

# A BRIEF EXPOSITION

WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS UPON THE UPON THE WHOLE

## Book of Canticles

BY

JOHN COTTON

(1655)

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# Imprimatur,

JOSEPH CARYL.

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A BRIEF  
EXPOSITION

With Practical  
OBSERVATIONS

Upon the whole Book of  
Canticles.

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Never before PRINTED.

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By that late Pious and Worthy Di-  
vine Mr. *John Cotton* Pastor of  
*Boston* in *New England*.

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Published by *Anthony Tuckney* D.D. Master  
of *Saint John's College* in *Cambridge*.

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To the  
**Reader**

Reader,

**T***He intent of this Preface is neither to commend the Author, whose praise is in the Gospel, throughout the Churches; nor to praise the Book, which would be to preoccupate thy judgment with mine; I pretend to no such Autocratical majesty, as some would invest us of the University with, [J.G.] that what opinions and doctrines we will, we may slay; and what we will, we may keep alive. For myself I am so conscious to my own weakness, that I look at my testimony, as at the small dust of the balance, which will not turn it when in æquilibrio, opus est, ut qui testimonium dat, ipse priùs habeat.*

*I crave thy leave, to say thus much. First, that the Authour himself (I think) may be well taken for*

*a competent Judge, (or at least Witness) whether he intended these Copies to be one or two. Now He in the first and second page of this last informeth thee, that whereas there is a threefold sense and meaning of this Book; as expressing, 1. The affection and relation between Christ and his Church in general. 2. The affection and relation between Christ and every sincere soul. 3. The estate and condition or every Church from Solomon's time to the last judgement. In the former Exposition (or Copy) the last sense was chiefly intended, and not the two former, which yet ought not to lie hid, therefore in this second Exposition he thought good to go over it again to supply what was then omitted. Which plainly evinceth that he intended them for several distinct Expositions, and so for distinct Books, though upon the same Book of Scripture. As in a like case, although our Protestant Divines dispute against the Papists fourfold sense of Scripture, and assert it to be one only; yet if an Expositor shall in four Tracts follow those four Senses; they will not deny them to be four Books, and as so many they will be printed, sold, bought, and generally reputed.*

*Secondly, In case it be said, that much of the former Exposition is made use of and is to be found in this: I readily grant it. That for-*



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*mer being the ground-work of this, which he here improveth an enlargeth in Doctrinal Observations, and more distinct Applications, which will render it as differing from the former, as the descant is from the plain-song, and more than some after editions, with new Commentaries and Annotations are from the first edition that had only the bare Text of the same Author. Austin's shorter and longer Explications of some of the same Psalms the Reader will find, though in the same Tome to be much different Expositions. And his Books de Genefi contra Manichæos. & de Genefi ad literam, though upon the same Scripture are distinct Books, and accordingly by the compilers of his works placed in several Tomes. Luther's shorter and larger Commentaries upon the same Epistle to the Galatians are not the same. Nor Br. Andrews his lesser and greater Traits on the Commandments, nor Dr. Bownd his shorter and larger discourses about the Sabbath, nor Mr. Cartwright's Metaphrase and Homilies on Ecclesiastes, His Analysts & Metaphrase, and practical History of the Gospel, were once two Books, though since compiled into one Evangelical Harmony. But I crave the pardon for this abuse of thy patience in troubling thee with so many instances of this kind, hundreds whereof are so obvious and well known, not only to Scholars who read books, but*

to Stationers (*which in this I desire to reconcile*) who sell them, that I needed not to mention them. And whereas other differences are wont to make two or more of one, this being a more uniting difference of friends to make one of two, I hope it will be the easilier united and reconciled.

I rather suspect, there are some other things concerning these Annotations, which others may more rationally expect, I should say something to for their satisfaction; As,

1. About the shortness of them as of those on Ecclesiastes.

2. Concerning the seeming uncouth expounding this Book, into a Prophetical history of the Church from David's (so Master Brightman) or from Solomon's time (so our Author) to the last judgement.

1. As to the first, I heartily wish that many of our Preachers would read less of their Sermons in the Pulpit, and that our Reverend Author could have had time to have written more of his in his Study. But he who considereth how often be Preached, (in the crowd of other businesss) may rather wonder that he could write so much. This telleth thee that he had attained to Dr. Whitaker's Vicimus, and how able a workman he was, who could Preach, so as he did, with such short Notes, and them usually written after he had Preached them. So mightily assistant was God

to him and so happy a hand had he, that had such a sudden, but happy stroke, whilst speaking, so accurately to lay on the live colours, and to complete the peace, of which there was nothing more than these first lineaments in his fore-preparations. Had'st thou his spirit, thou might'st advance these short hints to a very large improvement in thy Meditations, as he did in his Sermons.

2. As for his way of expounding this Scripture, as a Prophetical History of the Church, he for the most part treadeth in the steps of a very godly Learned Divine, who though persecuted when alive, and persiuanted when dead by some in those times, and sufficiently slighted by some in their late Writings, was yet by our Reverend Author much honoured, with whom he symbolized both in the frame and temper of his spirit, and in his judgement about many other things, which (it may be) did more easily conciliate an assent to him in this also. Sometime I knew him (as to this) of another judgement, when he much approved of Master Brightman's Exposition of the Revelation, but thought somewhat strange of this his way of Expounding the Canticles; & no wonder, for Mr. Brightman himself did not suddenly fall into it;\* but (as he telleth you) whilst he was studying the Revelation, he came first to think of it, and then proceeding to a nearer view of it,

\* In Cant. 1:1.

*all things (ask thought) did so fitly suit with this way, that he was fully persuaded of it. A good head and a good heart (we are wont to say) will be able to make use of any thing, and we find in ordinary course, that a quick phansie, with a good contriving head, especially if by larger reading supplied with materials, will neatly [[κλωθειν τα απιγελωστα??]], and very handsomely make things suit and meet, which otherwise are at a great distance, as we see in several different interpretations of many Prophecies, and particularly of Daniels seventy two weeks, and four Monarchies.*

*For my own part, I freely profess (as Mr. Baines was wont to say of himself) that in Prophecis nullus sum. When I see so many far more versed in them than I am, so exceedingly differing among themselves, and oftentimes so manifestly mistaken, although it doth not dishearten me from a sober enquiry, yet it giveth me a fair warning to be neither over-forward in opining, nor too peremptory in asserting things of this nature. I acknowledge that blessing which Christ promiseth, Rev. 1:3. to him that readeth and heareth the words of that prophecy, if it doth not lay a command on us, yet it affordeth us a very great encouragement diligently to peruse that book, and other like Prophetical Writings that so we may attain to some more certain*

*Scripture-evidence of these great things which (I believe) God will do in these latter days, and so in these doubtful times and circumstances, have some better light to guide our selves accordingly. As for truths more doctrinal, especially if fundamental as to salvation, I cannot but much abhorre the prophane Scepticism of this wanton age, in which that Gentleman hath so many forward Scholars, who in most R.D.C. grounded truths, and those [[πεπληροθορημένων]] Luk. 1:1. [[ἐν ἡμῖν]], to the end that we might (as he thinks) be the better settled in them, would have us [[τὸ ἀκίνητα κινεῖν]] and so far unsettle our assurance of them as to become like a needle between two loadstones in perfect indifferency between truth and error, even in the first and greatest truth, That there is a God, to be at our videtur quod sic, videtur quod non, that whilst we are perfectly a rasa tabula, neither way engaged or prepossessed, nor our eye stained with any colour, we may more clearly see the truth, and because nihil tain certam, quam quod ex dubio certum, upon our fair and unbiased velitation we may the more demonstratively dispute our selves into a more scientifical certainty. I wish it do not at the long run, prove into down-right Atheism; mean while in the things of God, whilst others run wild in their vain discourses, He enable me to acquiesce and sit down in the sim-*

*plicity, humility and certainty of faith, the light of which (I hope) will not blood-shoot my eye; and whatever they may say against the prejudice of preoccupation; yet if God's Word*  
*Deut. 33:4. be my inheritance, I have the more*  
*1 Thes. 5:2. cause to bless him, that I am pre-*  
*2 Tim. 1:13. possessed of it, & hope I shall ever be*  
*Tit. 1. 9. Rev. mindful of what I am so often com-*  
*2:13,25. manded to hold fast to what I have; &*  
*3:3,11. never prove so foolish as to put to*  
*suit that my inheritance, which I have so much to*  
*show for in God's Word, that may be argued pro*  
*and con by a crafty Lawyer before a corrupt*  
*Judge. Such, I am sure is both mine & every man's*  
*corrupt Reason, and the supreme Judges usual*  
*procedure in this Case, though very sad, yet is*  
*most righteous, that when we abide not by his*  
*sentence, but appeal to our own judgement, we*  
*should either be put off with a demur of an [[ἐποχη]]*  
*Academica, and fluctuating uncertainty, or*  
*if it come to a definitive sentance, that it land at*  
*last in flat Atheism, whilst we have laid aside*  
*the words card and compass. But by this time*  
*I am afraid thou wilt say I have lost mine in*  
*that by this so long digression I am so far driven*  
*from my course and whither I was bound; I re-*  
*turn therefore, and only say, that although in*  
*fundamental doctrines, I have great cause to*  
*abhor the way of these Sceptics who have un-*

ravelled the most received truths, and of greatest moment, both in Philosophy and Divinity, like to that of the Schoolmen, who have turned all Religion into an *utrum*, as many of our Querists, by their Queries have called many grounded truths into Question; yet in the Exposition of Prophetical Scriptures.

And in dealing with other things of the like nature, in which there is more obscurity than necessity of a certain knowledge of them, I had rather hear another speak ten words than myself one. Herein I'll turn Querist, and if you will Seeker, and say (as Austin did of some such like obscurities. *De his non affirmando, sed quærendo tractandum est.*<sup>1</sup> With such a mind (I doubts not) but that) Mr. Brightman first fell upon this way of expounding this Book, and our Reverend Author afterward followed him in it (for they were both of them very humble, candid, and ingenuous men) for which they conceive they have many fair hints in the Book itself, besides the suffrage both of Aben-Ezra, who takes it for an history of the Church from Abraham to the Messiah, as also of some Christian Writers, who would have it it a Prophecy concerning the Church from Christ to Constantine. For myself, although I cannot clearly and convincingly make out this general project of the whole Book, much less

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1 De Genef. ad lit. lib. 1 cap. 1.

*some particular Expositions and Applications which I here meet with: yea I find very many things of especial use for Christian knowledge and practice. Divers of the Fathers in their Commentaries on Scripture, and in particular Austin on the Psalms, though perhaps they may sometimes miss of the true sense; yet their Reader will find there so much of excellent matter and expression, that he will be sure not to miss of that which will abundantly satisfy him for his pains. The like I doubt not but thou wilt find in the perusal of this Book, in the hearty desires whereof, I rest*

Thy Servant in  
Cambridge July 14. and for Christ  
1655     *Anthony Tuckney*



A BRIEF  
EXPOSITION  
ON THE  
BOOK  
OF  
Canticles.

CHAP. I. ver. 1, 2, 3 & 4.

I. *The Song of Songs, which is Solomons.*

**O**F the Title, see the other notes already primed (though without my privity:) where, 1. The occasion and scope, 2. The excellency. 3. The Historical and prophetic use. 4. The Author and Penman of this Song is declared.

There is this further excellency in it, that a threefold, 11. Meaning, or sense, 2. Use may be made of it. 1. Of the affection and relation between Christ and his Church in general. 2. Of the affection and relation be-

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tween Christ and every sincere Christian soul. 3. Of the estate and condition of every Church, from *Solomon's* time (inclusively) to the last Judgement.

Now because in the former Exposition this last sense and use was chiefly attended, and not so the two former, (which yet ought not to lie hid) therefore how I thought good to go over it again, to supply what was then omitted.

In these four verses (after the Title in the first) the Church poureth out her longing desire for the manifestation (or revelation) of Christ's conjugal affection and love to her.

Partly, 1. In laying and amiable gestures and embraces of their souls, *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth*. Amplified and urged by two motives, 1. From the transcendent excellency thereof *above Wine*, verse 2. 2. From the sweet savour of his ointments, v.3. and it's set forth by the effects thereof, *the Virgin's love*, v. 3.

2. In strong and forcible attractives, or actions of love to her, *Draw me*, v.4. Which she urgeth, 1. By their promise of running after him. *And we will run after thee*. 2. By his former favour in that kind, *He hath brought me into his Chambers*. 3. By their joy and comfort in it, *We will be glad and rejoice in thee*. 4. By their remembrance of his transcendent love in it, *We will remember thy love more then Wine*. 5. By the affection of the upright to him, *The upright love thee*, verse 4.

*Doct.* 1. The kisses (or expressions of Christ's familiar love) Christ giveth, and the Church (or Christian soul) receiveth in the words of his mouth; kissing is an expression of familiar love.

*Kisses of his mouth*] not of his lip, holdeth forth not dumb salutations, but vocal and lively significations and declarations of his love in his Word.

Now because all the Word of God is contained in the holy Scriptures, the Lord kisseth us with the kisses of his mouth.

1. When he sendeth such Prophets to his Church, and either, 1. Pen Scriptures, as *David* and *Solomon* did in that age, and the former, and all the other Prophets and Apostles in their Generations, till the body of the Scriptures was complete. 2. Interpret and apply them faithfully, according to the, 1. Sense of the Scriptures. 2. The estate of the people and Church of God.

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2. When he breatheth in the same graciously and powerfully, in the application, of them to the soul and conscience by his Spirit, so as the Church or Christian's soul may feel Christ's love in it.

Such a speaking to the heart, is a real kiss, *Ruth* 2:10,13. *Isaiah* 57:19. *Psalms* 85:8.

Now the Lord kisseth the souls of his people in any word of his grace, whether, 1. Promises, First, Absolute, *Gen.* 2:15. *Luke* 7:48. *Ezek.* 36:25,26. Secondly, Conditional, *Mark* 9:23,24. *Luke* 7:50. 2. Exhortations or Comments mixed with promises, *Acts* 16:30,31. and 2:40,41. *Dan.* 10:19. 3. Threatnings and reproofs of love, *Gen.* 3:15. *Isaiah* 39:6,7,8. Faith can see light of love through a little crevice. 4. Doctrines, 1 *Tim.* 1:15. 5. Histories, and (which is all one) examples, *Psalms* 22:4,5. with verses 22, to 25.

