansed and washed in these devices, cannot betake her selfe to worship the Lord in his simple ordinances, and in the wayes of her calling, without some defilement: Thus marriage and worldly businesse (though both allowed by God, yet) seem a defilement, in comparison of more strict superstitious devotion.

My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore, and my bowels were moved for him.

Ver. 4.

My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore:] Or, *My beloved put downe his hand by the hole of the doore.*] Either of which imply, that Christ did at first use meanes for himselfe to open the doore, when shee would not; attempting to remove the impediments which hinder him from enjoying his spouse: First, *put his*
K 2
hand

hand by the hole of the doore, when hee stirred up Christian Emperors, such as *Martianus*, and both the *Theodosii*, to call Synods, and to command the Fathers assembled, to give all diligence to root out all heresies, and depravations of doctrine and worship, that the pure and holy faith might shine forth.

How easily might the Church upon such encouragements, have broken the barres and bolts of Superstition crept into the worship of God, whereby Christ was debarred from drawing neer to them? The Bishops assembled in those Councils of that time, condemned those gross heresies which blasphemed the doctrine of the Trinity; but how deeply did they neglect to redresse all other enormities and corruptions? Besides, Christ is said to put in his hand by the hole of the door, when he puts his spirit, which is the power and finger of God*, into the hearts of his people, whereby they are enlightened to know him better, and stirre up men honestly to seeke after him. So Christ eulightened and stirred up *Leo Isauricus*, *Constantines* sonne, and *Leo Copronymus*, to bend their best endeavours to root out Idolatry, and
to

* Mar. 12.
28. with
Luke 11.
20.

to remove Images, which were one of the chiefest abuses in Gods worship.

My bowells were moved for him.] These good Princes, and other Christians at that time were strongly and inwardly affected to the purity of Gods worship, in which alone Christ is found.

I rose up to open to my beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the locke.

Verſes.

I rose up to open to my beloved.] The Church under these good Emperours rose up out of the blankets of these humane inventions wherewith shee was covered, in a bed of sleeping devotion, and endeavoured to restore openly the simplicity of Gods worship, rejecting Images and Idolatry.

My hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the locke.] The endeavours of the Church were sweet, and delectable, and acceptable to Christ, and savoury to the people, to preserve them, as myrrh, from further persecution, when *Constantine* the sonne of *Leo Isauricus*, called the seventh *Constantinopolitan* Councell, and there tru-

ly and solemnly convinced and condemned the worship of Images: As also when *Charles* the Great did the like some forty years after, at a Synod in Frankford.

Ver. 6.

I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawne himselfe, and was gone: my soule failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not finde him: I called him, but hee gave me no answer.

I opened to my beloved.] This attempt of the Church in executing in some places the decrees of these Synods, was an opening of the doore to Christ: Images and Idolatry being shut forth, there is a doore open for Christ to enter.

But my beloved had withdrawne himselfe, and was gone.] Christ did not delight to reveale himself in their publike assemblies, though Images were in some places well removed, both because those decrees for removing of Images were not generally received and executed, through the coming in of the Bishop of Rome; and because the worship of God was still full of Heathenish and Jewish superstitions, which Christ tooke no pleasure in.

My soule failed when hee spake.] The faithfull in those times were assembled with

with feare and grieve, to consider how Christ now speaketh to them as farre off, comes not neare to their hearts and consciences; so that now, though they used such meanes to finde him as the times afforded, yet Christ did take no pleasure in those meanes, in those worships, nor to their sense, in those that used them.

The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls tooke away my vaile from me.

Ver. 7.

The watchmen that went about the city found mee.] These watchmen are the Bishops and Ministers of that time; as also the *keepers of the wals* may well be the Magistrates: for civill government is a wall of defence to the Church of God.

They found mee.] And yet the Church enquireth not of them, as shee had done before of other watchmen, * *Have you not seen him whom my soule loves?* For she knew these watchmen were of another spirit, rather wolves in sheeps cloathing, and more ready to beat her from Christ, then to bring her to Christ. They smote me with censures of Excommunications, as Gregory the third Pope of Rome did *Leo Isauri-*

* Chap.
3.3.

ricus for his endeavours. Afterwards, when sundry Christians, having intelligence that the Bishops and Doctors were assembled in a temple at *Byzantium*, to give sentence for restoring of Images, in the dayes of the Empresse *Irene*, came upon them, and forced them with weapons to leave off such decrees; these people were afterwards disarmed and banished into sundry Islands. Thus were the faithfull smitten with the censures of Excommunication by the watchmen of the city; of banishment by the keepers of the walls.

They wounded me.] With the Canons of the second Council of *Nice*; whither that Councell, assembled in the temple of *Byzantium*, and scattered by the people, was afterwards translated by the Council of the Bishops of Rome. In this Councell Images were againe restored, to the great griefe of the godly, yea, to the wounding of their hearts. The sentence of a generall Councell in the behalfe of any error is no small wound to the whole Church.

They tooke away my vaile from mee.] When they forced the Bishops of *Rhodes*, *Nice*, *Neo-Cesarea*, *Hierapolis*, and others
to

to recantation, who before had worthily opposed Images. To bring men to open recantation, to lay open their nakednesse, especially when they recant from the truth, is to take away the vaile.

I charge you, O daughters of Ierusalem, if yee finde my beloved, that ye tell him that I am sicke of love.

Verse 8.

I charge you, O daughters of Ierusalem.] The Church finding her selfe so hardly dealt with by the Ministers and Magistrates, would not give over her search after Christ; yet now seeketh him in the fellowship of private Christians, and stirreth them up to pray for her.

Tell him I am sicke of love.] That is, in your prayers acknowledge that the Church is ready to faile and perish for want of his presence and fellowship in his publike ordinances.

What is thy beloved more then another beloved, O thou fairest among women? &c.]

Verse 9.

The Christians, the daughters of Ierusalem, from this day forward, to the dayes of *Peter Waldus* (of whom the *Waldenses* tooke their name, were very ignorant of Christ, and therefore they aske who hee was,

was, and wherein better then another : But in stead of him they magnified the Church ; *Holy mother Church* was all in all with them : Her they acknowledged to be fairest among women, though they see nothing in Christ better then in another.

Ver. 10.

My beloved is white and ruddy, &c.] Thus *Petrus Waldus*, a citizen of Lions, opened Christ to the daughters of Jerusalem, to the children of the Church, setting before them the white innocency of true holinesse in him, and the ruddy scarlet dye of his death. The righteousness and death of Christ plainly, yet powerfully opened by him, brought many to behold Christ, and to professe him ; who (when by persecution stirred up against them by the Bishop of Rome, they were dispersed into many places) multiplied exceedingly ; and being then called *Albingenses*, in many battels fought against the souldiers which Pope *Innocent* the third had sent against them, under conduct of *Simon Mounteford*, and others signed with the crosse : in many of which the *Albingenses* prevailed, helped by *Reymund* Earle of *Thelus*, and *Peter* King of *Aragon* ; though after-

afterwards they were overcome and scattered further into many places of Christendome. So in regard of these troupes of many thousands, Christ is here called the *standard-bearer*, as the word signifieth, or the *choyce of ten thousand*. Againe, at that time Christ may be said to be white and ruddy in regard of his members, who were then white with innocency of life, yet ruddy, enduring persecution.

His head is as the most fine gold, his lockes are bushie, and black as a raven.

VER. II.

His head is as the most fine gold.] Christ comes now to be described in his members more particularly: This head of gold Christ shewed on the earth in the person of *Frederick*, the second Emperour of *Rome*, a Prince of much purity and worth, as an head of the Church of fine gold: Hee contended with many Popes about the headship of the Church, advanced the headship of Christ and of himselfe, his Vicegerents, above the counterfeit head of the Popes Supremacy. He wrestled for Christ against them with much difficulty, yet prevailed, so that even in the Popish schools, his election of God was agreed and condescended unto by fundry.

His

His locks are bushie, or curled, and black as a raven.] Curled black haire is a signe of heat and courage, and wit in him that it groweth upon: such was the Emperour himself, and such were the common Christians of that age that did depend upon their Emperour; they stuck close to him: learned men with wit, more then former ages had yeelded, and souldiers with courage maintained his person and cause.

Verse 12.

His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of water, washed with milke, and fitly set.]

Doves, diving in rivers of waters, dive their bellies deep into the waters; so that their eyes looke close and narrowly upon it.

First, the eyes are here set forth by their care of the Church; hee is not so farre off removed from it, that he had need of the Pope to be his visible Vicar to look to it.

Secondly, by their milde innocency, implied, in that they are doves eyes and washed with milke; whereas the Popes eyes were as hawkes eyes, looking eagerly after the prey.

Thirdly, by their fit standing, so as they may well looke to the whole body; whereas

whereas the Popes eyes cannot possibly watch to looke well to the estate of the Church so far off him.

To this purpose tended the doctrine of the faithful Divines in the following age, such as *Michael Cefenus*, *Petrus de Carbania*, *Iohannes de Poliac*, and such as followed them.

His cheekes are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers : his lips like lillies, dropping sweet smelling Myrrh.

Ver. 13.

His cheeks are as a bed of spices.]

Cheekes imply the outward face of the faithfull Church, for the cheeks are a place most conspicuous, which shewes that the faithfull of those times were as beds of spices and sweet flowers, to wit, not gathered into any set garden, as afterwards in *Luthers* time,* but scattered here and there, yet of sweet and precious savour in the nostrils of Christ : yea, one *Nicholaus de Bibrath*, living about that time, compareth Faith and Piety in the Church to spice rare and deare.

*Ch. 6. 2.

His lips like lillies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.] The doctrine of the Church at those times was such, as like myrrh, served to preserve the faithfull from putrefaction,

* Rev. 2.
25.

trefaction, according to that, * *That which ye have already, hold fast till I come.* In the Primitive Apostolique Church her lips dropped like an honey-combe, being of strong sweet relish to delight and nourish to full growth: † But the lips of this Church drop rather myrrh then honey; they rather preserved some truth of grace then yeelded any abundant nourishment to procure increase to the Church.

† Can. 4.
11.

Ver. 14.

His hands are as gold rings set with the Berill: his belly is as bright Ivory overlaid with Saphires.

His hands are as gold rings set with the Berill.] Hands are instruments of action; their being set with *gold rings* implyeth their purity and dignity: The *Berill* clear-eth moisture and dimme sight: *Franciscus Rudis, de Goma. libr. 2. cap. 8.* All these shew that the Ministry of the Gospel should be then more powerfull; and indeed God, about that time, *Anno 1300.* stirred up *Dantes, Marcillius, Potavinus, Ocham, Gregorius Ariminensis, Petrarchus, Wickliffe*, and many more, whose Ministry brought on so many, that some have counted it the first resurrection; yea, the Magistrates of that time, *Ludovicus Bava-*

us the Emperour, *Philip of France, Edward* the third of *England*, stood out in many things against the Pope, as those whose hands had got more strength, and better felt their owne worth, and whose eyes were cleered to see more light then their predeceffours.

His belly as bright Ivory overlaid with Saphires.] The belly is an hidden part of the body, yet such from which the rest is nourished; which fitly resembleth the Sacraments here, as also *Ch.7.2.* which being hid from those that are without, yet nourish the whole body, as an heap of wheat. The doctrine of the Sacraments, and the pure administration of the same, was at this time restored by *John Wickliff*, & embraced by his followers, though condemned in the Councell of Constance. These Sacraments are said to be overlaid with Saphires, whose property is to strengthen and cherish the principall solid parts,* because of the efficacy of the Sacraments truly taught and administred, to strengthen and quicken Gods graces in us.

His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

* Rucus
Deginus
l.1. cap.2.

Ver.15.

His

His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold.] These two legs seeme to be *Iohn Hus* and *Ierome of Prague*, who stood constantly in defence of the truth, even unto death, being established in the truth and grace of God, as it were *pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold.*

His countenance is as Lebanon.]

The faithfull grew so plentiful in *Bohemia*, that they seemed even to the adversary to be like a thick wood (as many and firme) which they were not able to hew downe; and therefore they were forced in the Councell of *Constance*, to allow them the use of the cup in the Lords Supper, because they could not by strong hand keep them from it.

Excellent as the cedars.] The cedar is a tree eminent for tallnesse, and soundnesse or durablenesse: such was then the face and countenance of the Church, observed to grow up in conspicuous eminency, and in soundnesse of love to the truth, that the Popish Teachers were not able to corrupt them any longer with their seducements.

Verse 16.