*Reason* 1. From the concurrence of the Spirit with the Word in the Ministry thereof, *Isaiah* 59:20,21. *Gal.* 3:2,5. 1 *Cor.* 3:8.

*Reason* 2. From the light of God's countenance shining upon the face of Christ, and from him reflected upon our hearts through the glass of the Gospel, 1 *Cor.* 4:6. with 3:18.

*Use* 1. To argue the familiar love of God to the Church when he kisseth them, with the kisses of his Word, to wit, when he vouchsafeth to them his Ordinances, and revealeth and applieth his gracious love to them therein.

He kisseth us when he speaketh to our hearts in his Word, we kiss him when we receive his Word with faith, love, joy, obedience, *Psalms* 2:12. (2 *Thes.* 2:10.) 1 *Thes.* 1:6.

*Quest.* But how shall I know that the sweetness I have found in the Word is not a delusion, may not Satan delude me with a Word?

*Ans.* 1. If he do abuse us from the Word, it is with his corruption of the Word, or of the true sense of it, as to Christ, *Mat.* 4.

2. His false flashes make us full without the Word, we do not thirst the more after it, as the soul doth here.

5. It will inflame our hearts to kiss him again, *Psalms* 2:12. if the kiss be from God, else we shall kiss our own heads, wits, or parts, &c. *Job* 31:27.

## CHAP. I. ver. 2.

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

**D**Oct. 1. Every chaste Spouse of Christ, whether Church or Christian soul, longeth for the kisses of Christ's mouth, not for a single kiss, but for kiss upon kiss, v. 2.  
*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth*] *Psalm* 63:1,2. and 41:1,2,3. 1 *Pet.* 2:2,3.

*Quest.* What is a kiss of Christ's mouth?

*Ans.* A kiss of Christ's mouth is a revelation [1] (or the manifestation) of the love of Christ shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, [2] enlightening us with the knowledge thereof [3] and sealing (or strengthening) us with the sense thereof, [4] in the Word of the Gospel [5].

1. *Ephes.* 1:17. *John* 14:21, 2. *Rom.* 5:5. 3. *Ephes.* 1:18. That the eyes of your understanding being enlightened. 4. *Ephes.* 1:13. 1 *Pet.* 2:3. 5. *Ephes.* 11,13. Ye having heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation, and believing were sealed, &c.

*Reason* 1. From the experience which chaste Churches and Spouses have of the excellency of the love of Christ, above wine, or above all other comforts, Text, *for thy love is better than wine*, *Song Chap.* 8:7. *Psalm* 63:3.

For 1. It more comforteth the heart, *Psalm* 104:15. with *Psalm* 4:6,7.

As that which, 1. Overpowereth all grief from afflictions, *Acts* 20:23,24. *Rom* 5:3,4,5. 2. Sealeth up and confirmeth to us our everlasting inheritance, *Ephes.* 1:13,14. 3. Strengtheneth and quickneth the heart to fruitfulness and patience, *Nehem.* 8:10, The joy of the Lord is your strength.

2. It less annoyeth the brain or understanding, but rather strengtheneth and enlargeth it, *Acts* 26:24,25. *Acts* 2:13,15,17.

*Reason* 2. From the communication of the Spirit of Grace by these kisses, not only for our present refreshing, but for our constant quickening and strengthening, to draw us the nearer unto Christ Jesus, *John* 20:22.

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As Conjurers convey a Spirit of Satan by a kiss, so doth Christ a Spirit of Grace.

*Use 1.* To reprove, 1. Such as can content themselves to live without the means of grace, the Words of Christ's mouth, the preaching of his word; such never were kissed by Christ in his Word, if they had, they would long for more kisses in it. 2. Such as content themselves with what taste they have had of Christ in their first conversion, such as have been kissed with the kisses of his mouth, they still desire more kisses from him. It argueth want of chaste and fervent love to Christ, to sit down quietly without renewed favours.

*Use 2.* To teach us the precedency of taste before desires, 1 *Pet.* 2:2,3. Such as desire kisses have felt the sweetness yea, and the excellency of them above wine, before.

*Use 3.* For a trial of sincere tastes of God's love. Hypocrites may have a taste, *Hebr.* 6:4.

But such as have truly tasted, 1. They prefer the sweetness thereof above creature-comforts. Text, *For thy love is better than wine.* 2. They long after renewed tastes of the same love. Text. *Let him kiss me, &c.*

### CHAP. I. ver. 3.

3. *Because of the favour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the Virgins love thee.*

**G**ood Ointments] are the gifts and graces of God's Spirit, whether in Christ, or in his members, 1 *John* 2:20. and verse 27.

For they as, 1. A precious ointment; First, do heal wounds, (*Luke* 10:34.) even the wounds of a broken heart, *Isaiah* 61:3. Secondly, do make the face to shine, *Psalms* 104:15. So do these, *Eccles.* 8:1.

2. The holy ointments; First, did anoint and consecrate all the Vessels of the Sanctuary, *Exod.* 30:25, to 30. So do these graces consecrate to God all the Vessels of mercy, 2 *Tim.* 2:21. Secondly, did

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anoint all the principal officers in the state, Kings, 1 *Sam.* 16:13. Priests, *Exod.* 40:13,15. Prophets, 1 *Kings* 19:16. So it is by these graces that we are anointed Kings, and Priests, and Prophets, *Rev.* 1:6, *Acts* 2:17.

*Savour or odour of thine Ointments*] That is the sweetness and savouriness of them. As the sweetness of pleasant odours doth refresh the Animal spirits, *John* 12:3. So doth the sweetness and savouriness of the precious and holy graces of Christ affect the souls of such as have any spiritual sense or discerning in them.

*Because of the savour of thy good Ointments, they Name is as an Ointment poured forth.*]

*The Name of Christ.*] is, 1. His honour, *Isaiah* 43:25. with *Ezek.* 36:22,23. 2. His attributes as Mercy, Grace, Power, Wisdom, Justice, Truth, &c. *Prov.* 18:10. 3. His Ordinances, 1 *Kings* 9:3.

*Is as an Ointment poured out.*] Affecting all that have any spiritual discerning, as the Ointment poured out, did perfume the whole house, *John* 12:3.

This pouring out of his Name, is, 1. In the Ministry of the Gospel, 2 *Cor.* 2:14,15,16. 2. In his gracious and great works for his people. 3. In the holy conversation of his members.

*Therefore the Virgins love thee.*] Virgins are of least account in this Marriage-Song, as appeareth by their multitude, *Song.* 6:8,9.

Here Virgins are not considered for their chastity; but, 1. As unspoken of in way of Marriage, *Song.* 8:8. 2. As coyly slighting Marriage and motions of it. 3. As though bashfulness putting it off.

*Object.* But Virgins do denotate chaste Maids.

*Ans.* Not always such, but sometimes such as have known man, *Prov.* 30:19.

*Object.* But this weakeneth the Prophecy of *Mary's* Virginitie, *Isaiah* 7:14.

*Ans.* Nay, for it were no wonder for a woman knowing man to conceive: Such are carnal Jews and Christians, who at first think it not meet to marry yet, to bestow themselves upon Christ.

Yet because of the great Name of Christ, 1. In himself. 2. In his members.

They begin. 1. To be astonished at the Renown of him,

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*John* 2:9,10,11. 2. To enquire after him, *Song.* 5:9. with 6:1. 3. To love him. *Text.*

*Doct.* 1. The pouring out, or publishing abroad the precious graces and virtues of Christ, is the way to draw on carnal hearts to the love of Christ.

The precious graces and virtues of Christ, whether; 1. His offices of, 1. Priest. 2. Prophet, 3. King. For an office is a grace, *Rom.* 15:15,16. 2. His Spiritual gifts given him to discharge all these offices, *Coloss.* 2:3. *Heb.* 7:25,26. 3. His faithful exercise of these gifts in the execution of these offices, *John* 17:4.

The pouring out, or publishing of these graces to Christ, whether published, 1. In the preaching of the Gospel, *John* 12:32. Lift up meane, First, partly on the Cross. Secondly, partly in the Standard of the Gospel, *Isaiah* 11:12. 2. In his great works for his people, *Exod.* 18:8, to 12. *Joshua* 2:9,10,11. 3. In the gracious and holy convention of his Saints, 1 *Pet.* 3:1. 1 *Cor.* 7:16.

*Carnal hearts.*] Virgins yet not espoused to Christ, whether: First, Through niceness and coyness, loth to change their condition, to marry yet, especially to such an Husband, whose household-Government they think to be too austere and melancholy; these the publishing of Christ's virtues gaineth, *Song.* 5. with 9:6. 1. Secondly, through hastiffulness and discouragement, putting him off thinking him too good, and too great a match for them.

These the publishing of Christ's virtues gaineth also, *Isaiah* 61:3.

*Reason* 1. From the attractive powerful virtue of the favour and odour of these Ointments, they are of a seminal virtue, *Matth.* 13:31,32. They are a Baptism with fire, and fire will kindle and catch, *Matth.* 3:11.

*Reason* 2. From the attractive virtue of the pouring out, or publishing of these graces of Christ. The Spirit of Grace is poured out therewith, *Psalms* 45:2.

*Use* 1. To teach such, whose calling or work is to save souls, or to win them to Christ, what course to take; to wit, to publish the virtues of Christ all the former ways above-said.

*Use* 2. To teach us upon whom the Name of Christ is called, as we desire that Christ's Name should not suffer by us, to shew forth in our daily course not our own weakness;

but the virtues of him that hath called us, 1 *Pet.* 2:9.

*Use* 3. To teach Virgins to say down all carnal coyness, bashfulness, and to attend to the savoury and sweet invitations of Christ Jesus held forth to you.

#### CHAP. I, ver. 4.

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

**C**oherence and parts, see in *verse* 1. *page* 1.]  
*Doct.* 1. The Church and Christian soul dearly affected to Christ, hath an earned desire of drawing Grace to come to Christ, and being drawn; hath a serious purpose to run after him.

There is a twofold drawing of a Church or Soul to Christ, 1. One sufficient to leave without excuse, but ineffectual to conversion, *viz.* a drawing by outward blessings and means, *Hos.* 11:4. 2. Effectual, and that either; First, at our first conversion to Christ, *John* 6:44. Secondly, in our renewed conversion unto Christ, and growth up in him. *Text.* For this is the desire of a Church or Soul dearly affected to Christ.

Drawing in our first conversion is wrought, 1. Not only by propounding good objects, *Trahit sui quemque voluptas:* So God having discouraged us from resting in our natural estate, propounding gracious promises in Christ. 2. But also by shedding abroad into our hearts a Spirit of Grace, breeding Faith in our hearts, whereby we come to him, and have (as it were) a Spiritual Concupiscence to enjoy him. As our Carnal Concupiscence draweth us aside from God to sensual objects, *Jam.* 1:14.

In our first Conversion we have need of such a drawing, because we have, 1. Neither active power to come of our selves, no more then water hath power to burn, or to run up the Hill. 2. Nor passive power in any *proxima potensia*, to receive Grace, as air hath to receive light; but we have only a power to resist, as cold water to resist heat. 3. A subjective



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power, or a power of subjection to God's Almighty power, by him to be subdued to himself, as our bodies have to rise again, *Phil.* 3:21. or as a stone to become a Child of *Abraham*, *Matth.* 3:9. [This the School all an Obediential Power, but unfitly.]

After our conversion, when there are wrought dear affections in us to Christ, yet still there is in us, 1. A strong weight of carnal corruption drawing us off downward from Christ, *Heb.* 12:1. *Rom.* 7:23. *Matth.* 26:40. 2. A dullness and slowness, and heaviness of heart to draw near to Christ, or to spiritual duty towards him, *Luke* 24:25. 3. Yet withal in the inner man, a mind and inclination to be drawn to Christ, and to run after him, *Psalms* 73:28. and 119:32.

*Running*] is, 1. A ready and voluntary motion, 2. A speedy and swift motion.

*After thee*] implieth, 1. Not a full comprehension or keeping pace with Christ, *Phil.* 3:12. 2. An hastening fast after him (*Psalms* 63:8.) as the chief object of our desires.

*Reason* 1. From the necessity of renewed conversion, *Matth.* 18:3.

*Reason* 2. From the willingness of the Spirit in the midst of much weakness of the flesh, *Rom.* 7:18. *Matth.* 26:41.

*Reason* 3. From the sweet solace and comfort they have found in fellowship with Christ. The King brought them into his Chambers, the Temple and Synagogues of his worship. Text *Psalms* 63:2. 3. Their joy was great in the Lord. Text. They remembered his love more then Wine. Text.

*Use* 1. To convince us of our natural, 1. Impotency to come to Christ, yea, after our conversion, then how much more before? 2. Unlistiness and laxiness of Spirit to come, else what need drawing? Ministers had need be thrust into God's Harvest, *Matth.* 9:38. So Magistrates, *Exod.* 3:10, 11, 12, 13, 14. 1:10, 13.

*Use* 2. To reach us to long after drawing grace.

*Use* 3. To stir us up to run after Christ; when the Lord draweth us, *Psalms* 119:32. and 63:8.

*Use* 4. For comfort to such as despair of their good estate, when they find dullness and slowness of heart to duty, it may be found in faithful souls and Churches,

*Doct.* 2. The Assemblies of God's Saints are to his beloved ones, the Chambers of the Lord Jesus.

These Chambers then were the Temple at *Jerusalem*,

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the Ark, the Tabernacle at *Gibeon*, *1 Kings* 3:4. All the Synagogues were God's Houses, *Psalms* 74:8.

The Courts may sometimes receive all sorts, *Rev.* 11:2. evil as well as good, *Psalms* 100:4. and 92:13.

*Reas.* 1. From the Presence of God, or his face there, *1 Chron.* 16:11. [Face in the Ark] *Psalms* 89:7. *Exodus* 33:24.

*Reas.* 2. From the hidden treasures and mysteries of grace therein revealed. The world of the creatures is a wide court, but the secret good things of God are in his Church-Assemblies, *Psalms* 19:1. to 6. with *ver.* 7, to 10. *Psalms* 65:4 and 36:8.

*Reas.* 3. From the secret familiar lore, and amiable conference, yea, and conjugal communion which the Lord Jesus manifesteth to the souls of his people there. For Chambers are for retired communion; *Judges* 15:1.

*Reas.* 4. For secret counsel, *Psalms* 55:14. and 27:5.

*Reas.* 5. For secret protection, *Psalms* 27:5.

*Doct.* 3. The Lord Jesus bringeth his beloved ones into his chambers *Jer.* 3:14. to wit, 1. By opening our hearts to be fit for Church-fellowship, *Rev.* 7:14,15. and desirous of it, *Psalms* 43:3. 2. By opening the doors of the Church, to receive us into their Church-fellowship, *Rom.* 14:1. 3. By carrying us into more inward communion with himself in his Church-administrations, then every common hearer or member is partaker of, *Acts* 1:14. *Isaiah* 57:15,19.

*Reas.* 1. From the Sovereign power of Christ in opening and shutting, *Rev.* 3:7. and in setting all the members in the natural body, much more in the spiritual, *1 Cor.* 12:18.

*Reas.* 2. From the conscience he giveth them of the second Commandment, which requireth the whole instituted Worship of God, all the means of grace.

*Reas.* 3. From the concourse of all the fresh springs of God there, *Psalms* 87:7.

*Reas.* 4. To make good the liability of his Covenant, to the posterity of his children in that way.

*Doct.* 4. The souls or Churches beloved of Christ, do make high account of it (as an high favour) that Christ will bring them into his chambers, *Ezra* 9:8. *Psalms* 84:10. *Psalms* 63:2,3.

*Reas.* 1. From the great and rare treasures of blessings revealed therein, *Psalms* 65:4,5.

*Reas.* 2. From the roots thereof, the bowels of electing love, *Mat.* 13:10,11.

II

*Reas.* 3. From the singular respect expressed therein to his beloved ones, *Mat.* 13:10,11. *Rev.* 2:17. *Psalms* 25:14.

*Use* 1. To teach us, how to esteem the Churches of the Saints now in these days of the New Testament. Christ is there, *Mat.* 18:20. *Rev.* 2:1. 1 *Tim.* 3:15. yea, the whole Trinity, *Rev.* 4:2,3. 1 *Cor.* 3:16,17. There hidden treasures dispensed, 1 *Cor.* 4:1. *Rev.* 2:7,17,29. Hidden and secret mysteries, *Eph.* 3:9,20. Hidden and secret mercies and love, *Rev.* 2:17. *Rev.* 3:20. Secret counsels, *Rev.* 16:1. Secret protection, *Rev.* 2:26,27.

*Object.* 1. But Antichrist hath laid the Church waste, it it yet in a wilderness.

*Answer.* 1. In a wilderness it is in goodly order, *Numbers* 24:5.

1. The gates of hell cannot prevail against the Church, no, not against the visible Church which hath the keys, *Matt.* 16:18,19.

3. There was a measured Temple in the height of the reign of the beast, *Rev.* 11:1.

4. All the wasters of Antichrist, issued forth out of the visible Church, *Rev.* 15:5,6.

5. New Apostles to gather new Churches are vainly expected: for *Paul* and *Barnabas* were the last, 1 *Cor.* 4:9.

The Apostles that shall build the New *Jerusalem*, are the Lamb's twelve, *Rev.* 21:14.

*Object.* 2. But now all God's people are Priests. *Rev.* 1:6.

*Answer.* So they were in the Old Testament, *Exod.* 19:6. The Apostles dying left the oversight of Churches to the Elders, *Acts* 20:17,18. Elders and Deacons to be continued till the last judgement, *Acts* 6:13,14. *Heb.* 13:17.

*Use* 2. To invite and encourage men to enter into Church fellowship, and for that end to be fitted for it.

*Use* 3. Not to rest in being or entering into the Court, but to look for leading into God's chambers. Men may be within the Church, without the Chambers; way to it, fear of God.

*Use* 4. For comfort to the beloved ones of Christ, Christ leadeth such into his chambers.

*Doctr.* 5. The same Spouse of Christ is both one and many. *The King brought me into his chambers; we will be glad and rejoice in thee.* So. *Draw me, we will run, &c.*

It's verified, 1. Of the Church as one body. 2. Of each Christian soul beloved of Christ. 3. Of the multitude of

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the faithful in the Church, *ver. 9. ch. 6:13*. The *Shulamite*, a company of two armies.

*Use 1.* This will be of help in the exposition, so to expound the words of the book concerning the Church, and yet so concerning the Church, as to reserve a portion for every sincere private soul.

*Use 2.* This will teach a Christian to join with the Church that he may take his part and portion with the Church, yea, to apply whatsoever is spoken to the Church, as spoken to himself.

*Doct. 6.* Such Churches and souls as Christ hath brought into his chambers; *they will be glad and rejoice in the Lord*, and remember his love above creature-comforts. Wine as making glad the heart of man chiefly, (*Psalm 104:15*.) is put for all creature-comforts, as also *ver. 1*. What is this gladness and joy in the Lord? Gladness and joy in the Lord, it is an affection of the heart and whole man, [1.] Springing from faith of the love of Christ revealed in the Word, and shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, [2.] Whereby the heart is enlarged to delight in the Lord. [3.] Above all blessings. [4.] And against all discouragements. [5.] 1. An affection of the heart, *Psalm 105:3*. and of the whole man; for the word here translated we will be glad, signifieth such a joy as is expressed, even in the outward gesture of the body, like that, *Luke 1:44*. 2. Springing from faith of the love of Christ, *1 Pet. 1:8*. revealed in the Word, *Cant. 1:1. Psalm. 119:14. Acts 13:48. Isaiah 57:19. 2 Cor. 4:6. Shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, Rom. 5:5,7. and 14:17. 3. Whereby the heart is enlarged to delight in the Lord*. Enlargement is the proper frame of the heart in joy, *Isaiah 60:5. 1 Sam. 2:1. To delight in the Lord*, it is the proper act of spiritual joy, *Psalm 37:4*. 4. *Above all blessings, Psalm 73:25. and 119:14. and 4:6,7. 5. Against all discouragements, Hab. 3:17,18. Acts 10:24) Proof* that such as Christ bringeth into his chambers, shall rejoice in Christ, *Psalm 36:8. and 63:2,3*.

*Reas. 1.* From the excellency of the matter or ground of our joy, which Christ revealeth to us in his chambers. This matter and ground of our joy, is the love and grace, or favour of God, made known to our souls in the Word, which is often in Scripture called the light of God's countenance, *Psalm 4:6*. The excellency hereof standeth, 1. In the sensible and satisfying sweetness of it, *Psalm 36:8,9 and 65:4. 1 John 1:4*. contrary to that of carnal hearts, *Prov. 14:13. 2. In the perpetuity*

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of it, *John* 16:22. contrary to that of hypocrites and worldlings, *Job* 20:5. *Heb.* 11:25. 3. In the efficacy of it; 1. It increaseth knowledge, even saving knowledge, faith, *Gal.* 2:2. *Eph.* 3:17,18,19. *Psalms* 119:135. 2. It quickeneth spiritual grace, and strengtheneth it. *Nehem.* 8:10. 3. It mortifieth sinful corruption, *Psalms* 85:8. Not so *Herod's* joy, *Mark* 6:20. 4. It weaneth from ill creature-comforts to enjoy this *Mat.* 13:44. ★

*Reas.* 2. From the virtue and efficacy of the remembrance of it, it is the renewal and revival of the joy and comfort of it, *Psalms* 63:5,6.

*Use* 1. For a sign of trial of our partaking with Christ in his chamber; It causeth, 1. Our joy and gladness in him. 2. Our remembrance of his love above wine. The joy of worldlings and hypocrites is, 1. Ungrounded, *Mark* 6:20. *Ezek.* 33:32. 2. Uncomplete, not as that is, *John* 1:4. *Prov.* 14:13. 3. Unfruitful and feeble, still leaving sin, darling sin predominant, *Mark* 6:20. with 16. 4. Dissolute sporting without fear, *Jude* 12. whereas the joy of the Saints is awful. *Psalms* 2:11. *Isaiah* 60:5.

*Quest.* But may not the joy of a Spouse of Christ be eclipsed?

*Answ.* Yes, but still it remaineth, 1. In the root and seed, *Job* 19:28. *Psalms* 97:11. 2. In the fruit, some fruit.

*Use* 2. To exhort the beloved ones of Christ not to over-grieve for worldly crosses, or over-joy in worldly comforts; spiritual joy overcometh both.

*Use* 3. To exhort to fellowship with Christ in his Chambers, it is the root of all this solid joy.

*Use* 4. For comfort to the beloved of Christ. They have a have a joyful state.

*Doct.* 7. The upright love the Lord Jesus, *Psalms* 18:1. and 116:1. *John* 21:15,16,17. *Eph.* 6:24. The upright are such 1. In heart, *Psalms* 94:15. 2. In speech, *Isaiah* 33:15. 3. in way or walk, *Psalms* 119:1. & 15:2. The way of such, 1. Flowerh from a right fountain, springeth from a right root, Faith in Christ, *Gal.* 2:20. *Col.* 3:17. 2. Isgued by a right rule, the Word of God, *Psalms* 119:168. and *verse* 9. and 105. 3. Aimeth at a right end, 1 *Cor.* 10:31. not as they, *Zech.* 75,6.

*Love*] is an affection, whereby we affect communion with the thing beloved, and communication of good to it.

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The love here spoken of is conjugal love, which excelleth all other loves, and so differeth from them. 1. In entireness, or intimateness, uniting into one, *Gen.* 34:3. Other loves affect communion, this union, *Cant.* 2:16. *Psalm* 86:11. 2. In fervency, *Prov.* 5:19. *Cant.* 8:6,7. 3. In fruitfulness, *Rom.* 7:4.

The Lord Jesus, 1. In his Person, *Psalm* 73:25.

2. In all things that are his, 4, His Word, *Psalm* 119:97. 2. His Church, *Psalm* 26:8. 3. His children, 1 *John* 5:1. 4. His Afflictions, suffering with him, *Heb.* 11:26. 5. His coming, 2 *Tim.* 4:8.

*Reas.* 1. From the causes, 1. His love to us, 1 *John* 5:19. 2. His death for us, *John* 15:13. *Rom.* 5:8. 3. His pardon of our sins, *Luke* 7:47.

*Reas.* 2. From the effects, the upright, 1. Desire after him absent, *Psalm* 63:1. yea, long to be drawn to him. *Cant.* 4:2. 2. They rejoice in him present, *Cant.* 1:4, 3. They remember his love more than wine, *Cant.* 1:4, yea, undervalue all things for it, *Cant.* 8:7.

*Use* 1. For a sign of trial of our uprightness by our love to Christ, in all the former particulars.

*Use* 1. To exhort to uprightness (in all the former branches of it) else the love of Christ will not easily be discerned in us.

*Use* 3. To exhort to the love of Christ, *Psalm* 91:14.

*Use* 4. Far comfort, 1, To the upright, that they love Christ.

2. To them that love Christ, that they are upright.

#### CHAP. 1, ver. 5,6.

5. *I am black, but comely, (O ye daughters of Jerusalem) as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.*

6. *Look not upon me because I am black, because the Sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept.*

**A**S the former verses set forth the estate of a pure Church especially in the former holy times of *Solomon*: so that the estate of the Church in the times of *Solomon's* fall. Where the Church describeth her fall by a double adjunct, and the one contrary to the other; *I am*, 1. (Saith she) *black*, and that illustrated by a similitude, *as the tents of Kedar*. 2. *Yes comely*, illustrated also by a similitude, *as the curtains of Solomon*, or his hangings.

*Black*] 1. By the fall of *Solomon*, 1 *Kings* 11:4 to 8. 1. In multiplying wives, and them of idolatrous Nations. 2. In declining to idolatry, both in a way, 1. Of toleration. 2. Maintenance.

2. By the folly of *Rehoboam*, 1. In forsaking good counsel and choosing bad. 2. Provoking the greatest part of his people. 3. Forsaking the Law of the Lord, with all his people, 2 *Chron.* 12:1.

3. By the defection of the people of the ten Tribes from *Judah*, and exacerbation against her, 1 *Kings* 12:19.

*Yes comely*; 1. By the presence and purity of God's Ordinances in the temple, *Psalms* 84:1. [1 *Chron.* 13:10,11,12.] 2, By the constancy of the upright, in cleaving to God, to the King and House of *David*; and to the House of God, 1 *Kings* 12:17,20,23.

*Ye daughters of Jerusalem*] children of the Church, called daughters rather than sons, at being to be prepared like a Virgin, unto Christ their Spouse.

*At the tents of Kedar*] that is, of the *Arabians*, who went called *Scanita*, that they dwell in tents, *Psalms* 120:5. and *Nomads*, for that they wandered up and down feeding their Flocks. Their tents were made of goats' hair, and coarse stuff of it self, and being weather-beaten, the more black, dark and homely.

Hereto the Prophet alludeth when he calleth the Church of *Israel*, *Aholab*, (a Tent) *Ezek.* 23:4. and *Jerusalem*, *Ah-libah*, my tent is in her.

The Church of *Judah* was now black as those tents, 1. In that their blackness resembled her adversity. 2. In that she how lived amongst the enemies of her peace and purity, the sons of her mother, the brethren of the ten Tribes, being angry with her. 3. In that this black and sad defection made way, for their future captivity, and laid the foundation of it: when the Church being removed to *Babylon*, her tent was removed.

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*As tht curtains of Solmon]* or hangings so named in the Hebrew from their coupling together, [See *Forstenus.*]

*Josephus (Antiq. lib.8.c.2.)* saith that *Solomon's Halls* were hung with hangings of Tapistry, in three courses, or suits, each hanging inwardly (it seemeth more rich then others) and the wall underneath of marble curiously wrought with Imagery, suppose knots or flowers.

Such was the estate of the Church of *Judah* in this time of public defection; pure and richly graced, 1. With Royal furniture and precious Ordinances. 2. With holy and sincere people, more inwardly gracious then outwardly appearing.