His mouth is most sweet, yea, hee is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and

and this is my friend, O Daughters of Jerusalem.

His mouth is most sweet.]

The doctrine of the Gospell was taught more and more favourly by *Johannes Rochesana*, and other Ministers in *Bohemia*.

He is altogether lovely, or desireable.]

Christ then began againe so to dispense himselfe to his Church, in giving them the faith and sense of his goodnesse, that now they saw or found nothing in Christ, or in the profession of his name, but what was wholly desirable. The rebukes of Christ began now to seeme greater riches, then the treasures of *Egypt* or *Babylon* in some former ages: they that saw the truth were often brought to yeeld and recant; but these saw nothing to be more desired then Christ. Besides, he is now called holy and desirable, because so many so generally were stirred up to desire and seeke reformation. The Regions were white and ready to the harvest, else *Luther* had not found such good successe in his Ministry.

This is my beloved, and this is my friend.]

The doctrine of certainty of our adoption,

Heb. 11.
26.

tion, Justification, Salvation, began now more plainly to be discerned and acknowledged: Christ is not onely faire and desireable in himself; but then the Church could more boldly say, *This is my beloved, this is my friend.*



THE



THE
CANTICLES,
OR
SONG OF SONGS
opened and explained.

THE TEXT.

CHAP. 6.

WHither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.

2 My beloved is gone downe into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.

3 I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.

4 Thou art beautifull, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.

5 Turne away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy haire is as a flock of goats that appeare from Gilead.

6 Thy teeth are as a flock of sheepe which goe

up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twinnes, and there is not one barren among them.

7 As a piece of Pomegranate are thy temples within thy lockes.

8 There are threescore Queenes, and fourescore Concubines, and virgins without number.

9 My Dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the onely one of her Mother, shee is the choice one of her that bare her: The daughters saw her, and blessed her: yea, the Queenes and the Concubines, and they praised her.

10 Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, faire as the moone, cleare as the sunne, and terrible as an army with banners?

11 I went downe into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the Vine flourished, and the Pomegranats budded.

12 Or ever I was aware, my soule made me like the Chariots of Aminadab.

13 Returne, returne, O Shulamite; returne, returne, that we may looke upon thee: what wilt thou see in the Shulamite? as it were the company of two armies.

THE

THE EXPLANATION.

Cant.6.1. *Whither is thy beloved gone? O thou fairest among women, whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seeke him with thee.*]

THe Churches affectionate describing and praising Christ, stirred up many then to looke after Religion and Reformation.

Chap.6.
verse 1.

First, wee may here see the danger of surfeiting the Church with wealth and pleasures and honour. *Constantine* had in the first verse enebriated the Church with wealth and honour, and hereupon the Church falleth into a long sleepe, which shee shook not wholly off for many ages. No wonder then of that speech heard from heaven, *Hodie venenum concidit in Ecclesiam*: Now is poyson powred or fallen into the Church.

use 1.

Secondly, this may let us see that they have not the spirit of the Church of Christ, that when they heare many voices in Religion carried sundry waies, know not whom to follow, cannot discern which

use 2.

is the true voice of Christ among them : This Church here could discern the voice of Christ even in her sleep, how much more easily if she had been well awake ?

Use 3.

Thirdly, this is to exhort both Ministers and other faithfull Christians to watchfulnesse, lest otherwise corruption in doctrine and worship grow amongst the people, till the locks of Christ be wholly dabled with superstitions ; the locks of Christ, to wit, the common Christians.

Use 4.

Fourthly, this may teach us to know that they provide not well for the direction of their own judgements, that depend upon the voice of the ancient Churches for their chief pattern and guidance in doctrine and worship : who would build upon the words of a man (though otherwise a good man) when he is half asleep ?

Use 5.

Fifthly, hence we may discern it is better the Church should open to Christ, appearing before him in the naked simplicity of his worship, then to cover our selves and his worship with the blankets and inventions of mens weaving, which will but lull the Church asleep in drowisie performances of perfunctory worship, and cause Christ to withdraw himself from us.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, this may teach us to know, to our shame and griefe, that our drowfie hearts will neglect to open to Christ upon his calling and knocking, unless he be pleased to put the finger of his spirit into our hearts, to open an entrance for himselfe.

use 6.

Seventhly, the faithfull must not wonder, if, opening their hearts to Christ and seeking after him, sometimes they finde him not; for it was so with the Church here, and hath been so with the faithfull in all ages: We neglecting to receive him when hee offereth himself, wee must not wonder if for a time he neglect us.

use 7.

Eighthly, we may from hence learn that bad Ministers wil sooner bear with any disorder in people, then serious seeking after Christ, and after the purity of ordinances.

use 8.

Ninthly, we may here see persecutions alienate not the affections of the faithful, but inflame them to more ardency and earnest pursuite after Christ, as this Church did.

use 9.

Tenthly, it may be known the Church hath lyen in a deep sleep, when common Christians can more acknowledge the Church then Christ himself, when they can see her to be *the fairest among women*, but know not any eminent worth in Christ.

use 10.

L 4 Eleventhly,

Use 11. Eleventhly, the estate of many Churches, in many ages, maketh but one body of Christ; in every of which Christ manifesteth himself, in some members more eminently then in others.

Use 12. Twelvethly, Christ had his faithfull people and members in the world before *Luther* was born; yea, he shewed himself glorious in sundry of them, in the darkest times of Popery.

Use 13. Thirteenthly, in Christ it's well known there is nothing but what is lovely and desirable; even persecutions for his sake are lovely and glorious.

Use 14. Fourteenthly, it is no comfort, or but small, to know Christ to be every way precious and excellent, unlesse wee can also say, hee is ours: *This is my beloved, this is my friend, O yee daughters of Jerusalem.*

Use 15. Fifteenthly, the affectionate faithfull preaching and setting forth of Christ, stirreth up in others a saving knowledge of Christ, and hearty affection to him. The Church here describeth Christ affectionately and faithfully, speaketh of him as her owne; whence the daughters of *Jerusalem* are converted and stirred up to seek after him. Lastly,

Lastly, hearts truely touched with sincere desire after Christ, chose rather to seek him in the Church, in the fellowship of the Church, then by waies of separation, as this Church did: *Whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seeke him with thee.*

use 16.

My beloved is gone into his garden.] The holy Ghost in these words descendeth to set forth the state of the Church reformed by the Ministry of *Luther*, and other late Divines, as in the verse following the calling of the *Jewes*.

Cant.6.
2, — 9.

This reformed Church is diversly described:

First, by Christs visitation of her, together with the ends thereof:

1. *To feed in the gardens.*
2. *To gather lilies, verse 2.*

Secondly, by her mutuall fellowship with Christ, *verse 3.*

Thirdly, by her degrees of rising: wherein she is likened to be, *verse 4.*

1. *As Tirzah.*
2. *As Jerusalem.*
3. *As an army with Banners.*

Fourthly, by her members, *ver. 5, 6, 7.*

1. *Eyes.*

2. *Haire.*

2. *Haire.*

3. *Teeth.*

4. *Temples.*

Fiftly, by comparing the severall reformed Churches, as amongst themselves, and preferring one above the rest of the reformed Churches there.

1. As *Queenes*, 60.

2. As *Concubines*, 80.

3. As *Virgins without number*, verse 8.

4. As a *Dove*; and who,

First, to Christ is undefiled.

Secondly, to the whole Church as an *only one*, as a *choice one*.

Thirdly, to the rest:

1. Blessed, to the *Daughters*.

2. Praised, to the *Queenes* and *Concubines*, verse 8, 9.

Verse 2.

My beloved is gone downe into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the garden, and to gather lilies.

My beloved is gone downe into his garden:] The Church, which Christ next visited, and wherein he was first found in that generall Apostasie wherein the Church sought Christ and could not find him.

In the former Chapter was the Church
of

of *Wittenburg* reformed by the Ministry of *Luther*, which was a garden; being

First, stored with variety of godly people, as sweet flowers set in order, some teaching, some hearing.

Secondly, fenced in as with a hedge, pale or wall, by the protection of *Frederick* the good Duke of *Saxony*.

Thirdly, a place wherein Christ walked (as wee doe in our gardens) to refresh himselfe and his friends.

Is gone downe into his garden.] Descending from those famous cities and eminent places of *Rome* and *Constantinople*, into a meane country city.

To the beds of spices.] Because in *Germany*, at that time, fundry Christians were called and sorted into severall beds and companies in severall places, though not attaining at the first to be so many gardens, so many severall Churches.

To feed in the garden.] In proceffe of time, these severall beds of spices (companies of Christians) grew up to the fashion of just and full Churches in *Zurich*, *Stranburgh*, *Brassell*, *Berne*, *Geneva*, besides those in *Hassia* and *Prussia*.

To feed,]

First,

First, both himselfe with his peoples prayers, and other worship and obedience.

Secondly, his people with his Word and Sacraments, and other ordinances.

And to *gather lilies*; that is, to gather and call more and more faithfull Christians out of a wild field of worldly people into the fellowship of his Church, as it were, *to gather lilies into his garden*.

They are called *lilies*,

First, for their fairenesse.

Secondly, for excellency, or eminency.

Thirdly, for Gods care in providing for them beyond their owne labour and industry.

I am my beloveds, 'and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.

I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine.] Which words imply foure things:

First, that the Church had familiar fellowship with Christ in his holy publike ordinances; especially in the maine doctrine of pardon of sins by Christs bloud alone, and of justification by faith.

Secondly, that shee enjoyed this fellowship with him, before the time of her deliverance out of a *Babylonish*, or *Romish* captivity: * for the same words

are

Mat. 6. 29.

Pro. 12. 26.

Mat. 6. 28,
29.

Verse 3.

* Chap. 2.
Verse 15.

are used upon the deliverance out of *Babel*, and enjoying Gods ordinances in their owne country ; but with this difference : there the Church saith, *My beloved is mine, and I am his* ; because, first, hee delivered her out of *Babel*, before hee gave her the free use of his ordinances ; but here the Church saith, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine* ; because shee first found Christ in his ordinances, before shee enjoyed deliverance from subjection to *Rome* ; for *Luther* preached against the Popes pardons, before he rejected the supremacy of the Pope.

Thirdly, their open profession of their fellowship with Christ, when the Princes of *Germany* openly protested against the Masse, and other corruptions in the Church, and avowed the defence of the reformation begun ; whence they were afterward called Protestants.

Fourthly, Christs gracious protection of those Churches, specially in their first beginnings : for how should *Luther* (a poore Friar) have attempted and gone through with so great a work, against such great and generall opposition, and in the end die quietly in his bed, if Christ had

Sleyden.
lib.6,7.

had not held him as it were in his armes :
Hee feedeth among the lilies.] Hee re-
 fresheth himselfe and strengtheneth his
 people, conversing amongst them, who
 strove for whitenesse, and purity, and re-
 formation.

Verse 4.

*Thou art beautifull, O my love, as Tirzah,
 comely as Ferusalem, terrible as an army with
 banners.*

Thou art beautifull as Tirzah.] Tirzah
 was the chiefe city of the Kingdome of
 Israel, after they had separated themselves
 from Judah, untill Samaria was after-
 ward builded*.

* 1 King.
 14. 17. &
 15. 33.

The city and Governors of it (the peo-
 ple having recourse to it for judgement,
 rather then to Ferusalem) were at first in
 disgrace and obloquie with the *Jewes* for
 their schisme and separation from the
 house of David at Ferusalem, and for her
 rebellion against the King of Judah; but
 this did not diminish her beauty, because
 this separation was from God.

1 Kings
 12. 24.

Afterward Tirzah lost her beauty by
 erecting the golden Calves, and falling
 off (not onely from the idolatry of Solo-
 mon wherein they did well, but) from the
 true worship of God, restored and conti-
 nued

nued in the Temple of *Ferusalem*. But *Solomon* here speaketh of *Tirzah* while shee retained her beauty : And indeed the reformed Churches were in this like unto *Tirzah* ; at first in disgrace and obloquie for their separation from *Rome*, and rebellion against the Emperour and other Princes ; and yet neverthelesse beautifull, because this separation was from God, in regard of Idolatries of the Church of *Rome*, greater then those of *Solomon*.

Thus the Duke of *Saxony* and the Landgrave of *Hassia* were proscribed as Rebels against the Emperour, and yet their cause was beautifull and good. The faithfull at that time in England were burned in King *Henry* the Eighth's daies, as Hereticks, and refractory Subjects or Rebels, yet beautifull in Gods fight.

Comely as Ferusalem.] In proceffe of time the Church wore out the suspicion and disgrace of heresie, and separation and rebellion, and was countenanced and adorned by Royall Lawes in the daies of King *Edward* the Sixth, and by Lawes of the Empire tolerating the Protestant Princes, so that the Church seemed as *Ferusalem*, the state of Princes, the true Church

Psal. 12. 2,
3, — 5.

Church of God, and at unity also within it self, wherein the comelineffe consisted : for, as *Ferusalem* had been three Cities, *Zion*, *Salem*, *Millo*, and all three were knit together into one *Ferusalem* : so the three differences between *Lutherans* and *Calvinists* in doctrine and discipline at *Geneva*, were all compacted together in brotherly love, in their harmony of confessions.

Terrible as an army with banners.] The Church was *beautifull as Tirzah* in King *Henry* the Eighths time, *comely as Ferusalem* in King *Edward* the Sixths time, *terrible as an army with banners* in Queen *Elisabeths* time, when the Protestant Princes grew formidable to the Emperour, *England* and the low Countries to the *Spaniard* and Pope. How terrible was that overthrow which the *Spaniard* in 88. receiv'd :

Verse 5.
*chap. 4 9.

Turn away thine eies, &c.] The eies, as above *, of the Church assembled, are the ministers, or the members considered apart ; as first, knowledge ; secondly, faith : In both respects the eies of the Church were wonderfull amiable : so that Christ speaketh affectionatly to the Church after the manner of Lovers, ravished with the beauty of their Spouses.

Turne

Turne away thine eyes, for they have overcome me.]

What worthy Ministers did that first age of the Reformed Churches yeeld? as *Luther, Calvin, Martin Bucer, Cranmer, Hooper, Ridley, Latymer, &c.* What a wonderfull measure of heavenly light did they of a sudden bring into the Church? and that out of the middest of darknesse and Popery; from whence it was, that the knowledge and faith of the Faithfull then was wonderfully enlarged farre beyond the ignorance of former times.

The eyes of the Faithfull in Christs time lay under their lockes, as hindered from cleere sight by many errours; but the eyes of the faithfull, now seeing the truth much more plainly, are not hindered by such lockes hanging over them: How cleere was their faith, that having seene him which was invifible, feared not the fiercenesse of their Kings and Princes, but endured patiently fiery Persecutions, and bloody Massacres?

Thy haire is like a flocke of goats.

Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep which goe up from washing.

Peter Martyr.

Chap. 4. 1.

Heb. 11. 27.

Ver. 5, 7.

As a piece of Pomgranat are thy temples within thy locks.

Chap. 4.
1, — 3.

The estate of common Christians set out by the haire, and of the Ministers set out by the teeth, and of the Church Governours set forth by the piece of Pomgranate, was the same in the Church reformed, as in the Primitive Church, where the description of these parts is used, and here repeated only with this difference: The teeth are not so even cut in Reformed Churches as in Christs time; some of them exceed their Brethren in Authority and Jurisdiction, whereas those were framed to more brotherly love in Christs time; whence the teeth they are said to be even cut, which in these teeth is here left out; yet both the Ministers of higher and lower ranke, were as sheep flocking and consorting together, washed with the Laver of Regeneration, fruitfull and powerfull in their Ministry, and therefore are here described, as a flock of sheep come up from the washing, *whereof every one beareth twinnes, and none is barren among them.*

Ver. 6.

Use 1.

First, wee may here learne to behold a different

different estate of the Church. Sometimes it is in a Garden; sundry Christians gathered together into beds and knots, and growing up into good order together, delighting and refreshing both God and man with the favour of their sweetnesse: such was, and is the estate of the Church reformed. Sometimes again, the members of the Church scattered abroad in the wilde fields, seeking where they may finde Christ, as in the former Chapter.

The Church is here visible, as in a Garden, in some of their eminent and principall members. If then the Papists aske, where was the Church visible before *Luther*? The answer is, it was visible, not in open Congregations indeed, as it were Gardens; but in sundry members of the Church, as sweet spices and flowers, growing here and there, whom the Popes and their Instruments, like wilde Boares sought to root out, and yet God preserveth them.

Somtime, the Church findeth Christ comfortably in her solemne assemblies, when good Christians are met together to serve him in the simplicity of his Or-

The
Church
how visi-
ble before
Luther.

dinances : sometimes , when they can finde no such Gardens, nor him in any place openly worshipped, yet even then they seeke him here and there where they can finde him.

Use 2.

Secondly, the like uses are here to be made of these Gardens, of that Chapter

4. *ver. 14.*

Use 3.

Thirdly , to teach us a true description of a Church : It is , as it were, a Garden , an Assembly of many good Christians, or Saints , as it were sweet spices, or flowers, set in order, as it were beds, or knots , amongst whom Christ walketh, they enjoying fellowship with him in his publique Ordinances, and hee with them.

Use 4.

Separatist.

Fourthly , to refute the arrogancy, or ignorance of the Separatists , who refuse to keep fellowship with reformed Churches, whom Christ yet keepes fellowship with ; shall man be more pure than his Maker ? or the sonnes of mortall men more holy than the sonnes of God ?

Use 5.

Fifthly, to exclude the Popish Synagogues from the number of Christs Gardens ; the Gardens and Churches
of

of Christ, as they have Christ walking in them, so they know it, and professe it, and rejoyce in it.

I am my wel-beloveds, and my wel-beloved is mine.] The Church of Rome disdaines such a song as Hereticall presumption, to say, *I am my wel-beloveds, and he is mine.*

Ver.3.

Sixthly, this doth teach us, that when Churches keepe themselves close to Christ, and to the simplicity of his Ordinances, that they can say, *I am my wel-beloveds, and hee is mine.* Christ will keep himselfe powerfull and gracious amongst them, for their protection and comfort; hee will not faile to shew himselfe theirs, when they faile not to shew themselves his.

use 6.

Seventhly, this may teach us, not to wonder if Christian Assemblies be at first suspected, as *Tirzah* for sedition, separation, &c. It is the lot of Gods Church, which when it groweth up to be better known, will appeare to be as it is, comely as *Jerusalem*.

use 7.

Eighthly, from the description of the Church here by her Members, Eyes, Haire, Teeth, Temples; gather here a-

use 8.

gaine in the same Uses made of the like description, Chap.4. *verse 1,2,3. page* in Uses 2,3,4. there expressed.

Use 9.

Ninthly, observe the Reformed Churches to be the same that the Primitive Church in Christs time, was in sundry principall Members and respects; and therefore the same Members in the same sort described, word for word; yea, such fellowship as the Church of the Jewes had with Christ coming out of Babylon, the same have the Reformed Churches with Christ coming out of Romish Babylon.

Cant 2.
16.ver.3.
Chap.6.

Verse 8.

There are threescore Queenes, and fourescore Concubines, and Virgins without number.

This Verse contains the last part of the description of the estate of the Reformed Churches, which is a comparison of them together amongst themselves; of whom some are,

First, Queenes, and they are threescore.

Secondly, Concubines, and they are fourscore.

Thirdly, Damosels, and they without number.

Secondly,

Secondly, one is eminent above them all unto Christ : First, a Dove, Secondly, undefiled.

Secondly, her selfe one.

Thirdly, her mother, an onely choice one.

Fourthly, her daughter, blessed.

Fifthly, the Queenes and Concubines commended her.

There are threescore Queenes, and fourescore Concubines, and Damofels, or Virgins, without number.

Verse 8.

Queenes differ from Concubines in foure respects :

First, Queenes, or chiefe Wives are taken into fellowship with their royall Husbands by solemne stipulation, and with consent and solemne rejoycing of friends : The Concubines are not so, as *Bilhah* and *Zilpah*, &c. A man takes such to him rather by right of Dominion, than by fellowship of Wedlock.

Gen. 29.
22.

Secondly, Queenes, or chiefe Wives bring with them dowries to their Husbands*.

Hence, *Lesbonius* to *Lusitoles*, in Matrimony, would not give his sister* *sine dote*, lest he should seem to give her *in Concubi-*

* 1 King.
9. 16.
Acts 3.
Sect 2.
* Without
Dowrie.

natum potius quàm in Matrimonium : But Concubines were taken without dowry for the most part, as *Hagar, Bilhah, Zilphah, &c.*

Gen. 16.

3.
Verse 6.

verse 7.

verse 8.

verse 9.

Thirdly, chiefe Wives had the keyes of the families in their owne hands, they had government of the house under and with their husbands. Hence it is that *Hagar*, though called *Abrahams* wife, yet is said to be in *Sarabs* hand, who also corrected her: the Angell calleth her *Sarabs* maid, and shee calleth *Sarah* her Mistresse, as likewise the Angell doth.

Concubines, though secondary wiyes, yet were but as servants, save onely they were admitted to the fellowship of the bed.

Gen. 25.

5, 6.

Fourthly, chiefe Wives brought forth children, to whom belonged the Inheritance; whereas Concubines children had, for the most part onely, some gifts given them. That *Dan* and *Neptali*, *Gad* and *Asher*, the sonnes of *Bilhah* and *Zilphah* had Inheritances among their brethren, was by extraordinary dispensation.

Queenes then are such Reformed Congregations where such properties of Queenes are found: Christ (indeed) lookes

lookes for no Dowrie from us for his owne use, he needeth nothing of ours, neither have we any thing to give him, but our owne nakednesse, filthinesse, and beggery. Here therefore looke at Christ in the persons of the Ministers, whose Vicegerents they are, and Embassadors also; and in whose name they being married to the Churches, doe beget children to Christ; though Ministers considered in comparison with Christ, they are but as the friends of the Bridegroom, not Bridegroomes themselves. Such Churches then, and Congregations are Queenes whom the Ministers and Congregations do with mutuall free consent chuse either the other; as when the people do give up themselves, first, to the Lord, and then to the Ministers by the wil of God. Of this sort are sundry Congregations in England, and very many in the reformed forain Churches: Other Congregations, which have Ministers thrust upon them without their liking and consent, and whom Ministers have to them by some clandestine conveyances, are more like to Concubines.

Againe, such Congregations as
come

Ezek. 16.
5,—6.

1 Cor. 4.
15.

John 3. 29.

2 Corin.
8. 5.

come to their Ministers with a good dowry, and comfortable and honourable maintenance, they are like wives. Others who bring little or no maintenance with them, are like to Concubines, though indeed the former condition is more essentiall to lawfull marriage; to wit, free consent, and mutuall stipulation on both sides; for as sometimes lawfull wives have but poore dowries, and Concubines sometimes bring large maintenance with them: so some Congregations that freely consent to the acceptance of their Ministers can allow them but slender maintenance, whereas some others upon whom Ministers thrust themselves are richly endowed: Furthermore, such Congregations as enjoy the power of the Keyes, they are as Queenes, lawfull wives. The Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven, are

First, the one of Knowledge, *Luke 11. ver. 52.*

Secondly, the other of Jurisdiction, *Matth. 18. 18.* and both of them mentioned, *Mat. 16. 19.*

Where then a Congregation enjoyeth a faithfull Ministry, opening an entrance
into

into the Kingdome of Heaven to penitent beleevers, and shutting it against impenitent hypocrites and scandalous livers, there the power of the Keyes is not wanting; and if withall they have liberty exercising Jurisdiction, there is their Queen-like, or Wife-like authority more compleat. Of this sort are divers, both English and Foraine Churches, though fundry Germane Churches dispensing the Keyes of Knowledge more corruptly in their Doctrine of the Sacrament, and Predestination, and neglecting the use of Excommunication, doe rather turne to the condition of Concubines.

But such Churches as have no Preachers, or such as have no power in their gifts to open and shut the Kingdome of Heaven, to the conscience and soules of men, they are as Concubines.

Lastly, such Congregations where the people remaine still ignorant in darknesse, and are not brought on to be begotten of God by the lively Word of Regeneration, but continue altogether ignorant, wordly, and profane; they are as Concubines whose children inherit not, though God may give them outward blessings.

But

Rev. 3. 4.

But such Congregations where the word is lively to the begetting of soules to an immortall inheritance, they are lawfull wives, yea Queenes : Of this sort our English and Forain Churches have many, (God be blessed) though the Church of *Sardis* hath but a few names.