*Ver. 6.* Parts of it two. 1. An admonition of the Church of *Judah* to the daughters of *Jerusalem*; the whole Church is the mother, the several members are as so many Daughters. Her admonition to them is not to despise her, nor alienate themselves from her in regard of her blackness, or as it is in the Hebrew, because I am she that is black.

2. A rendering of a threefold Reason; both, 1. Of her blackness. 2. Of their not despising her. 1. From the highest cause of her affliction, *The Sun hath bolted upon me.* 2. From the subordinate cause, *my mothers' children were angry as me.* 3. From the meritorious cause, which she acknowledgeth wholly to be in her self, The neglect of the trust and rule committed to her: *They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard I have not kept,* ver. 6.

*Look not upon me]* 1. With a scornful and disdainful eye, of enmity, and alienation and separation which would still add to her affliction. 2. With piercing vulture's eye (whereof Job speaketh, using the same word here used of the Sun, *Chap. 28:7.*) which spieth out what prey he may fasten on any corruption or carrion.

*The Sun]* that is, God, *Psalm 84:11.*

*Hath looked upon me]* to wit, with a scorching eye of displeasure and affliction, as, *Mat. 13:6,21.*

For God was angry with *Solmon*, 1 *Kings 11:9.*

And from him was that sad affliction and defection, 1 *Kings 12:24.*

It came not by chance or civil causes in Policy, but by divine procurement; And therefore the daughters to make such use of it, as not thereby to be the more alienated from God.



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*Reason*, From the end of all God's works; that which cometh from God should rather draw us nearer unto God. That use *Asaph* maketh of a like Providence, *Psalms* 73:27,28. God did it wisely and justly, to set up more Kings in the Common-Wealth, as *Solomon* set up more God's in the Church.

*The sons of my mother were angry with her*] that is, the ten Tribes of *Israel*, 1 *Kings* 12:16. For they with her were all children of the whole national Church of *Israel*. But this anger of the ten Tribes was excessive and broke forth to extremity, of Prophaneness, Schism, Apostasy, Rebellion, 1 *Kings* 12:16,18. And therefore they were rather to be reprov'd than the Church disdained.

*They make me the keeper of the vineyards*] that is, both, 1. God made me so, 1 *Chron.* 28:4,5,6. 2. All the Tribes of *Israel*, 2 *Sam.* 5:3.

*Of the vineyards*] that is, of all the Churches or Synagogues, *Psalms* 80:8. *Isaiah* 5:1. *Mat.* 21:33.

*But mine own vineyard I have not kept.* 1. Neither the Church of *Judah*, and *Jerusalem* idolatry and superstition creeping in amongst them. 2. Nor the vines of mine own house: (for wives are such, *Psalms* 128:3.) *Solomon* kept not them from open profession of idolatry, nor himself from toleration and maintenance of it, 1 *Kings* 11:4, to 8.

*Observ.* 1. The sad change that may befall a pure and gracious Spouse of Christ whether Church, or Soul. In the four former verses you have a Church described in a state of purity and holy beauty. 1. In gracious manifestations of Christ. 2. In ardent longings after it. 3. In preferring his love above creature-comforts, *verse* 2. 4. In honouring the savour of his gifts, *verse* 3. 5. In intimate familiar union and communion with him in his ordinances, *verse* 4.

All which were the estate of the Church in *David's* time, and the former days of *Solomon*. But now she is become black, through backsliding, and the ill fruits of it.

*Reas.* 1. From taking the utmost bounds of liberty in creature-comforts, is *Eccles.* 2:1, to 10.

*Reas.* 2. From leaning too much to gifts received, *Eccles.* 1:16.

*Use* For admonition, to such as stand to take heed of falling, and of the means therof, 1 *Cor.* 10:12.

*Observ.* 2. A Church of God may sometimes become black,

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even as the tents of Pagans, and yet retaine some comeliness, and glory, as the curtains of *Solomon*.

*Black]* Through, 1. Desertion. The Sun hath sun-burnt them. 2. Pollutions. 3. Afflictions, *Lam.* 4:8.

*Comely]* 1. Through presence, and beauty of Ordinances. 2. Through integrity of some sincere, and constant members. 3. Through humble acknowledgement of scandalous falls, *Verse 6.* of the Text.

*Use 1.* To beware of such blackness.

*Use 2.* To retain such comeliness.

*Use 3.* To discern of things that differ, and to judge righteously of Church-estate. Let not some blackness hinder our sight of some comeliness, nor sight of some comliiness hinder our discerning of some blackness; Christ discerned both in *Ephesus*, *Rev.* 2:2,3,4.

*Observ.* 3. *Solmon* saw his fall, and acknowledged it before the Church, with the sad causes and effects of it. His fill in neglecting the great charge committed to him, *1 kept not mine own vineyard.*

The cause of it God's anger.

The effect of it, the offence of the ten Tribes.

*Use 1.* To justify his repentance. This Book was written after his fall, (as was that of *Ecclesiastes*) else his repentance had been like that of the Jesuits, and Papists, to confess a crime to the Priests, and then to commit it.

*Use 2.* For a pattern to chief Rulers in Church and Commonwealth to confess publicly public offences.

*Observ.* 4. The children of the Church should not look awry at the Church for their falls, and failings, when she doth freely acknowledge them, *ver.* 6.

*Reas.* From the duty of forgiveness now requisite, *Luke* 17:3,4. *2 Cor.* 2:7.

*Use 1.* To direct private members, not to separate upon every essence in Churches: no not for the greatest offences when acknowledged.

*Use 2.* To teach the Church like patience to private members offending and confessing.

#### Chap. I. ver. 7, 8.

7. Tell me (O thou whom my soul loveth) where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon:

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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) go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids besides the shepherds tents.

**T**Hese two Verses consist of two parts

1. A prayer of the faithful unto Christ for direction touching the place of his worship, *verse 7*. Where observe,
  1. How she styleth Christ, as the object of the love of her soul; *O thou whom my soul loveth?*
  2. The matter of her request that he would tell *where he*, 1. *Feedeth*, 2. *Maketh his flocks to rest at noon*.
  3. The reason of her prayer, from the loathness of her spirit, and absurdness of the thing in itself, to turn aside by the flocks of thy companions.
2. An answer of Christ to this prayer which consisteth,
  2. Of a gracious compellation, *O thou fairest among women*.
  2. Of a supposition, *If thou knowest not*: (as who should say, It is much thou shouldst not know.)
  3. Of an holy direction. First, *Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock*. Secondly, *Feed thy kids before the shepherds' tents*.

In these two verses we have set forth a lively expression of an act of conjugal love between the faithful dispersed among the ten Tribes of *Israel* (after the defection of the body of their brethren from the Temple and House of *David*) and the Lord Jesus. In the two former verses (5,6.) we saw the description of *Solomon's* fall, and the estate of the Church of *Judah* by it. 1. *Black*, First, by the fall of *Solomon*. Secondly, by the anger of the ten tribes against them. 2. *Comely*, First, by the presence of the Ordinances. Secondly, by *Solomons* penitent acknowledgement of his sin.

Next followeth the desire and care which the faithful of the ten Tribes had, to be informed, where they should seek and worship Christ: whether in *Dan* or *Bethel*, as *Jeroboam* commanded, 1 *Kings* 12:28,29. or in the Temple at *Jerusalem*, Christ directeth them to *Jerusalem*, whither the godly priests and Levites went up before, and the faithful take, First, Christ's counsel. Secondly, that pattern of the Priests and Levites, 2 *Chron.* 11:13,14,16.

For this Song setteth forth the principal passages of the mutual affection and expressions of love, betwixt Christ and

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his Church in every age in order.

*Observ.* 1. Whatsoever the change of the civil State be, yet Christ is he whom the soul of the Church and of every faithful heart loveth and seeketh.

The body of the civil State of the ten Tribes was now revolted from the House of *David*, and the government of his good child *Rehoboam*: but the faithful they still enquire after Christ, whether part he taketh, where he will dwell, and be found, the fountain of which their enquiry, is their intimate affection to him, even from their souls.

*Soul-love*] Implieth intimate affection, as, *Gen.* 34:3. 1 *Sam.* 18:1,3. Hence, *soul-love*, 1. Selleth all for the person beloved, *Gen.* 34:11,12,18,19. 1 *Sam.* 23:17. 2. Communicateth all with the person beloved, doth nothing without him, *Judges* 16:15.

*Reas.* 1. From drifts redeeming grace to the soul, *Psalms* 71:23.

*Reas.* 2. From his favour, and love being the life of the soul, *Psalms* 63:1,3. *Isaiah* 38:16,17.

*Use.* To teach us to hold fast this soul-love to Christ in all changes; ye may change your Princes, your husbands, and wives, and the object of your love and duty may be changed, but not your soul-love to Christ.

*Observ.* 2. In the place of the public pure worship of God, there the Lord giveth food and rest to his flock (to his Church) openly. For so the Church describeth the place of God's public worship; where, 1. Thou feedest thy flock. 2. Thou makest them to rest at noon.

To feed] Is, with spiritual nourishment of heavenly life, in the use of all the Ordinances, ver. 3:15. *Acts* 10:28. 1 *Pet.* 5:2. Feeding implieth, 1. To strengthen us. 2. To quicken us.

To make them to rest] As flocks do after food lying; so he giveth rest, and peace of conscience in feeding upon the Ordinances, *Psalms* 23:1. He maketh me to lie down, &c. *Zeph.* 3:13. Feed and lie down, &c.

At noon] Openly in the face of the Sun.

*Reas.* 1. From the Lord's presence, and blessing in the assemblies of his Saints, *Mat.* 18:20.

*Reas.* 2. From his delight to breath in his own Ordinances, giving Food, Rest there, *Rom.* 1:16. *Exod.* 20:24.

*Use* To teach us, what to look for in the Ordinances of public worship, to wit, Food, Rest; And where to look for Food, and Rest, to within the Ordinances.

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*Observ.* 3. Indifferences of worship amongst men, enquiety is chiefly to be made, where Christ is to be found: and this enquiry to be made of Christ himself. Here *Jerobom* set up one worship, 1 *Kings* 12:28,29. In *Judah* they observed another, which haply God might forsake for *Solomon's* /apostasy, as they might conceive, *John* 4:19,20.

*Reas.* 1. From the purity and flower of Ordinances, where Christ revealeth himself, *Exod.* 12:24.

*Real.* 2. From the unworthiness of a chaste Spouse to step into the bed of Christ's companions, or into the society of their Flocks. *For why should I turn aside to the flocks of their companions?*

*Reas.* 3. From Christ's shepherdly office to teach us to profit and to lead us into green Pastures, *Isaiah* 48:17. *Psalms* 23:1,2.

*Use.* Not to make differences of worship or religion an occasion of neutrality, cleaving to none till all be agreed.

*Observ.* 4. They of all other are the most beautiful in Christ's eye, that seek him in the purity of his public Ordinances; *Oh thou fairest among women*, *Rev.* 14:4.

*Reas.* They are not spotted of the world (which is a point of pure religion, *James* 1:27.) who sell ail for the field of the Ordinances, *Mat.* 13:44. *Psalms* 45:10,11.

*Use* 1. To reprove the deformity of such Church or Christians, as make sure for the world, howsoever they do for the Word or Christ.

*Use* 2. To direct us to grow up to this holy beauty, *Psalms* 45:10,11.

*Quest.* But is it not more amiable, and beautiful for a soul to be so full of knowledge and faith as to be above Ordinances?

*Ans.* No, it argueth a dropsy fulness, not any solid fulness or beauty; Christ ordained Church officers, till we all grow up unto the fulness of the stature of Christ, *Ephes.* 4:11, to 13.

*Observ.* 5. The direction which Christ himself would give to a doubtful and inquisitive soul, for the enjoyment of himself in public assemblies, is to join with sincere Ministers and people, and to feed with them, *v.* 8. This counsel took effectually with the faithful of the ten Tribes, 2 *Chron.* 11:13,14,16.

*Reas.* 1. From the presence of the head with the body. The Church is his fulness, and his fulness is in it, *Eph.* 1:22,23. *Col.* 2:9,10.

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*Use.* Not the rest in singular solitary estate but to seek after, and to flock unto the flock of Christ; nor to rest in private meetings if public may be had.

**Chap. I. ver. 9.**

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

**I**N these words the civil (or outward) estate of the Church and people of *Judah* is expressed in the days of *Rehoboam*; for after the recourse of the godly Priests and Levites, with the faithful that followed them, had strengthened the Kingdom of *Rehoboam* in *Judah*, *Rehoboam* forsook the Law of the Lord, and all *Israel* with him; whereupon God sent *Shishak* King of *Egypt* with a great Host against them, who subdued them to his service. 1 *Chron.* 12:1,2,3,4,8,9.

So then here the Church of *Judah* is set forth, 1. By her service to *Pharaoh*, as if like Holies, they drew *Pharaoh* his triumphant chariot, 2 *Chron.* 12:8. *Josephus* maketh this *Shishak* *Sesostris*; of whose great victories *Herodotus*, and *Diodorus Siculus* speak. *Diodorus* saith further of him that on solemn days when he went to the Temple in state, or in the City, he caused Kings as Horses to draw in his Chariot. Now because this subjection to *Shishak* was base & dismal, and so unsuitable for a Marriage-song, *Solomon* veileth it (as fairly as the matter will bear in a stately companion of sumptuous Coach-horses in a great King's chariot, so as many that read it see no sad thing in it. 2. by the Lord Jesus his love to her even in this service, *I have compared thee, O my love, &c.*

*Observ.* 1. The great flocking (or resort) of godly Ministers and people to the pface (and fear) of purity of Ordinances, may soon degenerate to a general Apostasy: and a general apostasy may soon draw on a general captivity, [*or servitude.*] At first there was grear resort, and flocking by the godly Priests and people, out of all *Israel* unto *Jerusalem*, the seat of pure Ordinances, 2 *Chron.* 11:13,14,16. which much strenethened the Kingdom and Church of *Judah*, ver. 17. which soon degenerated to a general apostasy, 2 *Chron.* 12:1. not only of *Rehoboam* and *Judah*, but of all *Israel* with him,

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1 *Kings* 15:23,24. which within two years brought *Shishak* upon them, and servitude (or captivity, though not out of the land, yet in their land) under him. For three years they strengthened God's work among them, 1 *Chron.* 11:17. and in the fifth year of *Rehoboam's* reign (which was two years after) they fell into this Apostasy.