Damosels are without number, &c.] Damosels, or Virgins in this marriage-song are of lesse reckoning, as being yet either not spoken to in way of marriage by Christ and his Ministers, or coily refusing him. Of this sort there were many Churches at the first reforming of the Gospel, to whom for want of Ministers Readers were sent; whence one of the Martyrs wished, that every able Minister might have ten Congregations committed to his charge, till further provision could be made; so that such Churches there were, even ten to one, abundantly many, that scarcely heard of Christs knocking at their hearts by any conscionable Ministry; yea, and how many be there at this day, that either doe want such Ministers as doe espouse them to Christ, or else doe coily deny their motions, and stand out against Christ and their Ministers ?

Of

Of Queenes hee reckoneth threescore, of Concubines fourescore. A certaine number put for an uncertaine ; and of Churches, the lesse pure the greater.

Damofels hee reckons without number.

First, partly, because they have been exceeding many of them, and are still too many.

Secondly, partly, because Christ maketh no account of them, as if they were with him *nullius numeri*, not worth the reckoning.

But my Dove, my undefiled is one, &c.]

Verse 9.

A Dove is noted,

First, for her chastity ;

Secondly, mildenesse, or innocency : such are those Churches which goe not a whoring after any Superstition, or Idolatry, nor exercise that captivity of Tyranny over their Sister Churches, which the Popish watchmen are taxed for ; that smote and wounded the Members of the Churches for seeking after Christ, and took her vaile from her, which are unspotted, undefiled, either

Mat. 10.
10.

Cant. 5. 7.

First, of Romish pollutions, or
Secondly, of worldly courses.

Is

Is one; such congregations are,
First, few, as one to 60. or 80.

Secondly, at unity, or brotherly love one with another, as one body, though scattered into many places, as *England, Scotland, Germany, &c.* In all Christendom, some Churches are more chaste, milde, and unspotted than others, even of the same countrey; and yet such are but few, and though few, yet at entire unity, as one body.

Verse 9.

The onely one of her Mother, the choicest one of her that bare her.] In the Hebrew phrase, the whole is the Mother, the parts are the Members. The true Catholique Church of Christ is the Mother of all Reformed Daughters; and these Daughter-Churches that are most chaste and milde, and undefiled, they are best esteemed, and best beloved of the Mother Catholique Church, as coming neereſt to her in chastity, innocency, purity, &c.

Verse 9.

The Daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the Queenes and the Concubines, and they praised her.] These Daughters, whether they be the members of the unspotted Churches mentioned in the former verse,

verse, either of both, together with these Churches that are as Queenes and Concubines, doe give honourable testimony of these Congregations that are most reformed, and wish them all prosperity, the good things of this life, and a better.

To blesse is more than to praise : Praise is the acknowledging of any good thing in her, but blessing is the acknowledgement,

First, of Divine good things : and

Secondly, those drawing the Churches and themselves therein neerer to God.

Who is shee that looketh forth as the morning, &c.] In these verses, the calling and arising of the Church of the Jewes is described by six Arguments :

Verse 10.
13.

First, by the unexpectednesse of her arising, joyned with the admiration of it, *Who is shee that looketh forth ?* ver. 10.

Secondly, by the place of her arising, the morning or the East Countries.

Thirdly, by the degrees and beauty of her grace.

First, fresh as the morning.

Secondly,

Secondly, faire as the Moon.

Thirdly, bright and cleer as the Sun.

Fourthly, *terrible as an army with Banners*, ver.10.

Fourthly, by Christs visitation of her with the end of it, ver.11.

Fifthly, by the unexpected helpes which this Church found for her return, *verse 12.*

Sixthly, by the earnestnesse of her calling given her, *Return, Return*, foure times repeated.

Who is this that looketh forth?] These words expresse the unexpected admirable arising of a new Church; and that after the Reformed Churches of the Gentiles; she is a *Shulamite*, alluding to *Salem*, the ancient name of *Jerusalem*, the Mother City of the Jewes.

This Church then thus arising, is that of the Jewes which we look for; whose beginning for sudden conversion of multitudes, shall be admirable to themselves and others.

As the morning.] Her arising is resembled by the morning,

First, because this Church shall arise from the Easterne Countries.

Secondly,

Chap.3.6.

Isa.66.8.
& 49.12.

Rev 16.
12.

Secondly, her arising shall be like a new Resurrection from the dead.

Thirdly, her arising shall be speedily, as the same phrase intimates.

Faire as the Moone, bright as the Sunne.]

The Moone is faire by beauty communicated to her from the Sun. In the Suns brightnesse is light, heat, refreshing, and all in a glorious manner. The Citizens of that Church shall all at that time, or at least the body of them, have their sins forgiven them by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. They shall enjoy abundant light of heavenly knowledge. They shall excell in purity of holinesse. They shall abound in consolations to the refreshing of themselves and others.

Terrible as an army with Banners.]

Read *Rev. 19. 14, 21.* The Armies of the Jewes shall be terrible to the Turkes and Tartars, and to the false Prophet then driven from Rome by ten Christian Princes, and associating himselfe to the Turke for succour.

I went downe into the Garden of Nuts.]

The Jewish Synagogues, so called, because of that voice of hardnesse and
N blindnesse

Rom. 11.

15.

Isa. 58. 8.

and 60,

19, 20.

Isa. 6. 12,

20. and

24. 23.

Isa 33. 24

& 60. 21

Isa. 59. 21.

Zech. 14.

20, 21.

Isa. 66. 10,

11.

Ezek. 38.

& 39. cha.

Rom. 11.
8, 10.
2 Cor. 3.
14, 15.

blindnesse drawne over their hearts, as it were a hard Nut-shell over the Kernell,

To see the fruits of the vallies.] Valleys lying in the shade between two mountaines, bring forth fruit late: so the Jewes are long before they bring forth fruit unto Christ.

To see whether the Vine flourished, and the Pomegranates budded.] The Jewes, that for hardnesse of heart, are like a Garden of Nuts; yet when their conversion shall be wrought, will be as Vines and Pomegranates, bring forth sweet and wholesome fruits to the refreshing of God and Man.

Judges 9.
13.

Or ever I was aware, my soule made me like the Charets of Amminadab.] Or set mee upon the Charets of a willing people; not that any thing cometh at unawares to Christ in his owne person; but because to his Ministers, that in his Name shall goe into this Garden of Nuts.

The Jewes shall appeare unexpectedly, prepared to embrace Christs calling: they shall finde the Jewes as Charets of willing people, ready to march with them,

them, whithersoever in Christs Name they shall call ; their soule should no sooner desire it, but they should be set in all readinesse ; where also is intimated the willing readinesse of a willing people among the Gentiles to convey the Jewes into their Country, with Charets, and Horses, and Dromedaries.

Isa 66. 20.
and 49.
23, 24.

Returne, returne, O Shulamite : returne, returne, that wee may looke upon thee : what will yee see in the Shulamite ? as it were the company of two Armies.

Verse 13.

Returne, returne, O Shulamite, returne.] This call so often repeated, doth imply,

Isai. 62. v.
67.

First, the earnestnesse of the Ministers that shall them.

Secondly, the haste that they would have them to make in going through with their conversion.

That wee may looke upon thee, or behold thee.] It is the desire of the Ministers, and of all the faithfull, to behold this glorious Church when shee shall be called.

What will ye see in the Shulamite ?] But, as it were, the company of two Armies, or the hoste of *Mahanaim*.

Gen 32.
1, 2.

This is spoken, either because the Jewes shall, presently upon their conversion, marshall and ranke themselves into Armies against *Gog* and *Magog*, *ver. 10.* where she is said to arise *terrible as an Army with Banners*. Or else taking the word properly; the holy Ghost compareth the Jewes to an hoste of Angels, which *Jacob* saw at *Mahanaim*: as indeed the feeble at that day shall be as valiant as the Angels of God. This Interpretation seemeth to me to be the more likely, because her warlike provision was before mentioned, *ver. 10.* Or, otherwise, the holy Ghost may allude to the hoste of Israel and Judah, which went to bring up *David* from *Mahanaim* to *Ferusalem*, after the Israelites were brought to see their errours in casting him off for *Absolom*: So shall the Jewes at their conversion assemble for the establishment of the Kingdome and Throne of Christ among them, after they shall be brought to see their foule errours in casting off Christ so unworthily so long a time.

The first Use of this is for discerning a different estate of all Christian Churches and Congregations, and triall of our owne

Gen. 32. 1.
Zech. 12.
8.

2 Sam. 19.
9, 10, 14,
43.

use 1.

owne Parishes. In one of these rankes every Congregation is found, either a Queene, a Concubine, or a Damosell, or a Dove: If we have freely consented to the entertainment of a faithfull Ministry, coming to us in the Name of Christ; if we bring with us to him a sufficient dowry for his maintenance: If the Word of God shall be powerfully dispensed amongst us, and the opening and shutting of the Kingdome of Heaven, and withall the Key of Discipline be not neglected: If our Congregations bring forth many children to God, partakers of the Heavenly Inheritance, then are our Congregations as chiefe Wives, as Queenes to Jesus Christ. But if our Ministers finde not conjugall and free acceptance from us; if we be not willing to provide for them comfortable and honourable maintenance: If the Word be not so dispensed that the people may finde themselves in good or evill estates: If our Congregations bring not forth regenerate Christians to partake of the heavenly Inheritance, then are they but as Concubines in the sight of God:

2 Cor. 5.
20.

If wee have yet no Ministers that wooe us, and beseech us to be reconciled to Christ; or if they doe, yet we coily put them off with delayes, or refuses, then are wee Damosels, but neither Queenes nor Concubines. But if wee finde all the properties of Queenes belonging unto us, and withall, finde a love and care to keepe our selves chaste to Christ, and innocent to man, and undefiled, and unspotted, both of the World and of *Rome*, then are we Doves to Christ Jesus, choicest children of the true Catholick Church.

use 2.

A second Use is for a discerning of a different estate of all Christian souls, and triall of our owne estates before God; if our hearts have never yet been called and knocked at by the lively Word of Gods Ordinances, or if wee have coily put off our Repentance to this day, or refuse to hearken to Christ, then are we Damosels. If we bring forth seed of Righteousnesse to Christ, by reason we are under the government of such who will require it, and well may command it of us, wee are but as Concubines. But if we freely

ly condescend to receive and embrace Christ into our hearts with entire conjugall affection, and give up our selves to him to bring forth the fruits of his Spirit, and are enabled to governe our selves and families after his will, then are wee Royall Spouses unto Christ Jesus, and keep our selves to Christ chaste, innocent, and undefiled, and endeavour to *cleanse our selves from all filthinesse of flesh and spirit*; then are wee as Doves unto Jesus Christ.

2 Cor.7.1

A third Use to direct and instruct Ministers and people how to approve themselves and their Congregations in best sort unto Christ. Let not Ministers thrust themselves upon their people against their consents, but let their people freely accept them, and comfortably maintaine them: Let the Ministers be faithfull in dispensing Gods Ordinances, and the people obedient, to give up themselves to Christ and his trueth, till both grow up to heavenly and holy purity of worship and life; so shall our Congregations be as Queenes and Doves to Jesus Christ.

use 3.

A fourth Use may be to encourage

use 4.

N 4

men

men to waies of spotlesse Innocency; they are not disgracefull, but blessed of the Faithfull, and praised, even of them that are without.

use 5.

Fifthly, to reprove the children of the Separation, who reproach the Church instead of blessing or praising them.

use 6.

Sixthly, this may teach us to expect a powerfull and glorious calling of the Jewes in all the particulars before described: say, They be now, as *Gideons* Fleece, dry; when the Gentiles are moistened with heavenly dew, they shall again be moistened when we shall seem dry in comparison of them. Though *Leah* step first into *Jacob's* Bed, and so the lesse comely Church of the Gentiles into the fellowship with Christ; yet the Church of the Jewes, as beautifull as *Rachel*, shall in the end finde fellowship with Christ.

The glory of their calling appeares in the Text, because the holy Ghost describes her by comparisons, not fetched from earthly flowers, or metals, or jewels; but from heavenly lights, the Morning Moon, Sun.

It appeareth further in their unexpected and free readinesse to embrace Christ.

The

The power of their calling appeares in their earnestnesse and zeale of their Ministry, in breaking the hard shell of their hearts wherewith they were formerly inclosed, *ver. 11.* In stirring them up to fight manfully, and terribly Gods battels against the enemies of the Church, *ver. 13.*

The Lord speedily hasten the coming of this *Shulamite*, that we may behold her, *Amen.*

THE TEXT.

CHAP. 7.



THE
The neck is as a tower of ivory: thine eyes
like the firs-poles in Lebanon, by the gate of Bath-
sheba: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which
reaches to the battlements: thy mouth is as an open
casket, and thy lips are like two young roes
that are twins.



Thine head upon thee as the Carmel, and
the faire of thine head like purple, the King is sold
in the galleries.

How

THE
CANTICLES,
OR
SONG OF SONGS
opened and explained.

THE TEXT.

CHAP. 7.

How beautifull are thy feet with shooes, O Princess Daughter! the joynts of thy thighes are like Jewels, the worke of the hands of a cunning workman.

2 Thy navell is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy belly is like an heap of wheat, set about with lilies.

3 Thy two breasts are like two young Roes that are twins.

4 Thy neck is as a tower of Ivory: thine eyes like the fish-pooles in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus.

5 Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the haire of thine head like purple, the King is beld in the galleries.

6 How

6 How faire, and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!

7 This thy stature is like a palme tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.

8 I said, I will goe up to the palme tree, I will take hold of the boughes thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples.

9 And the roose of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved that goeth downe sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleepe to speake.

10 I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards mee.

11 Come, my beloved, let us goe forth into the field: let us lodge in the villages.

12 Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appeare, and the pomegranats bud forth, there will I give thee my loves.

13 The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

THE

THE EXPLANATION.

THis Chapter to the end of the fourth verse of the eighth Chapter, describeth a foure-fold estate of the Jewish Church. When they shall come to be converted unto the Lord: to wit,

First, as it shall be in gathering and growing up, *ver. 1, 5.*

Secondly, as it shall be, growne up to her Stature and Maturity, *ver. 6, 7.*

Thirdly, as it shall be further enlarged by the accessse of the Gentiles, *ver. 8, 10.*

Fourthly, as it shall multiply and stretch it selfe into the Country villages, and throughout the Land of Israel, *vers. 11.*

—*ver. 4. of Chap. 8.*

That in *vers. 11.* the Church inviteth Christ, and with him her selfe to have recourse into the Country villages, is plaine in the words of the former verses, which set forth a three-fold estate of the *Shulamite* converted, is evident by the Repetition of the verses, *verse 3, 7, 8.* and all with some difference; and the breasts are so described, *verse 3.* and set forth an unsettled Ministry, quickly stirring up
and

and down to gather this Church and the scattered Members of it.

This Church then in gathering, is described by ten parts; Feet, Joynts of Thighes, Navell, Belly, Breasts, Necke, Eyes, Nose, Head, Haire.

How beautifull are thy feet with shooes, O Princes Daughter! the joynts of thy thighes are like Jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.

Verse 1.

How beautifull are thy feet with shooes, O Princes daughter!] In her feet shod with shooes there is a three-fold beauty: for it implyeth,

First, her returne out of Captivity; as on the contrary, bare feet is a signe of going into Captivity.

Secondly, her challenging and recovery of her lost Inheritance in Israel, *Ruth* 4. ver. 7, 8.

Isai. 20.

1, — 4.

Deut. 25.

ver. 9.

Thirdly, her walking in that peace of conscience which the Gospel prepareth: whereas he that walketh bare-foot, either gathereth a thick brawny skin upon the soles of his feet; or if his feet be more tender, hee pricketh them ever and anon with thornes, or little sharp stones, as scruples: a conscience not furnished with
true

Eph 6. 15.

true peace, either waxeth senselesse and brawny, or else scrupulous and anxious: all the three things are beautifull and glorious; as on the contrary, it is a great disturbance and deformity to goe into captivity, to sell and foregoe a mans Inheritance, to walke unquietly and uncomfortably: and if it be beautifull and glorious to returne out of bodily captivity, and to recover the earthly Inheritance; how much more is it together with these outward things, to joyne a returne out of spirituall captivity, and recovery of an everlasting Inheritance, as the Jewes shall doe at their conversion:

O Princes Daughter !] So called,
First, because they are borne of God,
the Prince of Princes.

Secondly, the Jewes converted shall be of much glory and authority, even as the Kings of the Earth.

The joynts of thy thighes, &c.] The word signifies whole bones of the thighes; they, for their apt and ready turning in their conversion to God, are like well wrought precious Jewels, the work of the hand of God, the Spirituall work-
man

man of all the workes of the Church.

Thy navell, &c. thy belly is like the navell, &c.] The navell and belly are both hidden parts, not conspicuous to them without; and therefore set forth the two Mysteries, or Sacraments of the Church, Baptisme, and the Lords Supper. The Navell, serving for the nourishing of the Infant in the wombe, resembleth Baptisme, nourishing Infants, and new born babes in the womb of the Church.

It wanteth not liquor:

First, of the Spirit of Christ to sanctifie and cleanse us from sin.

The belly: to wit, the Lords Supper, is as an heap of wheat, for store of excellent, and sweet, and fine nourishment, set about with lilies; because onely the faithfull pure Christians shall be admitted to partake in that Sacrament.

The Lords Table shall not be set about with weeds, profane and scandalous sinners, but with *Lilies*, worthy Communicants.

Thy two breasts (the Teachers of that Church) *are like two young Roes:* For their agility, skipping up and down to suckle the converts; implying that the first Mi-

nistry

nistry of the Jewes, at the conversion of that people shall rather be as the Evangelists, bound to no certain place, than as Pastors fixed to any settled Congregation, which yet outwardly they shall be.

That are twins.]

First, for their likenesse in disposition.

Secondly, brotherly equality.

Verse 4.

Thy necke is as a tower of Ivory : thine eyes like the fish-pooles in Heshbon ; by the gate of Bath-rabbim : thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus.

Chap.4.
verse 4.

Thy necke is as a tower of Ivory.] The neck (as above) is the faith of the Church, joyning Christ and his Church together, as the neck doth the head and body.

1 Pet. 1.7.
2 Pet. 1.1.

As a tower, for strength ; *of Ivory,* for preciousnesse, for which faith is commended.

Thine eyes are like the fish-pooles in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim.] For the abundance of water, meaning teachers, that they shall yeeld even teares of Repentance at their conversion ; partly, for the

the great wrong they had done our Saviour; partly, to consider the unspeakable and undeserved kindnesse of God towards them.

Thy nose is like the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus.] There was a double house of the Forrest of *Lebanon*, the one in Jerusalem, built by *Solomon*, so called by way of resemblance: in which hee put his golden shields, whence *Shishak* taking them, is said to take them out of Jerusalem: of this House speaketh *Isaiah*, Chap.22.ver.8.

There was another House built in the Forrest of *Lebanon*, as appeareth by this place, which is said to look toward *Damascus*, to distinguish it from the other which is in Jerusalem.

Lebanon it selfe stood in the utmost Confines of Israel, Northwards towards Syria: and therefore this House built in *Lebanon* is said to look toward *Damascus*, the chiefe City of Syria. Now *Lebanon* being full of all manner of sweet and fragrant trees, and shrubs, and spices; the tower built in *Lebanon* must needs be compassed with the sweet smelling odours, to the great refreshing and de-

Zech.12.
10.

Jerem.3.
8,—9. &
50.4.

1 King.7
2. & 10.
17.
1 King.11
25,—26.

light of such as should lodge in it.

2 Cor. 2.
15.

Hence the nose of this pure Church is compared to this tower; because they that dwell in this Church shall be wonderfully refreshed with the sweet odours of the Ministry, which is the sweet favour of life unto life: as also with the favoury conference of good Christians, and their faithfull and godly conversation.

Verse 5.

Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the haire of thine head like purple; the King is held in the galleries.

Isa. 339.
and 35. 2.
1 Sam. 15.
ver. 17.

Thine head upon thee is like Carmel.] Carmel excelled for fruit, and fulnesse in feeding cattell, and therefore is reckoned with Lebanon, and Sharon, and Bashan, famous for fertility.

The head of the Church under Christ is the Civill Magistrate. The meaning then is, that the Magistrate of this Church shall yeeld store of sound and sweet nourishment to the people, by giving and maintaining free passage to each holy Ordinance of God, and also by wholesome Lawes; and lastly, by good example of godly life.

The haire of thy head like purple.] The haire;

haire; whether it be the common Christians of the Church that hang upon Christ, or the Officers or Servants that hang upon the Magistrates of that Church, they are like purple.

First, not onely died in crimson blood of Christ.

Isa 33.24
and 63. 1.

Secondly, but also of a royall hue, as purple is a princely dye; all of them as Princes.

Cant 7.1.
Zech. 12.
ver. 8.

The Officers and Exacters shall be Peace and Righteousnesse.

Revel. 16
12.

These Officers shall not basely sharke for bribes, nor exact for fees, nor oppresse for filthy lucre, nor picke holes in mens estates to trouble the people and enrich themselves; but like purple cloathed Princes, be like their Ministers, and honour both their Ministers and themselves with Peace and Righteousnesse.

Isa. 60. 17
and 18.

The King is held in the Rasters.] For so the word is turned before, where the Rasters were understood partly of the Temple. *Held*, is alwaies (to my remembrance) used for holding by constraint, bound as a Prisoner. The meaning may be then, That the King, or chiefe Magistrate is bound to be present

Cant 1.
17.

Ezek. 46.
10.

Psal. 149.
6, 8, & 9. v.
Isa. 49. 22.

use 1.

at the Ordinances of God in the Temple. The Prince is commanded to goe in with them, when they goe out, hee shall goe out with them together; hee shall come in with the first, and go out with the last: Or what if it imply that their greatest Magistrates shall submit themselves to be bound with the Censures of the Church, according to that where the Psalmist telleth of binding of Kings with the Ordinances of God in the Church. And *Isaiah* foretelleth that Kings and Queenes shall bow downe their faces towards the earth unto the Church, and licke the dust of their feet; both their Interpretations stand well together.

First, this doth shew us how to come and appeare beautifull in the eyes of the Lord Jesus: which is when we turne our feet from the estate and wayes, and bondage of sinne and Satan, and come out of the captivity into the liberty of his children, when we claime our Inheritance of the Kingdome of heaven, seeking after it above all earthly blessings, and walking towards it; when we walke confidently in a Christian course, then Christ admireth

reth our beauty. How beautifull are thy goings with shooes, *O Princes Daughter!* Yea, Christ then esteemeth us as Princes children: what matter then if foolish men account us Peasants, and our going with shooes as straight in the instep? But wee stand not, nor fall not to their judgements, but to his who shall judge us to eternall happinesse, or misery at the last day. His word must not stand when heaven and earth shall fall: If he account us vessels of honour, wee are so indeed, who is it that dishonoureth us? If men should cast a vessell of gold or silver into the mire, and trample upon it, yet the vessell is still a vessell of honour, good, and rich, and precious; the mire may easily be washed off from such vessels. Be not discouraged then from Christian courses by foolish feares of reproach: The truth is, if wee goe on in sinne, Christ esteemeth of us as base peasants, as ugly and abominable in his sight, naked, bare, deformed, and defiled; yea, he esteemeth our goings as going bare-foot, which either, first, braw-neth our feet with a thick skin, that there-by we grow insensible and feele nothing: or secondly, pricketh us with unne-

Mat. 5. 18.

2 Tim. 2.
Ver. 21.

cessary scruples and feares.

1sc 2.

Secondly, we may from hence observe to whom the praise of the conversion of the forwardest Christians is due; to wit, to the hands of a cunning workman, the God of power and peace. We might be also called as often to retutne, as the *Shulamite* in the last verse of the former Chapter: and yet unlesse this cunning workman put the bones of our thighes into joynt, we shall not retorne to him.

1sc 3.

Further, see here the use of Baptisme, even to infants. The Anabaptists object, that Infants can receive no benefit by it, because they yet receive no understanding, no benefit by the Word: As if Infants cannot receive nourishment by the Navell, though they can neither take, nor chew, nor sucke meat with hand or mouth: Baptisme is the Navell by which Infants are nourished in the Church.

1sc 4.

Fourthly, from this Navell, never wanting liquor; observe, there doth never want just matter of instruction and comfort to be fetched from our Baptisme against all temptations. Doth Satan detain thee from obeying thine effectuall calling: Remember in Baptisme from
thine

Comfort
in Ba-
ptisme.

thine Infancy thou wast admitted into the family of Christ; doth hee trouble thee with feares and doubts, that thy finnes are not pardoned? Behold thy Baptisme is full of liquor of Christs blood, to justifie thee from all thy finnes: Doth Satan tempt thee to defile thy selfe with any sin? Behold thou art washed solemnly in Baptisme from all sinne, and wilt thou defile thy selfe against thy Baptisme?

Fifthly, in the Lords Supper, see what plenty of excellent, sound, and sweet nourishment is offered to us, even an heap of wheat: *Christs flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed.* There is al-sufficient nourishment for an hungry soule; this serveth to quicken our appetite to this heavenly banquet.