*Reas.* 1. Of this apostasy, 1. Security, First, of good people under the means of grace; Partly, 1. Through evidence of their sincerity by forsaking all for the means, *Mat.* 13:44. 2. A through confidence on the means without Christ in them, 1 *Kings* 15:3. with 1 *Chron.* 13:10,11,12. Secondly, of *Rehoboam* and such hypocrites, from the arm of flesh, being strengthened with multitudes, 1 *Chron.* 12:1. 2. Infirmity not able to continue long in a constant good duty, *Mat.* 26:40. *Exod.* 32:8. quickly turned aside, *Deut.* 31:27. whilst I am yet alive.

*Reas.* 2. Of this captivity, 1. From the holy jealousy of God soon avenging the quarrel of his Covenant, *Deut.* 31:16,17. 2. From his faithful love to his people to apply corrosive medicines speedily, 2 *Chron.* 12:8.

*Use* 1. To Argue this Song is not a dialogue between *Solomon* and any of his wives or concubines: for it had been absurd comparison, to compare any one woman to a company of Coach-horses

*Use* 3. To beware of blessing ourselves, in our forsaking all for Ordinances, that will not secure us from apostasy.

*Use* 3. To beware of apostasy under means of grace, it will soon lead us into calamity and captivity. Ordinances may secure from *Jeroboam*, 1 *Chron.* 13:9, to 20. but they will not secure from *Shishak*, if deserted by apostasy.

*Doct.* 2. The people and Church of God in the midst of their captivity, and servitude are yet owned of Christ, and acknowledged as his love.

*I have compared thee, O my love, &c.]* Which appeared, 1. By his instruction of them in the cause of it, 2 *Chron.* 12:5. 2. By his bowing their hearts to humiliation under 2 *Chron.* 12:6. 3. By his nurturing of them by this means to an experimental discerning of a difference between his government and theirs, 2 *Chron.* 12:7,8.

*Reas.* 1. From the unchangeableness of God's love to his own, *John* 13:1. *Jer.* 31:3. God changeth his action not his affection, [*Deus mutat effectum, non effectum* upon our changes.]

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*Reas.* 2. From the perfect obedience of our surety (the Lord Jesus) in whom we are accepted.

*Use* 1. For comfort to weak Christians, who think God's love is as soon changed as our duty.

*Use* 2. To melt us the more for our backsliding, in sinning against so much grace.

**Chap. I. ver. 10,11.**

10. *Thy cheeks are comely with rowes of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold.*

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

**T**Hese words describe the estate of the Church as it was in the days of, 1. *Abijah* in the former part of *ver.* 10. 2. *Asa*, *ver.* 10,11.

*Thy cheeks.* That is the outward face of the Church.

*Are comely with rows of jewels*] With the Ordinances of God, set and kept in right order, place and manner.

This *Abijah* himself observeth, and proclaimeth to all the House of Israel, 2 *Chron.* 13:10,11,12. *But as for us* (saith he) *the Lord it our God, we have not forsaken him: The Priests which minister to the Lord, are the sins of Aaron: and the Levites wait upon their business. And burn unto the Lord every morning, and every evening, burnt-sacrifice and sweet incense; They show-bread also they set in order, upon the pure Table, and the candlestick of gold with the lamp thereof to burn every evening, &c.* it was not so with the house of Israel, at the same time under *Jeroboam*, 2 *Chron.* 13:8,9.

But for the House of Judah and Benjamin, though the heart of *Abijah* their King was not so upright as *David's* (1 *Kings* 15:3.) yet the outward face of the Church (her cheeks) were comely with the orderly observation of the Ordinances of God. When the Ordinances of God's are kept in due order, and God himself is the top and head of that order, it is a comely face of things, yea, and comely also was the face of the Church looking up to God in distress, 2 *Chron.* 13:14,18. which moved God to deliver them from *Jeroboam*.

*Thy neck with chains of Gold*] *ver.* 10. The neck is sometimes considered in the song as that which joyneth head and



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body together (and then it put for faith;) sometimes the neck is put for that part which is wont to bear yokes, or to wear chains for ornament, chains of gold or pearl, and so it is here signified, the profession of faith in subjection to God's Ordinances.

*Chains of gold.*] *Buxtorsius* translatheth chains of Margarithes, that is, unions of most precious pearls. The sense is the same. *Junius* doth not fitly turn it horse-collars, with respect to *ver.* 9. where the Church in *Reboboam's* time, was compared to company of Horses drawing in *Pharaoh's* chariot. For the Church was not comely with such horse-collars: nor are the Coach-horses if Princes won; to draw with horse collars,

*Chains of gold*] Are such wholesome Laws and comely bonds, which like chains do bind the profession of faith to keep the worship of God, and true religion in purity, such laws and bonds are chains, *Psalms* 149:8. *Cant.* 4:9.

And such chains are not fetters or manicles of bondage, but chains of gold, Ornaments of Liberty, honour.

Such chains were in *Asa's* time. 1. His royal Edict and command unto *Judah* to seek the Lord God of their fathers, to do the Law, to remove high places, and images, 1 *Chron.* 14:4,5. 2. The Covenant to serve the Lord, 1 *Chron.* 15:12. and to inflict capital punishment upon idolaters, *ver.* 13.

V. 11. *We will make thee*] This offer in the plural number, *We*, showeth the forwardness of the people to join with *Asa*, 1. In reforming Religion. 2. In adorning the Church, as is recorded, 2 *Chron.* 15:10, to 15.

*Borders of gold*] That is, borders of the Kingdom, pure as gold, by cleansing and putting away all the idols our of all the coasts of *Judah*, and *Benjamin*, yea, out of mount *Ephraim*, the very skins, and frontiers, and borders of the Kingdom, 2 *Chron.* 15:8. And by borders are also meant (as in the former verse) the rows or orders of the Ordinances of God, which *Asa* renewed in renewing the Altar of the Lord, which was before the Porch, 2 *Chron.* 15:8.

*Studs of silver*] They are such prominent knobs, or knots in works of precious metal, as do stand out above the rest of the work for ornament sake, as, *Prov.* 25:11.

Such like eminent works to adorn *Asa* his reformation were, 1. The deposing of *Maasah* the Queen-mother, 1 *Chron.* 15:16. for her idolatry. 2. The cutting down of her idol (*ibid*) and stamping it, and burning it. 3. The consecrating

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and bringing into God's House, the dedicated treasures of himself and his father, 2 *Chron.* 15:18.

*Doct.* 1. It is a comely outward face of a Church, when the Ordinances of God are observed in due order and purity. This is the state of beauty. *Zech.* 11:7. This makes God's Tabernacle amiables, *Psalms* 84:1. and 27:4.

*Reas.* 1. From the requisites to comeliness. 1. The integrity of parts, none defective. 2. The right posture or standing of every one in his place, not the feet standing where the eyes should be. 3. The fit proportion of one of them to another, not one swelling above or against another.

*Reas.* 1. from the presence of God where such due order is observed, 1 *Chron.* 13:10. The Lord is our God, &c. and, *ver.* 11, 12. we keep the charge of the Lord, and behold, God himself is with us.

*Doct.* 1. It is no impeachment of Church-liberty, but an enlargement of their beauty and honour, to be bound by strict Laws and holy commandments, to observe the pure worship of God, and to be subject unto due punishment, for the gross violation of the same. For the neck of the Church is here said to be comely by wearing such chains of gold.

*Reas.* 1. From the greatest liberty of the sons of men, which is found in the service of God, 1 *Cor.* 7:22. On the contrary, liberty to error and sin is the greatest bondage, *Rom.* 6:17,18. 2 *Pet.* 2:19.

*Doct.* 3. It is a great advancement to the beauty and comeliness of a Church state, when people and Magistrates do both consent together to purge the whole country, even to the utmost borders of the Churches, from corruption in religion, and to adorn the same with exemplary justice, upon notorious offenders (though of highest rank) and with liberal supplies to the Lord's treasury. As here the Lord acknowledgeth it an eminent part of the Churches Beauty, that the people so freely joined with the King in accepting such Laws, and Covenants, in purging the outmost borders of the country, in adoring of the Altar of the Lord, in punishing the Queen-mother for her idolatry, and in bringing the dedicate treasures into the Lord's treasury,

*Reas.* 1. From the comeliness of concord, between high and low and all sorts, *Psalms* 133:1,2,3.

*Reas.* 2. From the defilement of the whole body, by the filthiness of the skirts, *Lev.* 1:9.

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*Reas.* 3. From the blessing of God upon a whole state, where the House of God is maintained, with due supplies, *Mal.* 3:10,11,12.

*Use of Doct.* 1. 1. To intrust Churches, that are not completely furnished with the whole row of Ordinances a to supply themselves from the Lord.

2. To teach such as have Ordinances, to see they be kept in their place, and order. The feet not to stand where the eyes should stand: not one in his place to swell against another.

*Use of Doct.* 2. 1. To take off prejudice and jealousy from Churches of impeachment of their Church liberties, by submitting to wholesome Laws of Magistrates and holy Covenants.

*Object.* But *Asa* and those Magistrates in *Judah* were types of Christ.

*Answ.* All types are either, 1. Examples to us, as, 1 *Cor.* 10: 11. and then their acts are our patterns for imitation. 2. Ceremonial and Levitical shadows. But these are moral punishments of moral and perpetual equity; no shadowy matter in them. The light of nature taught the *Gentiles* to say to their Princes, *Prima est tibi cura Sacrarum.*

*Use* 2. To teach Magistrates a lawful use of civil power in punishing even with death the fundamental subversion of God's worship, or of pure religion.

*Object.* But such power is not civil when it punisheth for causes of religion.

*Answ.* Yes: For, 1. The Magistrate is bound to protect all societies in the City and Common-wealh in peace; amongst other societies the Church is one.

2. The civil State cannot subsist in peace, if gross pollutions in religion be tolerated in Churches. The toleration of images in Christian Churches brought in the *Turk*, *Rev.* 9:14,20.

*Use* 3. To teach impartiality against all sorts of offenders in such cases high and low.

*Use of Doct.* 3. 1. To teach people to assist Magistrates in such vigilant care of reformation of religion. Toleration here God will not tolerate, 1 *Kings* 20:23,28,42.

*Use* 2. To direct all sorts not to neglect supplies to the Lord's Treasury.

## Chap. I. ver. 12,13,14.

12. *While the King sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.*

13. *A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved 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 Engedi.*

**T**Hese words are a description of the offices of mutual love betwixt Christ and his Church, in the days of *Jehosaphat*, and from thence to the reign of *Hezekiah*.

*Whilst the King sitteth at his Table*] That is, whilst *Jehoshaphat* (the vicegerent of Christ) sitteth at rest and peace, refreshing himself, *2 Chron. 17:5*. God stablishing the Kingdom in his hands, and giving him riches and honour in abundance.

*My spikenard*] A shrub yielding an ointment of all other most precious [*Pliny, lib. 12. c. 12.*] and of all other Syrian spikenard of greatest estimation [*Idem ibidem.*] This *John* calleth very costly, wherewith *Mary* anointed Christ, *John 12:3*. By spikenard is here meant the Preaching of the Word, which is of all savours the most precious, even the savour of life unto life, *1 Cor. 2:16*. An ointment in which the perfume and ointment of the Spirit is chiefly conveyed, *Gal. 3:2,5*. When *Jehoshaphat* 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*, *1 Chron. 17:8,9*.

*A bundle of Myrrh*] Myrrh is an odoriferous Tree, that sweateth out a sweet Gum called Stacte, which is preferred before all other Gums [*Pliny, lib. 12. c. 16.*] This Gum is also called Myrrh from the Tree. His smell is strong and fragrant, and fit to preserve from putrefaction, whence it is of much use in embalming, *John 19:39*. God himself reckoned it among the principal spices, and it was a principal ingredient in the composing of the holy ointment, *Exod. 30:23,25*. *Psalms 45:8*. Myrrh is restrictive, and drying up

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superfluous humours, and so a fit emblem of Magistrates, whose proper work is to restrain evil, *Judg.* 18:7.

*Between my breasts*] The breasts are those that give milk (the sincere milk of the Word,) to the children of the Church, to wit, the Priests and Levites, they were the Churches' breasts.

The bundle of Myrrh between them were, 1. A bundle or company of religious Noble-men, Princes, whom *Jehoshaphat* sent forth with the Priests & Levites, to give countenance and encouragement, to them in their Ministry, which drew on the people by their presence, and speech to them, to give the more reverence and attention to their Ministry, 2 *Chron.* 17:7,8,9. 2. A bundle, or company of Judges whom *Jehoshaphat* set amongst the Priests, and Levites to decide all controversies amongst the people, both in matters concerning God and the King, and to preserve the people from corruption and sinning against the Lord, whether in matters of Religion, or civil justice, 1 *Chron.* 19:5, to 11. 3. *Jehoshaphat* himself (representing Christ the Churches well-beloved upon earth) he rested in the bosom of the Church, as a bundle of Myrrh sweetly and strongly preserving, and restoring the people from corruption, from *Beersheba* to Mount *Ephraim*, and went about through all the country, to bring them back again to the purity of God's worship, 2 *Chron.* 19:3,4.

*A cluster of Camphire*] The word כפר is sometimes taken for the proper name of a Tree Cypress, which also preserveth from putrefaction, and yieldeth a sweet savour (whence garments are wont to be laid in Cypress-chests,) but sometime and indeed most usually, and ordinarily it is taken appellatively, for expiation, or propitiation, or ransom, as, *Prov.* 21:18. *Isaiah* 43:3. This latter sense I rather take, though the former also may be coincident. For Christ was a cluster of, Redemptions, preservations, to his Church in the latter end of the Reign of *Jehoshaphat*, and during the Reign of a cluster of his successors, all of them wicked, and one or two of the latter but weakly godly, such as *Jehoram*, *Joash*, *Uzziah*, *Ahaz*, *Ahaziah*, *Amaziah*, *Jotham*. *Jehoshaphat* himself stood in need of expiation, for matching his son and *Jehoram*, in affinity with the daughter of *Ahab* and *Jezebel*, 1 *Chron.* 18:1, for which he was reproved and threatened with wrath from the Lord, 2 *Chron.* 19:2. This wrath brake forth in

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*Engedi*, 2 *Chron.* 20:1,2. whence sprang *Jehoshaphat* fear, *ver.* 3. Hence Christ was an expiation to him in the vineyards of Engedi, saving him from wrath there, and discomfiting the Host of enemies, 2 *Chron.* 20:22,23,24.