Sixthly, observe what manner of persons should be admitted to the Lords Table, and how wee should prepare our selves thereto. This heap of wheat is not to be set about with stinking weeds, but with faire lilies: Cleanse our selves then from all scandalous finnes, yea, and from all secret finnes, to our best endeavours, so shall wee be fet about

use 5.

John 6.
55.

use 6.

this heape of wheat, the Lords Table.

Seventhly, note that Ministers, to be like Roes, skipping up and down to gather and suckle the children of the Church, is fitter for a Church in gathering, than convenient in a Church constituted; for then the breasts hang in their place like clusters of Grapes upon the branches of the Vine, *v. 7, 8*. But they must be breasts giving suck, not dry nurses; that is their duty in every estate of the Church. Or, if their people be grown up in Christ to fittest for strong meat, then they to be full in a stronger liquor than milke, as clusters of Grapes, full of wines.

Eighthly, see the beauty and commendation of three cardinall graces:

First, Faith, to be

First, strong.

Secondly, precious, applying the precious promises, and making us rich with them.

Secondly, Repentance to abound in brokenness of spirit through godly sorrow, melting into abundance of teares, or other affections suitable thereto.

Thirdly, Obedience, to be

First, fragrant.

Secondly,

Secondly, and that with all manner of sweet fruits and good, that all that converse with us may smell a sweet savour from our conversation.

Ninthly, marke here a lesson for Magistrates, to be as *Carmell*, yeelding some sweet and plentiful nourishment to the people.

use 9.

First, by procuring free passage to Gods Ordinances, whence *Jehosaphat's* Nobles are said to teach.

2 Chr. 1. 7
& 7. 9.

Secondly, by making wholesome Lawes.

Thirdly, by giving good example of life, to have no Officers hanging about them of base demeanour, exacters, promoters, contentious persons, but such as may execute it themselves and their Ministers, and for publick Ordinances of Gods worship; it is no disparagement to Magistrates to behave themselves reverently in them, and to submit themselves unto them as unto Christ.

Tenthly, from this compleat description of the beauty of the Church in all her parts; observe,

use 10.

First, that the Church was never so compleatly beautifull in all her parts, as it

1 Cor. 11.
20.

it shall be when the Jewes are called. The Apostolique Primitive Church, though all faire, yet wanted this head-like *Carmel*, a Christian Magistrate, yea and some purity of the Sacrament.

Secondly, in that he beginneth this description from the feet, and so ascendeth to the head in order: It may seeme the calling of the Jewes shall begin at first, rather with some of the lowest people, and so ascend higher and higher to more eminent persons.

Thirdly, in that the Church neither here (where so many of her members are set forth) nor in all this Song is described, by the beauty of her hands, or fingers, wee must not gather that therefore this Church will be barren of good works, God forbid, but rather conceive, Christ concealeth the mention of her hands; to wit, her works, partly,

First, because the Harlot of *Rome* so delighteth so much to boast of her hands, of her workes, which indeed shee wants: Christ had rather his Church should abound in good workes in silence, than boast of them, especially when they are wanting.

Secondly,

Secondly, because it is he alone (and not wee) *that worketh all our workes for us.*

Cantic. 7. vers. 6. — vers. 4. of 8. Chap. How faire, &c.

Isa. 26. 12.
Hos. 14. 8.
Joh. 15. 5.

In these verses the holy Ghost goes on to describe the second estate of the Jewes Church, as is spoken above, *Chap. 7. ver. 1. in ver. 6, 7. as grown up to her full stature and maturity.*

For first, beauty is not observed till full growth; now here her beauty is admired, *verse 6.*

Secondly, her stature is expressely mentioned to be a Palme-tree, *ver. 7.*

Thirdly, her breasts are here mentioned againe, *ver. 7.* shew that he speaketh not of the same estate of the Church as afore. Besides, the breasts yeelding wine in stead of milke, it is a signe the Church shall then be grown to more maturity and fitnessse to be fed with stronger meat.

The Church of the Jewes then come to her fuller growth is here described,

First, by her beauty, which is admirable, *How faire!* and joyned with pleasure, *How pleasant art thou!* especially for publick worship so described, *ver. 6.*

Secondly,

Secondly, by her stature, resembled to a palme-tree, *ver. 7.*

Thirdly, her breasts resembled to clusters of Grapes, *ver. 7.*

The third estate of this Church, as it shall be further enlarged by the acceffe of the Gentiles, is described, *ver. 8, 10.* and that

First, by Christs climbing this palm-tree, and taking hold of the boughes of it, *verse 8.*

Secondly, by the rich supply of nourishment from her breasts, *ver. 8.*

Thirdly, by the smell of her nose, resembled to Apples, *ver. 8.*

Fourthly, by the power of her Doctrine, *ver. 9.*

Fifthly, by her familiar fellowship with Christ, *ver. 10.*

The fourth estate of this Church, as it shall multiply, and stretch it selfe into the Country villages, is described, *verse 11.* to the fourth of the next Chapter, and that

First, by the occasion of this encrease, the Churches invitement of Christ to visit the Country villages, *ver. 11, 12.*

Secondly,

Secondly, by the affectionate service of this Church to Christ, *Chapter 8. ver. 1,2.*

Thirdly, by Christs affectionate embracing of her, *ver. 3.*

Fourthly, by the Churches desire for the continuance of this estate without interruption, *ver. 4.*

How faire, and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!

How faire!] The fairenesse and beauty of the Church implyeth sutablely to what is found in the naturall beauty of the body.

First, a compleat integrity of all the Members of this Church; where any Member is wanting, there is deformity, beauty is blemished. This Church shall want then no Ordinances of God, nor any such Members to whom the dispensation of each Ordinance belongeth.

Secondly, a fit proportion of all the Members of the Church one to another; no swellings, no convulsions.

Thirdly, a good colour in the outward face of things, all carried decently, and in order: *How faire!* It implyeth admirable beauty in all these respects.

How

How pleasant for delights !] This word implyeth a ready willingnesse of this Church to the publique worship of God, which is here called delights; as being the marriage bed wherein Christ most familiarly solaceth himselfe with his Church.

Psal. 110.

3.

2 Cor. 9.

7.

This ready willingnesse of this Church was fore-told, and the willingnesse of this people to any service of his is pleasant to him.

O love !] As if the Church were so lovely, that it were even love it selfe.

The five former verses described the Church in her severall Members apart. This verse considereth the whole body met together in publick duties.

Verse 7.

This thy stature is like to a palme-tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.

This thy stature is like to a Palme-tree.]

This tree is eminent,

First, for her straightnesse.

Secondly, for her talenesse.

Jer. 17. 8.

Thirdly, for her perpetuall greennesse and fruitfulnessse, as that

Fourthly, for her thriving under weight pressing it down.

Fifthly, for her easinesse to be climbed,

bed, having many boughes, whereon to stay hands and feet: So shall the Church be eminent for uprightnesse therein, for growing up even against 'all oppositions of Gog and Magog, for ready entertaining of all the faithfull that shall come to her.

Plin. li. 13.
cap. 4.

Thy breasts are like the clusters of the vine-grapes.] Their Ministers such like in four respects:

First, not few, as afore, two young Roes, but many, as clusters.

Secondly, not stirring up and down, as Roes, from place to place, but hanging in their places.

Thirdly, full of strong liquor of sound Doctrine.

Fourthly, requiring some pressure in urging (though little) before they empty themselves, but upon easie pressure doing it plentifully.

I said, I will goe up to the Palme-tree, I will take hold of the boughes thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the Vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples.

Ver. 8.

I said, I will goe up to the Palme-tree, I will take hold of the boughes thereof.] Christ speakes of himselfe to imply the readinesse

readinesse of his members to resort and flock to this Church of the Jewes; for what Christs members doe by the guidance of his Spirit, hee accounteth it his owne action. This forwardnesse of the Gentiles to ascend and resort to Jerusalem, is elsewhere fore-told more plainly *.

* Zech. 8.
23.
Isai. 60.
8. 11.

Now also thy breasts as the clusters of the vine.] And that is notwithstanding the plenteous accesse of the Gentiles to the Church. Here shall be no defect of Ministers to teach and feed them all; but there shall be still a large supply of store, sweet and plentiful Teachers, as clusters of Grapes to refresh them all.

And the smell of thy nose like apples.] Notwithstanding this plenteous accesse of the Gentiles, the life of common Christians intainted with heathenish and popish unsavory pollutions; yet the Church her self, and they that live in it shall smell a fragrant savour of the good conversation of the people.

The smell of thy nose.] Not which the nose yeeldeth, but which is yeelded to the nose, to thy favoury discerning shall be sweet and comfortable, as that of apples.

Before,

Before, when this Church consisted of her owne people, her smell was as that of *Lebanon*, ver. 4. and now by the accessse of the Gentiles it shall not be corrupt. Indeed when the Israelites came out of Egypt, the mingled of the Gentiles with them, drew them away to murmuring and lusting; for this compare *Exodus* 12. 38. with *Numb.* 11. 4. But no such contagion shall accrue to this Church by the mingling of the Gentiles with them.

And the roose of thy mouth like the best wines, for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.

Verse 9.

And the roose of thy mouth like the best wines. Hebr. *Like good wine, going to my beloved most straightly and rightly.* That is, the Doctrine of the Church shall be as ever any most sweet and powerfull, and comfortable, and generous wine; it shall ever goe, or tend directly to Christ, alwaies aiming at the preaching of him.

To goe rightly, or straightly, implyeth the strength and generousnesse of wine, when it sparkleth upward in the cup, as *Proverb.* 23. 31. which here expresseth the lively vigour of the Churches Doctrine,

A. 2. 11,
13.

Verse 10.

in her preaching of Christ, *causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak*. Such shall be the sweet and powerfull efficacy of the Doctrine of the Church then, as shall cause the sleepey and drowsie professors, whether amongst us Gentiles, or amongst the Jewes, to open their mouthes and speak plentifully to Gods praise. When the Apostles spake (the wonderfull works of God) in strange tongues, some of the people thought them to be full of new wine, but they were deceived, and were willing so to account of them in mockery. But these people shall be full of new wine of the Spirit and Word of God, to open their mouthes to speak as the Apostles did, the wonderfull workes of God.

I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards mee.

This profession of the Church, that she is her beloveds, argueth,

First, her familiar fellowship with Christ.

Secondly, her faith, or confidence of her interest in him, or his in her.

Thirdly, her open profession of the same.

That his desire is towards her, argueth
the

the strength of his affection toward her, and it is the same word used *, which there implyeth two things :

Gen. 3. 16
& 4. 7.

First, the strength of their affection to their husband, and their elder brother.

Secondly, the subordination and dependance thereof upon their will : the former is here also meant, the latter doth not stand with the Sovereignty and Headship of Christ over his Church : Unlesse thus farre, to intimate Christs tender regard of the will and desire of his Church ; as hee would be as unwilling to deny them, as loving husbands be to deny their wives any thing.

Ephes. 5.
23, 24.

Come my beloved, let us goe forth into the field : let us lodge in the villages.

Verse 11

In these words, the Church inviteth Christ to visit the Country villages about her, implying,

First, her prayers to Christ, that with her he might lodge there, plant and set Churches there.

Secondly, her care to take and observe all opportunities to advance such a work.

Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender

Ver. 12.

grape appeare, and the pomegranats bud forth, there will I give thee my loves.

Verse 12.

Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish.] Meaning if any opportunity should offer it selfe, to plant Religion amongst them; then Christ and shee might be forward to further the same.

Thirdly, her promise to Christ to employ her best endeavours to such a service.

Joh. 21.
15.

There will I give thee my loves.] The love of the Church to Christ is especially seen in feeding his Lambes and Sheep: She therefore offereth to Christ free use of her dearest and best affections to set forward such a work.

Fourthly, her discerning of some good beginning of such a work.

Verse 13.

The Mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

Gen. 30.
14.

The Mandrakes give a smell.] Which is a Country field herb, yet amiable, which argueth some fruits to be gathered in the Country.

And at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits,

fruits, new and old.] And therefore, out of the abundance of her owne store, she can supply the Country with all fit helps, to her further gathering and establishment.

Which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.] She professeth her desire to employ all her store to Christs advantage, and therefore abounding with Ministers, and other fit Officers for gathering and establishing the Country Churches about her, she expresseth her readinesse to bring them out to his service and use, as if they were some good household provision, laid up by her for such a use. The accessse of the whole Land of Israel to the City is profitable. The Land shall be called *Ben-lah*, as well as the City *Hephzibah*, ver. 10. A Causey is cast up for a mutuall recourse of Country to City.

Isai.62.4.

THE
CANTICLES,
OR
SONG OF SONGS
opened and explained.

THE TEXT.

CHAP. 8.

O That thou wert as my brother that sucked the breasts of my mother ! when I should finde thee out, I would kisse thee , yet I should not be despised.

2 I would lead thee , and bring thee into my mothers house , who would instruct me : I would cause thee to drinke of spiced wine , of the juyce of my pomegranate.

3 His left hand should be under my head , and his right hand should embrace me.

4 I charge you , O daughters of Jerusalem, that yee stirre not up, nor awake my love untill hee please.

5 (*Who is this that cometh up from the Wildernesse, leaning upon her beloved ?*) I raised thee up under the apple tree : there thy mother brought thee forth, there she brought thee forth that bare thee.

6 Set

6 Set me as a seale upon thy heart, as a seale upon thine arme : for love is as strong as death, jealousie is cruell as the grave : the coales thereof are coales of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.

7 Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it : if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.

8 We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts, what shall we doe for our sister, in the day when she shall be spoken for ?

9 If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver : and if she be a doore, we will inclose her with boards of Cedar.

10 I am a wall, and my breasts like towers : then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.

11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baul-Hamon, he let out the vineyard unto Keepers : every one for the fruit thereof, was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.

12 My vineyard which is mine, is before me : thou (O Solomon) must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof, two hundred.

13 Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice, cause me to heare it.

14 Make haste my beloved, and be thou like to a Roe, or to a young Hart upon the mountaine of spices.

THE EXPLANATION.

THe Church of the Jewes, both in City and Country thus gathered, doe here expresse her ardent affection to Christ, and due respect of him, which the old Synagogue shewed towards her whilest he was conversant amongst them in the flesh. (Since saith she) *O that thou wert as my brother, &c.* Christ was made our brother by taking our Nature upon him at his Incarnation, and then he sucked the breasts of the Church, attending to the Ministry of *John*, and other Jewish Teachers: she therefore to shew her affection, desireth that he were now amongst them conversant in their streets againe in bodily presence, she would not doe then as the old Synagogue did, be ashamed of him, or come to him by night; but shee would kisse him, and embrace him in the open streets, and yet no man should then despise her for her so doing, as they did; but every one should encourage her in her obsequiousnesse to him: She would not reject him, and thrust him out of the Synagogue, as her old Ancestors had done;

John 4.
3, 49.

Luke 4.
1, 29.

done; but if she found him without, shee would lead him, and invite him into their Synagogue, or Temple, there to instruct her, and teach her the will of her father; she would not give him gall to eat, and vinegar to drink, as her forefathers had done; but she would cause him to drinke of the best delicate spiced wine, and the juice of her Pomegranate.

Mat. 27.
34.

His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.

Verse 3.

The left hand of Christ is the Christian Magistrate, which shall in those daies support and advance the Church, and hold up her head.

His right hand is the faithfull Ministers, which shall speake comfortable things to her heart, and so embrace her, *Isai. 62.* for this also see, * *I charge you, O daughters of Ferusalem, that you stirre not up, nor awake my love untill he please.*

Ezek. 33.
23, 24, 25
Dan 7. 27

* Cant. 2.
6.

The Church enjoying these great mercies and blessings from Christ, chargeth all her daughters, members, to walk so thankfully, and fruitfully towards God, and lovingly and helpfully one towards another, and so circumspectly, and inoffensively to them which are without, that

no

Chap. 2.
verse 7.
Chap. 3.
verse 5.

Isai. 65.
25.

Use 1.

Isai. 66.
11, 12.

Use 2.

no occasion be given of their alteration of their happy estate. When the Church gave this charge before, it was in regard of the Roes and Hindes of the field; fearefull Christians coming on towards Religion, willing to flock, and feed, and converse with the sheep, yet ready to start and flee away upon any feare of danger of persecution; but now no regard is had of these fearefull ones; for they that shall then remaine fearefull, when the Church shall enjoy so great light and safety, they shall be quite excluded from conversing with the Church.

For use, we may here learn,

First, since the Church of the Jewes shall attaine to so great beauty, it ought to kindle our desire to pray earnestly for their conversion, that we may behold the admirable fairenesse thereof, and be delighted with her consolations.

Secondly, this doth teach us how to approve our selves pleasant and faire in Christs eyes, even by keeping his Ordinances in integrity, and simplicity, and by a willing readinesse to frequent the same.

Christ may see all the world, as he did
when

when Satan * shewed it to him, and yet not admire it, yea, condemne it for vanity, as it is *; but a well ordered Church, and ready, he admireth.

Thirdly, here learn the more straight and sincere, the more patient and meek, the more faithfull, the more fruitfull in all holy obedience, &c. the more doe we attaine to a Palm-tree, like full stature of Christianity.

Fourthly, it may learne and direct Ministers to apply themselves to the estate of their people: If they be babes in Christ, to be as breasts of milke to suckle them: If they be grown to ripe yeares, to be as clusters of grapes to refresh them with stronger liquor, be ready to poure out sweet and comfortable liquor; but see some good calling to pressing you to it, let all your Doctrine direct to Christ, and dispense it with such powerfull efficacy of the Spirit, that the drowsie slug-gard may be raised up to some fruitfulness, and more holy walking towards God.

Fifthly, this may teach townes well provided for, to lend their best care and help for the edifying and calling home of
Country

*Mat. 4. 8,
9.
Luk. 4. 5, 6
*Eccl. 1. 2,
14. & 2.
11, 15, 17,
19, 22, 26.
Use 3.

Use 4.

Use 5. 2

Country villages : Grudge not then at their ready resort to the gate of your Assemblies, but rather encourage them, that they may be partakers with them.

use 6.

Sixthly, this lets us see, that time shall come when forward profession shall be no disgrace; yea, men shall kisse Christ openly, and shall not be despised.

use 7.

Seventhly, the malignity of our Ancestors against Christ and his Gospel, must provoke us to more embracing of him, and more subjection to him.

use 8.

Eighthly, we may here see that a faithfull Ministry, and godly Magistracy is a pledge of Christs tender love, and kinde embracing of the Church.

use 9.

Ninthly, we are hence to take notice, that when a Church enjoyeth many gracious and sweet blessings from Christ, it is good for her to see it and acknowledge it, and to be carefull that all her Members may so walk, as their happinesse be not interrupted. In the fourth verse the charge runneth thus, *That yee stirre not up, &c.* But in the Hebr. *Why should you stirre up, &c.* As who should say, when all things are throughly and fully reformed and settled: Why should you goe about any Innovation?

Innovation? This manner of charge was never uttered before, *Cant. 2. ver. 7.* to the end.

(Who is this that cometh up from the Wildernesse, leaning upon her beloved?) I raised thee up under the apple-tree: there thy mother brought thee forth, there she brought thee forth that bare thee.

Who is this that cometh up from the Wildernesse?] In these words the holy Ghost setteth out the calling and estate of two other Churches after the calling of the Jewes:

First, the one arising out of the Wildernesse, *ver. 5, 7.*

Secondly, the other a little sister, *ver. 8, 10.* together with the estate of the whole Church, as it shall then stand, from that time to the end of the world, *verse 11, 14.*

This Church coming up from the Wildernesse is discribed,

First, by the unexpectednesse of her arising, together with the admiration of the Jewish Churches there, *ver. 5. Who is this that cometh up out of the Wildernesse?*

Secondly, by the place of her arising, the Wildernesse.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, by her familiar fellowship with Christ, joyned with her confidence on him, *leaning upon her beloved.*

Fourthly, by the meanes of the gathering and raising of this Church, *I raised thee up under an apple-tree, &c. ver. 5.*

Fifthly, by her earnest desire of his deep affection to her, and continuall remembrance of her, *Set me as a seale upon thine heart, as a seale upon thine arme, ver. 6.* which petition of hers is urged by a motive, taken from the strength and depth of her affection to him, which she pro-
veth,

First, by comparing her affection as equal to three things most strong,

First, Death.

Secondly, to the Grave.

Thirdly, to vehement flames of fire,
verse 6.

Secondly, by comparing it to two things as lesse than her affection, though they be also of great force,

First, to many waters, which cannot quench her affection of love.

Secondly, to the whole substance of any mans house, which would be condemned if it were offered to withdraw her from Christ, *ver. 7.*

The

The calling and estate of the other Church, the little sister, is described by three passages,

First, by the consultation of the elder Sisters; to wit, of the Jewish Churches, and of that Church coming up out of the Wildernesse, what they shall doe for her when she shall be spoken of, *ver. 8.*

Secondly, by a resolution what they shall do for her, sutable to what her condition (as they shall finde her) shall require, *ver. 9.*

Thirdly, a satisfaction given by this little sister, to the elder, how her estate standeth, together with the cause thereof, Gods favour, that they may the better know what courses to take for her, *v. 10.*

The estate of the whole Church, as it shall stand after the conversion of the Jewes, and of those other Churches is set forth;

First, from Christs care for them, expressed,

First, in his watchfulnesse over them in his owne person, which he amplifies by the lesse care which *Solomon* had of his vineyard, committing the keeping of it to others, *ver. 11, 12.*

Secondly,

Secondly, in his charge to the Church, that he may heare her companions harkning unto her, *ver. 13.*

Secondly, by the Churches prayer unto Christ, that hee may hasten the translating of them into heaven in the end of the world, *verse 14.*

Who is this that cometh, &c.] Who these Churches should be that remaine to be called after the conversion of the Jewes and Gentiles, wee cannot conceive any more fitly than the Churches of *Assyria*; secondly, of *Egypt*, of which wee read *Isa. 19. 23, 25.* When a Church shall be elected among the Jewes, signified by *Ezekiels* goodly Temple, the water of Gods Spirit shall flow from thence Eastward, goe downe into the Desert, and from thence spread themselves farre and neere.

Ezek. 47.
1, 9.

This Desert, or Wildernesse Eastward from *Judah*, is the wildernesse of *Arabia*, whither Spirituall graces shall be conveyed by some coming from *Jerusalem*, and from thence they shall be further carried into the East Countries, to the gathering, and conversion of the *Assyrians* and others: Whence it is, that Church arising from

from the Wildernesse of *Arabia*, is said to leane upon her beloved in an *Arabian* word; as when the holy Ghost was to speak of the *Babylonian* Captivity (or Winter, being past, he useth the *Babylonian* or *Caldean* word. So then, when the Churches of *Judea* shall see such a goodly Church spring from some small helpe, out of the Wildernesse of *Arabia*, beyond their expectation, they shall say of her, *Who is this that cometh out of the Wildernesse, leaning upon her beloved?* trusting by faith on him, and thereby attaining and enjoying fellowship with him: for to leane is put as an act of faith or trusting*, and the gesture implyeth familiar love*. *[I raised thee under an apple-tree.]* Christ, or the Church of the Jewes by his power raised up his Church by the meanes of some inferiour Magistrate, resembled here by an Apple-tree, as before*: For though hee was not so high and mighty as the Cedars of *Lebanon*, or the Oakes of *Bashan*; yet eminent hee was, and his shadow good, and his fruit cordiall and comfortable.

And the meanes of the gathering of this Church, being at first but an inferi-

Q

our

Cant. 2. 11.

* Pro. 3. 5.
* John 13.
23. & 20.
20.

* Cant. 2.
ver. 3.

our Magistrate ; the Church had more need and use of faith to leane upon her beloved, when soveraigne authority did not countenance the work.

There thy mother brought thee forth.] To wit, the Mother-Church of the Jewes, or the Catholique, which is the Mother of us all.

Gal.4. 26.
Verse 6.

Set me as a seale upon thy heart, as a seale upon thine arme, for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruell as the grave : the coales thereof are coales of fire which hath a most vehement flame.

Set me as a seale upon thine heart, as a seale upon thine arme.] That is, let me be deep engraven as a seale is into thine heart, or affection, and as a seale on thine arme, let me be continually in thy sight and remembrance. And because the heart is the seat of the will, and the arme of strength, therefore shee desireth his deep affection and mighty strength and power alwaies to be present with her for her comfort and peace.

For love is strong as death.] Death sheweth his strength,

First, in subduing all sorts of people high and low, young and old.

Secondly,

Secondly, accepting no compassion, nor yeelding to any opposition, but going through with his work; such strength of love shall this Church shew to Christ; subduing all before her to the obedience of Christ, and not suffering any impediment to detain her from him.