In the cluster of the Kings following, the Church saw no visible token of Christ's love, but only, 1. His redemption of them from woeful idolatries, and cruelties, when there was nothing but pollution, and corruption in the State, yet there was redemption in Christ. 2. His expiation of blood with blood, striking *Jehoram* with an unnatural disease, in his bowels, for his unnatural murder of his brethren, 2 *Chron.* 21:13,14,15,19. and slaying *Azariah* by the sword of *Jehu*, 2 *Chron.* 22:7,8,9. 3. His purging the Church and Civil state in in the days of *Joash*, by *Jehoidah*, 2 *Chron.* 22:17,19. and *ver.* 15. 4. His casting *Uzziah* out of the Temple by leprosy through the valour of *Azariah*, and so other Priests, 1 *Chron.* 26:17, to 20.

*Doct.* 1. Whilst Princes enjoy peace, it is a love-token of Christ to his Church, when they send forth the sweet smelling savour of the Ministry of the Word, throughout all the country.

*Reas.* 1. It is a favour from Christ, yea a token of marriage-love, *Jer.* 3:14,15. For therein, to wit, in the Ministry of the Word, Christ casteth in the immortal seed of his Spirit, and grace into his Church, 1 *Pet.* 1:23. *Gal.* 3:2,5.

*Reas.* 2. It is the duty of Princes to be nursing fathers, *Isaiah* 49:23. Nurses should provide wholesome milk for their children.

*Doct.* 2. When Magistrates countenance the Ministry of the Word, and provide for the purity of religion and civil justice, it is as if Christ lay like a bundle of Myrrh all night between the breasts of the Church.

*Reas.* 1 From the freer passage of the Word by this means, *Acts* 9:31. which is a thing dchrabic. 2 *Thes.* 3:1.

*Reas.* 1. From the greater peace and tranquillity of the Church then, 1 *Tim.* 2:1, 2.

*Reas.* 3. From the prevention or healing ot open scandais by just judgement *Psalms* 101:8.

*Doct.* 3. When God giveth up godly Princes to gross failings, and sendeth many (even a cluster of) evil Princes to succeed them, the Lord Jesus is even then to his Church, a cluster of expiations in times of their greatest fear.

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*Even in the vineyards of Engedi] where Jehoshaphat most feared the enemies, 2 Chron. 20:2,3. Psalm 65:3.*

*Reas. 1. From the plenteous Redemption of Christ wrought, for his Church, Psalm 110:8.*

*Reas. 2. From Christ's Pastoral faithfulness to apply the work of Redemption in a needful time, Ezek. 34:12,22. Psalm 78:65,66.*

*Use 1. To teach Magistrates this great duty, of providing the Ministry of the Word to all their people.*

*Use 2. To teach God's people, not to suffer the favour of the Gospel to grow unsavory to them. A sign some strong lust putteth our mouths, and spiritual senses out of taste.*

*Use 3. To acknowledge it as a singular token of Christ's love, the mutual accord of Magistrates and Elders. It is as if Christ like a bundle of Myrrh lay all night between the Churches' breasts.*

*Use 4. To exhort to awful fruitfulncfle in this peaceable estate, Acts 9:31.*

*Use 5. To support Churches and godly souls, how to look at Christ's love in public corruptions of the State, and of their own hearts: to wit, as a cluster of expiations and redemptions.*

*Use 6. To make the like use of the redeeming love of Christ to such souls as see themselves overwhelmed with many calamities, yea and iniquities too.*

**Chap. I. ver. 15,16,17.**

15. *Behold, thou art fair, my love: behold thou art fair, thou hast doves eyes.*

16. *Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea pleasant; also our bed is green.*

17. *The beams of our house are Cedar, and our rafters of Fire.*

**T**Hese three verses describe the beauty of the Church in the days of two gracious Kings namely, *Hezekiah, v. 15. Josiah, v. 16,17.*

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*Beheld, thou art fair, behold, thou art fair: Thou hast Dove's eyes.]*

*Fair, fair]* Holdeth forth, 1. Eminent or superlative beauty. For so the Hebrews express their superlative, as high, high, is very high: low, low, is very low, *Deut.* 28:43. peace, peace, is perfect peace, *Isaiah* 26:3. 2. Variety of beauty, so, peace, peace, is variety of peace, *Isaiah* 26:3.

In *Hezekiah's* time the Church was beautiful, 1. In purity, power of Religion; First, by sincere and zealous Reformation, 1 *Chron.* 29:3, to 36. Secondly, by holy administration of the Passover, 1 *Chron.* 30. throughout. In which 1. He called in the *Israelites*, *ver.* 1, to 12. 2. He purified them; First, by sacrifices, *v.* 17. Secondly, by intercessions, *v.* 18,19, 3. He with the people kept other seven days of thanksgiving, *v.* 2,3. Thirdly, by provision for the maintenance of God's worship, 2 *Chron.* 31:2, to 21. 2. In glory of salvation: For salvation or deliverance is a beauty to the meek, *Psalms* 149:4. Marvellous great was the beauty and glory of the Church by their deliverance from *Sennacherib*, 1 *Chron.* 32:23.

*Thou hast doves eyes]* 1. For Ardency and charity of love, so observed by *Pliny*, *lib.* 10. *c.* 34. which *Hezekiah* showed forth, 1. In loathing and destroying all monuments of idolatry, 1 *Kings* 18:4. yea, even the brazen Serpent, though sometime of divine institution, *Numb.* 21:8,9. but now abused to idolatry. 2. In trusting steadfastly to the Lord, 2 *Kings* 18:5,6,30. looking only unto him for salvation in that great danger. 2. For affecting to flock to their habitation, *Isaiah* 60:8, so the *Israelites* theirs, 1 *Chron.* 30:11, 12,13. This ardency and chastity of affection, belongeth to power of religion.

*Behold, behold]* Argueth all this beauty was, 1. Sensible, visible, observable. 2. Eminently observable, *Behold, behold.*

*Verse* 16. The like testimony is given of the Church in *Josiah's* time; only here by mutual conference, the Church ascribeth the beauty to Christ, as he in the former verse had ascribed it to the Church; As indeed the Church hath no good thing, but a what it received from Christ, and what is in him much more. Thou art comely by the comeliness, which I had put upon thee, *Ezek.* 16:14. And Christ is commonly described in Scripture, and in this Song according to the present state of the Church. The beauty of the Church in *Josiah's* time, lay, 1. In like zealous reformation, 2 *Kings*



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23:1, to 10. yea, he excelled, 1. In reforming of some things which *Hezekiah* omitted; as, 1. The Altars of *Ahaz*, ver. 12. 2. *Solomon's* high places, v. 13. 2. In putting the idolatrous Priests of the high places to death, v. 20. 2. In like administration of an holy Passover, v. 21,22,23. Only here is not an ingemination of fairness, *Behold, thou art fair*, again: for he wanted the beauty of salvation, or deliverance from *Pharaoh Necho*, which *Hezekiah* found horn *Sennacherib*: for *Necho* slew him, v. 29.

But instead of a second beauty, *Behold, thou art fair*, it is said, *yea, pleasant*. 1. It was a pleasant sight to see so young a Prince to turn to the Lord with all his heart in the prime of his youth, 2 *Chron.* 34:1,2,3. Christ's soul desireth the first ripe grapes, *Mich.* 7:1. *Eccles.* 12:1. 2. It was a pleasant sight to see his heart so tender, his eyes to weep at hearing the Law 2 *Chron.* 34:27.

*Also, or yea, our bed is green*] The house of God then was the Temple. The bed, is the Ordinances of God wherein Christ solaceth himself with his Spouse; these in *Josiah's* time were flourishing, no Passover like his, 1 *Chron.* 35:18. Besides, *Green* is an allusion to a Pasture in the Spring-time, implying the worship of God did begin to revive and flourish again after a Winter's time of dirty and miry pollutions, in the days of *Manasseh* and *Amon*.

Vers. 17. *The beams of our House are Cedar, and our Rafters (or walks, or galleries) of Fir*] Which describeth the beauty of the Church by the repairs of the Temple, in the days of *Josiah*, 2 *Chron.* 34:8, to 13.

*Doct.* 1. It is the eminent and plentiful and sensible fairness and beauty of a Church. The purity, and power of Religion, and the glory of salvation. Purity and power of Religion is beautiful to the spiritual eyes, 1. Of God, *Psalms* 45:13. 2. Of his people, *Psalms* 84:1. Glory of salvation is beautiful to the eyes of all men, 2 *Chron.* 32:23.

*Reas.* 1. From integrity of parts.

*Reas.* 2. From proportion of each part one to another, and of all to the rest.

3. From the [[ὤχροια]], the well-coloured lustre, and face of things.

*Doct.* 2. It is a very pleasant sight, to see a young Prince in his green years, to seek the Lord, to be of a soft and tender heart, and to restore the Ordinances of God, to flourishing

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greenness, and purity. Thus Christ declared himself in young *Josiah*. 1. Who sought the Lord in his green youth, 2 *Chron.* 34:1,2,3. 2. Whose heart was soft and tender melting into Tears, at the hearing of the Law, 2 *Chron.* 34:27. 3. Who restored the bed of Christ and his Church (the Ordinances) to flourishing greenness, and repairing also the Temple.

*Reas.* From the gratefulness, and suitableness of these things to the will of Christ, when youth forsaketh the lusts of youth, and attendeth to the rule of their general and particular calling, *Psalms* 45:10,11.

*Doct.* 3. The Church hath no beauty, but what is first in Christ, and from him received. That which Christ acknowledged in the Church, *ver.* 15. she faithfully ascribeth to him, *ver.* 16.

*Reas.* From the Father's good pleasure. 1. That in him should all fulness dwell, *Col.* 1:19. 2. That from him it should be derived to us, *John* 1:16. *Col.* 2:3,10.

*Use* 1. Of 1 *Doct.* 1. To teach Churches and souls, all Spouses of Christ how to approve your beauty and comeliness in the eye of the Lord Jesus, to wit, by purity and power of religion expressed, 1. In ardency and chastity of affection. 2. In sincerity and zeal of reformation. 3. In holiness of administration of Ordinances preparing our selves and others thereunto. 4. In provision for the maintenance of the Ordinances of God.

*Use* 2. To expect a glorious salvation in this way.

*Object.* But *Josiah* did not so find it.

*Answ.* Because the People's hearts were utterly against his reformation. Hence the beauty rather ascribed to the beloved then to the Church, *Zeph.* 1:1, to 12. let people therefore go along with like sincerity, and zeal as in the days of *Hezekiah*.

2. Or the 2. *Doct.* 1. To instruct young men the way to be found pleasant and acceptable in the sight of Christ; to wit, 1. To seek the Lord betimes. 2. To be soft and tender-hearted. 3. To affect pure and flourishing fruitful Ordinances.

2. To teach us it is no deformity for Princes, to cause Church-members to keep Church-rules, 2 *Chron.* 34:33. yea, and to punish apostates for true religion, 2 *Kings* 23:20.

3. Of the 3. *Doct.* To teach us whence to look for all our beauty, and comeliness even from the Lord Jesus.

## CHAP. 2. ver. 1,2.

1. *I Am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.*
2. *As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.*

**T**Hese words are a description of the estate of the Church in the latter end of the Reign of *Josiah*, and in the days of his successors, *Jehoahaz*, *Jehoiakim*, *Jeconiah*, *Zedekiah*. The description is declared, 1. In the complaint of the the Spouse, *v.* 1. 2. In the acknowledgement of her beloved, *vers.* 2.

In the former, the Church setteth forth her condition, 1. By a comparison of two sweet flowers. First, Rose. Secondly, Lily. 2. By the subject places of their growth, 1. In *Sharon*. 2. In the Valleys: though this latter may be rather so distinction of the kind of lily, lily of the valleys is not the common tall lily.

In the latter her beloved setteth forth the estate of his Church by a comparison of the lily amongst thorns to hold forth the like condition of the Church amongst the daughters of *Jerusalem*. The rose, though it be, First, fair & orient for colour and beauty. Secondly, fragrant; and pleasant for smell, of all flowers. Thirdly, wholesome and medicinable for use; yet it is also soon fading: continueth but a while, not to be seen above a month or two, all the year long, but in some conserves or syrups made of it.

*Sharon*] Is an open fruitful field in *Bashan*, under *Lebanon* where the King's herds were wont to feed, 1 *Chron.* 5:16. and *Chap.* 27:29. excellent for fatness, and fruitfulness, *Isaiah* 33:9. and *Chap.* 27:29. There was a Town in that tract of the same Name, whence *Shetrai* was called the *Sharonite* (1 *Chron.* 27:29.) as dwelling in that Town. But *Sharon* here is an appellative, as appeareth by [[ $\pi$ ]] *hagedagnah notificatedum*, which is not wont to be prefixed to proper names, which implieth that the Church at that time, though in respect of some

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choice members, *Josiah* himself and the basket of good figs carried away in the days of *Jehoiakim*, Dan. 1:1,2,3, &c. *Jechoniah*, Jer. 24:5. it was as a rose, yet not as a rose in a Garden enclosed and fenced, but lying in open fields exposed to be cropped, or trod down of the beasts of the field, sometimes the *Babylonians*, sometime the *Egyptians*. *Josiah*. no flower so fragrant, 1 *Kings* 23:25. yet *Pharaoh Necho* soon cropped him, v. 29. *Jehoahaz* reigned three months, v. 31. and *Pharaoh* cropped him also, plucked him away, put him in bonds, carried him to *Egypt*: and put the land to a Tribute of one hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold, v. 33. *Jehojakim* succeeded him, and though he reigned eleven years, yet after his first three years, several bands of enemies invaded and spoiled him, 1 *Kings* 24:1,2. *Jechoniah* after him reigned but three months, and then *Nebuchadnezzar* cropped him, 2 *Kings* 24:8, to 16. and the flower of *Jerusalem* with him, Jer. 24:5. *Zedekiah* after him reigned (as a tributary Prince) eleven years, but in his ninth year the *Babylonians* came against him, besieged the City three years, in the end took it, and carried him and his people captive, burnt the Temple the fairest and sweetest Rose (or flower) of that State.

*The lily of the valleys*] A sweet flower too, but growing low, not an hand-length high, though the white, and red lily be tall. The Kingdom was then low and base.

*Use 2. As the lily among thorns: so is my love amongst the daughters.*] Which argueth, 1. That the Church is now not in any walled, or cultured garden; for these thorns are not wanted to grow. 2. That yet the fields the thorn were an annoyance to it, as it were pricking, and scratching it, thorns are an impediment to growth, *Matthew* 13:7. 3. That nevertheless it was defended by God amongst these thorns, from being licked and swallowed up among these wild beasts of the field. The *Babylonian* was willing to preserve it a Kingdom to be a defence against the *Egyptian*, and the *Egyptian* was willing to let it stand against the *Babylonian*. But God protected it against both, so as they that kicked, kicked against a thorny hedge, and pricked and galled themselves at length. Thorns hedge in the Spouse in her way, *Hos.* 2:6. and prevent the cropping and brouzing of beasts.

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*Doct.* 1. The Church of Christ is unto Christ even in her worst times as a rose of the field, as a lily of the valleys, *v.* 1,2. Her worst times be times of, 1. Declination, and apostacy. 2. Calamity and captivity, which were the times of the Church of *Judah*, from the latter end of *Josiah's* Reign to the captivity of *Zedekiah*.

*Reas.* Why as such a Rose and Lily, 1. From the sweetness and fragrancy of some members amongst many weeds: some were as a rose, and *lily of the valleys*, *Ezek.* 9:4. *Rev.* 5:9. *Jer.* 24:2. when the rest were a generation of God's wrath-

*Reas.* 2. From their low and mean estate like the lily *convallium*, not an hand's length high, *Ezek.* 17:14.

*Reas.* 3. For the want of culture and defence either from good Magistrates, or Ministers, as a rose in *Sharon*, whence also they lie open to treading down, and cropping off by the beasts of the field, *Psalms* 80:12,13.

*Reas.* 4. From some preservation for a while, by those who annoy them. The thorns preserve them somewhat: so did the *Babylonians* preserve *Judah* awhile from the *Ægyptians*, and the *Ægyptian* from the *Babylonian*. So did the King of *Spain* preserve the life of the Lady *Elizabeth* for fear of the *French*, who had married the Queen of *Scots*.

*Reas.* 5. From want of open flourishing and conspicuity, but as a rose which flourisheth, for a month, and yet is secretly kept in conserves all the year.

*Use* 1. To reprove the seekers nullity of the Church, during the Reign of Antichrist, *New Babel* hath not more prevailed against the Church, then the old *Babel* did against the Church of *Judah*.

*Use* 2. To refute the Popish exception against the visibility of our Church before *Luther*.

*Use* 3. To teach Christians to grow the more savoury and fragrant, and gracious in declining times, when many about them grow like nettles, briars and thorns.

*Use* 4. For comfort to Churches in their lowed estates; For, 1. Christ will preserve a remnant, 2. This remnant shall be fragrant as roses, or lilies. 3. Their very annoyers shall be their defenders, at lead for a time, *Hos.* 2:6 Thorns are our defenders, 4. Christ will conserve us, when out flourishing is past,

## CHAP. 2. ver. 3.

3. *As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.*

**I**N these sad and afflictive times of the Churches the Lord Jesus declareth, how his Church is esteemed and acknowledged of him, (to wit) as a lily amongst thorns: so she declareth how Christ is to her, *As the apple-tree amongst the trees of the Forest: so is my beloved among the sons of men*, and that in a threefold resemblance, 1. Of the tree it self, in comparison of other trees. 1. Of the shadow of it, and her affection to it, *I sat under his shadow with great delight*. 3. Of the fruit of it, *his fruit was sweet unto my taste*.

*Doct.* 1. When the Church is to Christ, as a lily amongst thorns, then is the Lord Jesus to the Churches an apple tree among the trees of the Forrest.

As an apple-tree, 1. For mediocrity of statute, not like the high Cedars of *Lebanon*, as was the *African* and *Babylonian*, *Ezek.* 31:3, to 8. *Dan.* 4:20,21,22. *Nebuchadnezzar* grew as high as created under-moon-excellency could grow; not as the strong Oaks of *Bashan* which yield fruit only for beasts, or no fruit at all, as the Cedar and Elms but of a low condition, 1. In himself not putting for any eminent acts of his sovereign authority; as, *Psalm* 46:10. as he did in the days of *Hezekiah* against *Sennacherib*, or in the days of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Dan.* 3:29. 2. In his vicegerents, overtopped by the trees of the Forest, as was *Josiah* and his successors, and *Gedaliah*, whose safety was to be servants to foreign States, *Ezek.* 17:14. 2 *Kings* 25:23,24.

2. *For comfortable shadow*] or defence, or protection. For so Christ gives a shadow, 1. From the heat of God's wrath, 1 *Thes.* 1:10. 2. From persecution and affliction, *Isaiah* 4:6. and 25:4. A shadow Christ giveth. 1. In himself, *Psalm* 121:5,6,7. 2. In his vicegerents in respect of protection from oppression and affliction, *Lam.* 4:20.

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3. For variety of good fruit; no tree yieldeth more variety of fruit, wholesome and good fruit, than the Apple-tree doth. The Cedars, Firs and Elms yield no fruit at all. The Oaks yield only fruit for swine, Acorns. The Apple-tree chiefly yieldeth variety of fruit, and that, 1. Cordial, *Cant.* 2:5. 2. Sweet, for Smell, *Cant.* 7:8. Taste, *Cant.* 2:3.

The fruit of Christ is Cordial, Sweet, whether, 1. Growing upon himself, as our redemption, *Psalms* 130:7,8. *Psalms* 34:8. our vocation, 1 *Pet.* 2:3. *Mat.* 23:37. our justification, *Rom.* 5:1. and 14:17. our sanctification, *Phil.* 11. Also, 1. His Gospel, 2 *Cor.* 2:15. 2. His seals, *John* 6:55. though spoken of Christ in any Ordinance. 3. His Spirit, *Psalms* 143:10. *John* 14:16,17. 2. Growing upon his vicegerents and members, *Gal.* 5:12. Magistrates, Ministers, Private Christians.

*Use* 1. To behold this Scripture fulfilled, as in those afflicted times of the Church in the end of *Josiah's* times to the captivity, and in the captivity under *Gedaliah*, *Daniel*, &c. So in our own days, God even our Lord Jesus hath provided for us, such a Magistracy, wherein himself is as an Apple-tree to us. They are not as Cedars, or Oaks, but of a more mediocrity of stature: no great store of malt under them for swine, but variety of all comfortable fruit for men; we have sat down under Christ's shadow under them with great delight: His fruit growing on them hath been sweet to us.

*Use* 2. To teach weary and thirsty travellers laden with burden of sin, scorched with the fire of God's wrath, longing after the taste of God's favour in Christ, what course to take (to wit): to rest to Christ. 1. To desire earnestly his shadow to over-shadow us, for so the word is here, in Piel [[חִסְרוֹת]] I earnestly desired to sit down under him. 2. To sit down under his shadow: not under our own means, and strength, or mans, but under his, *Psalms* 91:1,2.

*Use* 3. To take notice of our spiritual estate, by our desire to sit down under his shadow, by our delight in it, by sweetness of his fruit unto our taste.

*Use* 4. To teach all that supply the place of Christ in Church or Commonwealth, to carry themselves to inferiors, as Christ doth, to be as an Apple-tree, (Magistrates, Elders, Husbands, Parents, Masters, &c.) unto all under them, to yield them, 1. Comfortable shadow. 2. Wholesome fruit.

*Use* 5. For comfort of Christ's lilies among thorns; Christ

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is to such as an Apple-tree amongst the trees of the Forrest, more excellent then the sons of men, *Psalm 45:2.*

**Chap. 2. ver. 4,5,6,7.**

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 sick of love.*

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

7. *I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the Roes, and by the Hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please.*

**I**N this Verse to the end of the seventh, is set forth the State of the Church in the *Babylonish* captivity, with the mutual intercourse of love-passages between Christ and her in that condition. The captivity the Church describeth, 1. By the similitude of a winecellar, as the *Geneva* fitly translateth it; not so fitly turned a banquetting House, which *Solomon* expresseth by another name [[*בית משתה*]] *Eccles. 7:2.* A wine-Cellar at first entrance appeareth, 1. A dark. 2. Cold, raw. 3. Deep vault under the earth, yet by the wine therein, it is found to be, 1. Spiritual. 2. Hearty and lively. 3. Warm, and comfortable. 2. By the chief author of her coming thither, *He brought me* (to wit) Christ. 3. By Christ's loving Protection of her there, *Love was his banner over me, ver. 4:4.* By her longing and fainting affection after Christ, *ver. 5:5,* By his familiar embracing of her with both arms, *ver. 6:6.* By her charge to her daughters to beware of unseasonable attempts of seeking to change their estate, till Christ's appointed time, *ver. 7.*

*Doct. 1.* Howsoever deep and low, cold and raw, dark and gloomy, the afflicted estate of the Spouse of Christ may seem to be in extreme calamity: yet when the Lord is acknowledged, and found in it, it is found to be spiritual, and lively, warm and nourishing, wholesome and comfortable, O; thus, when



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Christ bringeth his Spouse into a Dungeon, she findeth it a Wine-celiar. The Spouses Dungeon is Christ's Wine-cellar, *Psalm* 119:71. *Dan.* 1:17. and 2:19, to 23. Spiritual gifts and fulness of them seem like fulness of new Wine, *Acts* 12:13.

*Reas.* 1. From the trial of faith in it. 1. Beholding God's hand in it, and looking off from instruments, *He brought me*, Text, *Gen.* 45:4, to 8. *Job* 1:20. 2 *Sam.* 16:10. 2. Acknowledging the cause of his hand, to be his faithfulness, *Psalm* 119:75. As a faithful shepherd driveth tainted sheep to salt marshes. 3. For gracious ends, *Deut.* 8:16. *John.* 23:10. *Isaiah.* 27:9. *Heb.* 12:6, to 11.

*Reas.* 2. From the manifestation of God's love to us in affliction, *Jer.* 48:10. In the Text, 1. *His love is a btanner o-ver us*, 1. For defence against danger, *Dan.* 3:25. and 6:22. 2. For defiance against enemies, *Dan.* 3:29. and 6:24. 2. *He embraced her with both arms*, 1. Left hand of riches and honour, (*Prov.* 3:16.) *Dan.* 2:48,49. 2. Right hand of immortality. *Prov.* 3:16. in the Ministry of *David* and *Ezekiel*.

*Reas.* 3. From the manifestation of the Spouses love to Christ, in her affliction, *Psalm* 44:17,18,19. *Job* 1:20,21. In the Text *Daniel* through abundance of Revelation was faint and sick, and longingly desirous of more clear knowledge of his visions, and of the Churches deliverance and found the Angel ready to refresh and strengthen him, *Dan.* 8:27. and 10:8, to 12. and *v.* 16, to 19. And the other godly members of the Church, settling such sweet taste of the pretence of Christ amongst them in the captivity, did find their fainting and longing desires satisficed and their spirits supported. 1. By the Ministry of the Prophets, *Daniel* and *Ezekiel*, as by flagons of wine, who also embraced her with comfortable encouragement as by the embraces or the tight hand, *v.* 6. 2. By the Magistracy of *Daniel*, and his fellows; the three Princes) whom the King set up for inferior Magistrates, *Dan.* 2:48,49. which were as a left hand under her head, *v.* 6. the fruit of whose government was as Apples, themselves being apple-trees, *v.* 2. Apples are cordials (in *Fernelius.*) 1. Comforting heart and brain. 2. Preventing swoonings 3. Restraining poisons. Again in the text, the Church manifesteth, and expresseth another fruit of her love to Christ: By her charge to her daughters (the members of the Church) to beware of unseasonable attempts to seek their liberty in the change of

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their estate from captivity till Christ's appointed time, *ver. 7. 1 adjure you, or charge you, or cause you to swear, by the Roes, and by the Hinds of the field*] Roes and Hinds are wild and fearful creatures, easily and swiftly running away, yet otherwise willing to feed and converse with the sheep; but if any noise or tumult arise, they are presently gone. Such were then the Gentiles that were willing to converse with the Jews, and to come onward towards their Religion. But if the estate of the Church should have proved troublesome, by any indiscreet or offensive carriage of the Jews, they would soon have started back from them. By these the Church chargeth her daughters, not as the persons by whom they were to swear, (for no oath is lawful by creaturr, *Matth. 5:34, to 37.*) but as those for whose sakes, they were to take themselves bound, as by a solemn Oath. *Not to stir up nor awake my love*] that is, not to provoke Christ, to change the present estate of the Church, till his own appointed time be come, wherein he will be pleased to do it himself. The like charge *Jeremy* gave them by letters into *Babel, Jer. 29:4, to 9.*

*Use 1.* For a sign of Trial of our estates, whether we be spouses of Christ, or no.

If yea, 1. Our afflictions are consolations, and Nurtures, *2 Cor. 1:4. Deut. 8:5.* 2. Our faith looketh upon Christ's hand in them, his grounds, his ends. 3. His love is more manifested to us in them. 4. Our love is more manifested to him 1. In longing after him and fainting for him, *Text, ver. 5:2.* In contentment with our conditional, till he send release, *Text, ver. 7. Lev. 26:41.* If they accept *&c.*

*Use 2.* To instruct us to aright profitable, comfortable use of Afflictions. To look at God's hind in all, and not at instruments. To entertain, loving thoughts of God, take his dungeons for wine cellars. To observe his gracious dealings with us. To return meekness, and patience, and longing desires to him.

*Use 1.* For comfort to Christ his spouses, whether Churches, Souls; your worst Estate is wine-cellars.