Jealousie is cruell as the grave.] Jealousie is a mixt affection of zeale or fervent love, and carries at any contrivalls, a rage with wrath against them: So fervent then shall the zealous love of this Church be to Christ, that she may not endure any such things as shall steal away the peoples hearts from Christ, or alienate or lessen his affection to her, but as the grave,

First, she shall devoure all such things, and bury them out of sight; And

Secondly, there hold them under for ever.

The coales thereof are coales of fire, which have a most vehement flame.] The ardency of this love shall as coales of fire,

First, enflame her in all her services to Christ.

Secondly, burne up as stubble all impediments.

First, all inward green lusts.

Secondly, outward entanglements.

(*Vehement flame*) Hebr. Flames of God, that is, excellent or extraordinary; for in Scripture phrase, the things of God are transcendently excellent, as the Harpes of God *, the Trees of God *.

*Rev. 15.2
Psal. 1.3.

Flames of God, divine and vehement; and indeed this vehement love being kindled by Gods heavenly Spirit, cannot be quenched with earthly things.

Verse 7.

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drowne it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.

That is, neither adversities, though never so many, or deep, or strong, as many waters and floods, shall withdraw this love from Christ; nor all the treasures, and pleasures, and credit, which the substance of any mans house might procure us, shall be of any reckoning in comparison of Christ, to withhold our hearts from him.

Verse 8.

We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts, what shall we do for our sister, in the day when she shall spoken for.

We have a little sister, &c.] The Church of Judea and Assyria hearing of some good people

people growing up & coming on in *Egypt*, they are solicitous what course to take for them for their growth and establishment.

A little sister.] In comparison of the Jewes or Assyrians, for but *five Cities in the Land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and one of them shall be called the City of destruction.*

Isa. 19. 18.

And she hath no breasts.] No Ministers to give to them the sincere milk of the Word or the meanes of consolation in their oppressions and distresses.

1 Pet. 2. 2.

Isa. 9. 20.

In the day when shee shall be spoken for.] When the fulnesse of time shall come, that she shall grow up to such a multitude of Professors, as may be fit to have a settled Church established amongst them; for there is a company grown up to be a fit Spouse for Christ. When there are so many good Christians as may constitute a well ordered Church.

If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she be a doore, wee will enclose her with boards of Cedar.

Verse 9.

If she be a wall, we will build.] That is, if she have a Christian Magistracy; for the Magistrate is a wall.

First, high, to keep out invasions of
 Q 3 enemies;

enemies; even so doth he keep our forain evils from breaking in upon his people.

Secondly, close to keep in his people within bounds from breaking out into disorder.

Thirdly, firme, whereon to reare (if occasion be) a *silver Palace*, whereon to lay the frame of a good motion, or course to be taken for publick good.

Fourthly, a wall of partition, to divide between right and wrong, to give every man his owne.

Wee will build upon her a silver palace.]
Wee will make her garment honourable and wealthy.

If she be a doore.] That is, if she have faithfull Ministers, which as a door open the way to Christ, that the people may goe in and out, and find pasture in him:

Wee will inclose her with boards of Cedar.]

Cedar is a timber that will neither rot, nor breed worms, and so will endure alwaies; whence it was that the Heathen made their *Simulackra deorum*, Images of their gods of this wood, to make them seeme eternall. These Sister-Churches then promise, that if their little Sister of *Egypt* have any faithfull Ministers, they will

will provide for their safety and peace, that they be not discouragèd, nor disturbed in their function.

I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.

Verse 10

The little sister of *Egypt* resolveth her sisters, that she wants neither Christian Magistrates, nor faithfull Ministers; so full of wholesome Doctrine, as that her breasts swell like towers; which yet shee acknowledgeth to be a singular mercy and favour of Christ, and ascribeth all her store to his praise: *Then was I as one that found favour in his eyes.*

Solomon had a vineyard in Baal-Hamon: A place so fruitfull, that for excellency it was called the Lord of a multitude, or the owner of great encrease. Hee let out the vineyard to keepers, who paid him a great rent, even thousands for the fruit of it, and yet had a good portion, certaine hundreds for their own paines.

Verse 11

My vineyard which is mine, is before me: thou (O Solomon) must have a thousand, and those that keepe the fruit thereof, two hundred.

Verse 12

To wit, I let not out my vineyard to
Q 4 others,

others, but I kept it my selfe alwaies; let *Solomon* take his thousands for his fruits of his vineyard, and the Reapers their hundreds; I will not so doe, but take all the paines to keep my vineyard, and reap all the gaines of the fruits thereof to my selfe. The meaning is, when Christ hath gathered all these Churches of the Jews, Assyrians, Egyptians, and neighbour-Nations, he will then keep his Church with his mighty power, that neither Dragons, nor wilde Bores, nor Foxes shall hereafter root it up, or make havock of it, as in time past they have done: *This is* expresly foretold, and shall come to passe after the destruction of *Leviathan* the great Turke*.

*Isa. 27. 1,
—3.
Verse 13.

Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice, cause me to heare it.

Thou that dwellest in the gardens.] The Participle being of the Feminine gender, sheweth that it is the Church not Christ that is here spoken to, who is said to *dwell in the garden*; to wit, in the particular Churches, as the sea dwelleth in each particular Countrey sea; the German sea, the Spanish sea, the Baltick sea, &c. So

&c. So the Catholick Church is divided into particular Churches, or the Jewish Mother Church dwelleth by her authority and directions in all other Churches.

The companions hearkning to thy word (or voice) *cause me to heare it.*] So the words in the originall which implyeth either that Church would have the Mother Church of the Jews take care of all other Christian Churches, and give directions unto them, and yet not as unto her handmaids, but as to her companions; or else if the words be read according to the translation, *The companions hearken to thy voice, cause me to heare it:* They imply, that after the calling of these Churches, this shall be their constant estate to the worlds end, as they shall all

First, embrace one another as companions, not claiming Romish Supremacy.

Secondly, hearken to the voice and directions of the Mother Church, (in *Solomons* daies for wisdom to him.)

Thirdly, continue in calling upon the Name of Christ without dissipation and interruption to the end.

Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a Roe, or to a young Hart upon the mountain of spices.

Verse 14.

This

This is the prayer of all the Churches; now that all things are accomplished, the which Prophets and Apostles have fore-told, that Christ would hasten his last coming as swiftly and quickly, as the swiftest of the creatures, *the Roe, or young Hart*, to take them up with himselfe into the highest Heavens of the Mountaines of spices, where are all manner of spices, where are all manner of sweet and fragrant and pleasant things, even fulnesse of joy at Gods right hand for evermore. Thus is the end of the Revelations, *The Spirit and the Bride*, and every faithfull soule saith in like sence, *Come Lord Iesus, come quickly.*

Psal. 16.
11.

Rev. 22.
17, 20.
Use 1.

* Rom. 11.
19, 20.

Rom. 11.
13, 15.

Rev. 21.
24.

The Use of this is, first, to teach us that the Nations of the Gentiles shall not be cast off from the fellowship of the Church, when the Jewes are called, as the Jewes were out of the Church, that the Gentiles might be grafted in*; but even after their calling, new Churches of the Gentiles shall be brought in; yea, their conversion shall bring from the dead into the world: *What shal the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?* yea, *the Gentiles shall bring their glory to it*, yea, the
curfed

curfed Canaanite fhall not be excluded from partaking in this bleffing *. How much more may we hope then that thefe Churches of Chriftendome, which have fuffered fo much with Chrift, and for him, under the Dragon, the Beast, and the Turk, fhall partake with the glory of thefe Churches of the Jewes when the time fhall come.

*Ezek. 16.
55, 60, 61.

Secondly, this doth teach us how to attaine fellowship and holy familiarity with Chrift, even by faith, leaning upon him as our beloved; infidelity and doubting hinder our fweet communion with Chrift, labour wee therefore to abandon it from us.

ufe 2.

Thirdly, wee may here fee the duty of inferiour Magiftrates what it is, even to fee that the Church be raifed up under them, how much more to countenance and protect it with their fhadow, and to comfort it with the fruit of their fweet and wholefom lawes and examples?

ufe 3.

Fourthly, this may ferve for tryall of the goodneffe of our affections to Chrift; if we thirft after his deep affection to us, and continuall remembrance of us, if we labour to fubdue our felves and all ours
to

ufe 4.

to him, if wee jealously warre against all that which might impaire our love to him, if we burn up all our impediments, if no afflictions can discourage us from him, if no prosperity can shake our intire desires after him, we are then well affected to him as this Church is: If we desire to have such deep place in Christs heart, it is a plain signe Christ hath a deep place in our hearts.

use 5.

Fifthly, this may shew us a meanes how to consume all base and kitchin-loves and lusts in us, set upon these sensuall worldly things; grow up in this spirituall love to Christ, and it will swallow up and consume these lesser fires; the greater light will extinguish the lesser, as the Sun will put out the kitchin fire; so this strong fire of Christs love in us will burn up, and eat out all lust in us.

use 6.

Sixthly, this may comfort the true Church and children of God, in assurance of their perseverance: if our love to him be so unchangeable, that many waters of afflictions cannot quench it, nor floods of temptations drown it; if it be so strong as death, that it will devour all before it, how much more is his love to us.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, this lets us see that the Churches that are well established themselves, must not contemne their weake neighbour-Churches, but take care, and use all good meanes for their establishment and growth: How farre should greater Churches be from cutting off the breasts, or breaking downe the walls of their small neighbour Churches?

use 7.

Eighthly, this may teach Magistrates to be as walls to keep out all disorder, stand up as a wall if there come in disorders, stand so high that they cannot come over; if any would goe a begging, keepe them in; restraine beggery, idlenesse, drunkenesse, whordome, and profanenesse, all evill courses; be as a wall, whereon to reare a silver Palace for ever; whereon to lay the frame of a good motion, course, or order, to be taken for the publick good; any good motion made, or to be made, is as a wall to divide equally to all men their right.

use 8.

Ninthly, this may teach Ministers to be as doores to open a wide entrance for the people to come to Christ; not as those Scribes and Pharisees, which

use 9.

* Luk. 12.
52.

which Christ complaines of *, which neither enter in themselves, nor would suffer others: such are rather Port-cul-lises, yea, gates of Hell.

Use 10.

Tenthly, this may let us see the duty of Magistrates; if Ministers be doores, it should be their care to hemme them in with boards of Cedar, to provide for their security: it is the duty of every Magistrate and member to hemme them in, that no enemy may be able to oppose them, but that they may be without feare among them, as it is *, *See that Timothy be without feare among you.*

* 1 Cor.
16.10.

Use 11.

Eleventhly, this may let us see, a Church enjoying a faithfull Ministry, and a Christian Magistracy, enjoyeth a speciall favour from Christ.

Use 12.

Twelfthly, this lets us see what great care Christ will one day have of his Church, though Lyons, Dragons, and Beares have broken in upon the Church to devoure it; and besides many Foxes have sought to subvert it, and to cut the sinewes of it asunder, yet when Christ shall take the government of it into his hands, there shall be no enemy to offer violence to it: When the great *Levia-
than*

than shall be punished, even *Leviathan* that crooked Serpent, and the Dragon that is in the sea shall be slaine; *In that day sing ye unto her, a vineyard of new wine*; yea, the Lord will keep it, he will water it every moment, lest any hurt it, he will keep it night and day; yea, Christ will one day free his Church from all oppression, and give free passage to all his ordinances.

Isa. 27. 1,
2.

Finally, this serves to teach us all what affection we should have to the coming of Christ to Judgement, to desire him to be as the *Roe or a young Hart upon the mountains of spices*; to take us up into the highest heavens, where are all manner of sweet and fragrant and pleasant things, even *fulnesse of joy for evermore*.

Use 13.

The faithfull Spouses of Christ doe earnestly desire his coming to Judgement, but Harlots would put off his coming: A chaste wife, and a loyall Spouse desires her husband to send no more letters, but to hasten his returne, and come home; but a harlot would have her husbands coming deferred; so they whose hearts are a whoring after the world, neither desire Christs coming, nor love his appearing.

Psa. 16. 11.
2 Tim. 4. 8.

appearing. That we may therefore shew and approve our selves to be the true Spouses of Christ, desire his hasty coming, and say, as *Revel. 20.20.* *Even so come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen. The Lord work this good work and frame of grace in our hearts, for Jesus Christs sake, Amen. Alas who shall live when God doth this? Numb. 24.23.*



FINIS.