**Chap. 2. ver. 8,9,10,11,12,13,14.**

8. *The voice of my beloved! behold, he commeth leaping upon the mountains, 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 himself through the lattice.*

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

11. *For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over, and gone.*

12. *The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the Turtle it heard in our land.*

13. *The Fig-tree putteth forth her green Figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair fine, and come away.*

14. *O my dove! that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs: let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.*

**I**N these Verses are set forth the love-token, that passed between Christ and his Church, in bringing them out of the Babylonian captivity, and calling them back again to return to their own Country. The spouse acknowledged his love, 2. In his voice it is the voice of my beloved, 2. In his speedy coming expressed, 1. In the Acts of swift motion leaping, skipping, and that over difficulties and uneven ways, over mountains and hills, *ver. 8.* 2. In a similitude from the nimblest and swiftest creatures like a Roe, like a young Hind, *ver. 9.* 3. In his presence, expressed in four Actions, 1. He standeth behind our wall. 2. He looketh forth at the windows. 3. He showeth himself through the lattice, *ver. 9.* 4. He spake to me, *ver. 10.*

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The Beloved in his speech expresseth his love, 1. By calling her away (to wit, into her own land, where the voice of the Turtle was heard, *ver. 12.*) *Arise my love my fair one, and come away, ver. 10.* Which call he urgeth. 1. By declaring the Removal of Impediments. For lo, 1. *The winter is past. 2. The storm (or strong shower) is over and gone, ver. 11. 2.* By setting before her the invitements & encouragements to come away into their Country. Which invitements be, 1. The flowers appear on the earth. 2. The time of the singing of birds is come, 3. The voice of the Turtle is heard in our land, *v. 12.* 4. The Fig-tree putteth forth her green figs. 5. The vine with her tender grape giveth a good smell, *ver. 13.* Whence the call to come away is ingeminated *Arise my love, my fair one, and come away, ver. 13.*

2. By calling her forth to public worship of him in stead of that former private worship, which he was wanted to in *Babel, verse 14.* and that set forth, 1. By the contrary private worship, formerly in *Babel, Thou that hast been in the clefts of the Rocks in the Holes of the stairs.* Let me 1. See thy face, 2. Hear thy voice. 3. By a Reason, 1. From the sweetness of her voice. 2. From the comeliness of her countenance, *verse 14.*

Verse 8. *The voice of my Beloved*] This is a distinct voice from that *ver. 1.* no express words are here expressed, but Actions related. The voice was the report and rumour of *Cyrus* his coming to besiege *Babel*, and his muttering together of many Nations to that expedition, *Jer. 50:9.* This Rumour was discerned by the faithful to be the voice of Christ accomplishing the prophecies given them, by the Word of Christ in the mouth of *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah, Isaiah 44:28.* and *45:1. &c. Jer. 50:43.* and *51:46.* Hence the Church hearing this rumour do suddenly acknowledge the voice and promise or Christ: and so it was no less grateful to them, then doleful and dreadful to the Babylonians, *Jer. 50:43.*

Verse 9. *He commeth leaping upon the Mountains, skipping upon the hills, my beloved is like a Roe, or young Hart.*]

It is the life of Faith, to behold the presence and face & hand of Christ in all the Instruments, which Christ setteth a work. *Jacob* saw the face of God in *Easu, Gen. 33:10.* So this People saw the presence and coming of Christ to their deliverance, in the coming of *Cyrus.* The words then express the great speed and expedition, which *Cyrus* made in his voyage against *Babel.* All the many and great Nations that by in his way,

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1. Either of themselves readily opened, their gates to him, as weary of the Babylonians yoke, *Isaiah* 45:1, I will open before him the two leaved Gates, &c. 2. Or were speedily surprised and subdued by him, *Isaiah* 45:2. I will break the Gates of Brass, &c.

The young Hart and Roe are the swiftest of foot, 2 *Sam.* 2:18. 1 *Chron.* 12:8. and leaping and skipping holdeth forth agility and speed.

*He standeth behind* (or without) *our wall*] as laying siege to the walls of *Babylon*.

*Hi looked forth at the window*] The window was an open breach or space in the wall, through which the great River *Euphrates* ran through the midst of *Babylon*, That opened to *Cyrus* a light of hope to surprise the City by turning the stream of the River into another Channel above the City, and leaving breach in the wall (through which the River was wont to run,) dry. *Jer.* 50:38.

*He showeth himself through the Lattice*] Showeth himself that is (as the word signifieth) blossometh out as a flower out of his green Husk, or Blade. The lattice (in the original) is any hole, or passage burnt through, so in the Siege of *Babel*, *Cyrus* having diverted the River, he dried the old Channel that went through the City, and burnt up the Reeds (whereof the Banks of the River were full, and so shewed himself like a flower flourishing in that passage) and entered the City, *Jer.* 51:31,32.

*Ver. 10. My Beloved spake and said to me, Arise my love my fair one & come away*] Though *Cyrus* knew not Christ the beloved of the Church (*Isaiah* 45:4,5) yet the Church knew & acknowledged the voice of Christ, in *Cyrus* his proclamation, releasing her out of captivity, and calling her to return into her own Country, *Ezra* 1:1, to 4. Whence *Ezra* there saith, The Lord stirred up the Spirit of *Cyrus*, v. 1.

*Vers. 11. For lo, the Winter is, &c*] To wit both the natural Winter, the stormy Rain whereof might have hindered travel: and also the metaphorical Winter of *Babe's* captivity was now expired, and all the storms of it was blown over, whence the Chaldee word [[סתו]] is here used to signify this winter, not the common Hebrew word [[חרק]]: Chaldee words are fittest to express Chaldee things.

*Vers. 12:13. The flowers appear on the earth, &c*]

These two verses are a description, 1. Of the Spring-time of

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the year, which invited them to this voyage, for it was in the Spring-time, when this journey of the *Jews* from *Babel* to *Jerusalem* was undertaken, for it was a journey of four months (as appeareth *Ezra* 7:9) and the first solemn feast which they kept was in the seventh month, *Ezra* 3:1,4. So they came out of *Babel* in the Spring foregoing, and housed themselves, *Ezra* 2:70.

2. Of the Invitements and encouragements civil and Spiritual, which might invite them to undertake the journey.

*The Flowers appear on the earth*] Even the people of the Country about them did (as it were) strew there way with Flowers, affording them liberally all help to their journey gold, silver, goods, vessels, beasts, *Ezra* 1:6, to 11.

*The time of singing of Birds is come*] the Priests and Levites should now sing and praise God in their own Country, which they thought unseasonable in a strange land, *Psalms* 137:34.

*The voice of the Turtle is heard in our land*] The voice of Christ (the faithful spouse of his Church) is mourning in *Judea* because he findeth not his mate, his Church therein.

*The Fig-tree putteth forth her green Figs, the vines with the tender grapes thereof give a good smell*] The chiel of the Fathers and Elders of the People, they show themselves forward to prepare for the journey, and to countenance it and to carry it along, *Ezra* 2:2.

*Arise, my Love, my fair one, and come away*] This ingemination of the same call to the same duty, *verse* 10. and *verse* 13. argueth, 1. The serious desire of Christ.

2. The weight of the Duty.

3. The speed required [*Gen.* 41:32.]

4. The Slowness of the people to it, many of them hence, *Zech.* 2:7.

*Doct.* 1. The spouse of Christ doth discern and acknowledge presence, and voice, and hand of Christ, in the waves of his instruments. In the Rumour of *Cyrus* his coming to besiege *Babel*, the Church discerneth and heareth the voice of Christ expressing the approach of the accomplishment of his Promise.

In the speedy coming and march of *Cyrus*, they discern the approach of Christ; Christ commeth like a Roe, or young Hart. In *Cyrus* besieging *Babel* about the walls, they behold Christ behind the wall. In *Cyrus* his observing the open

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places of the wall, and marching through the Reeds they see Christ looking through the window, and flourishing through the lattice. In *Cyrus* his proclamation, they discern the voice of Christ calling them out of *Babel*, to return to *Jerusalem*. So *Jacob*, Gen. 33:10. So *Joseph*, Gen. 45:4, to 8. So *David*, 2 Sam. 16:10.

*Reason 1.* From the principal powerful influence of the first cause in all second causes, Christ is first and last, *Rev.* 1:17.

*Reason 2.* From the life of Faith to discern this.

*Use 1.* To teach us the like spiritual discerning of Christ in all his providences about us in all the Acts of instruments.

It wil make us, 1. More humble and patient in Crosses, *Job* 1. *ver.* 10. 1 *Sam.* 16. *ver.* 10. 2. More thankful and comfortable in blessings received, *Text.*

*Doct.* 2. When the time of the spouses Deliverance is come, Christ will come quickly and speedily to perform it. Like a Roe or an Hart, skipping leaping, over mountains, hills, all difficulties, *Heb.* 10:37. *Exod.* 12:41.

*Reas.* From the faithfulness of God to mind his Word, 1 *Pet.* 3:9. To delay one day were to him as a thousand years.

*Use 1.* To teach us to wait quietly for his appointed time, yet look for him by degrees, which are shadowcd out in the *Text*, A voice of Christ giving hopes afar off, then his approaches nearer, than presence, but behind a wall, a partition-wall of an hard heart, then a window of hope, light through a lattice then lively voice, my love, my fair one; come away, my love, my fair one.

*Doct.* 3. The spouses winter-storms shall not always lie upon her, they shall in the end blow over her, *ver.* 11. *Psalm* 125:3. *Micah* 7:9.

*Reas.* 1. From our fellowship with Christ as well in his Resurrection as in his Death, *Rom.* 6:4,5. *Hosea* 6:1,2.

*Reas.* 2. From the Lord's delight in our prosperity, *Psalm* 35. *ver.* 27.

3. For prevention of our Apostasy into evil, *Psalm* 125:3.

*Use.* To train us up to patience and hope in ill hours.

*Doct.* 4. It is a fit season to return to our Native Country, when the Winter storm is over, when every Ordinance of God is settled in peace and purity, and when concourse of providence giveth fair opportunity, *Vers.* 11,12,13. Here, 1. The Winter is over, *ver.* 11. Captivity dissolved, liberty of

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return proclaimed by *Cyrus*. 2. The voice of the Turtle is heard in our land, *ver.* 12. that is, Christ waiting for us in his Ordinances. The birds Singing, Levites administering God's praise. 3. Concourse of providences means offered (the way strewed with flowers) gracious Magistrates, that would refresh commerson, yeilding green Figs; tender grapes, and abandoning venomous Serpents from under their shadow. For (as *Merer* noteth) Serpents will not abide under the shadow of the vine.

*Reas.* 1. From the preferment due to Spiritual Liberties and Ordinances, above chiefest Wordly blessings, *Matth.* 6:33.

*Reas.* 2. From an evident call of God to undertake such a voyage, when the door of impediments is shut, and the door of encouragements and opportunities is opened.

*Use* 1. To approve our calling, where all these were found: no winter-storms in the State, the liberty of Ordinances, Providences opening a door.

*Use* 2. To observe the same before any return.

*Use* 3. To warn us not to go unloving to Christ, and soul out of *New-England*, when they went lovely, and fair out of *Babel*.

*Doct.* 5. The Lord Jesus is earnest to call his spouse out of *Babel* unto the Liberty, Purity of *Zion*, hence the ingemination, *ver.* 10,17. *Zech.* 2:7.

*Reas.* 1. From the weight of the Duty [as in the ingemination of *Amen*, *John* 3:5.]

*Reas.* 2. From the slowness of our hearts to it. Creature-comforts detain in *Babel*, when men are well nestled for outward things.

*Reas.* 3. From God's hast certainly to perform it, [See the like Reason given of an Ingemination, *Gen.* 41:32.]

*Use* 1. To teach us to be more slow of removal from liberty, purity of Ordinance.

*Doct.* 6. The land where the Church is seated, is the land of Christ, together with hiss Church. The voice of the Turtle is heard in our land *v* 12. *Isaiah* 8:8. thy land, O *Emmanuel* [thy land God with us] *Levit.* 19:33. with 25:23.

*Reas.* From Christ's promise of cohabitation with his Spouse *John* 14:23. 1 *John* 4:15,18. 8. The promise is to Faith, *v.* 15. Love *ver.* 16. As an husband cohabiteth with his wife, 1 *Pet.* 3:7.

*Use* 1. To beware of bringing up an evil Report upon the land, *Numb.* 14:37. *Ezek.* 36:13.



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*Use* 2. To learn us contentment and comfort in our condition, where the Lord dwelleth with us, there dwelleth all-sufficient Goodness. *Ob. Judges* 6:12,13.

*Doct.* 7. The spouse of Christ may be chaste and innocent, and yet sometime latent or hidden. The Church of Christ, he here calleth her *my Dove*. The Dove is noted, for 1. Chaste, keeping constant the one mate to the other, *Cant.* 1:15. and 2. Innocent, *Matth.* 10:16.

Such was this Church towards the end, of the Babylonian captivity, *Jer.* 29:11, to 14. Yet a Dove, 1. In the clefts of Rocks, 2. In the secret holes of the stairs: to wit, because she worshipped God in secret conventicles, 1 *Kings* 19:18. *Jerem.* 13. *ver.* 17.

*Reas.* 1. From the danger of public worship of God in captivity, or under persecution, *Exod.* 8:26. or at least the Unseasonableness of it, *Psalms* 137:4.

*Reas.* 2. From the still voice of Christ breathing in his people, at such a time, not in vehement power, and zeal always, 1 *Kings* 19:11,12,13.

*Use* 1. To refute the seekers, who think the visible Church was extinguished under the tyranny of Antichrist. The Church then worshipped God in clefts of rocks and holes under the stairs.

*Use* 1. To answer the *Quære*, and challenge of Papists, where was your Church before *Luther?* in clefts of rocks, holes of stairs, prisons, wildernesses, &c. *Heb.* 11:38. *Rev.* 12:6.

*Doct.* 8. The pretence of a chaste spouse of Christ in a public assembly, whether in speaking, or hearing, is pleasing and desirable to the Lord Jesus. It is the Church of a Dove-like spirit, which Christ calleth forth from the clefts of the rocks, from under the stairs in *Babel*, to wit, into more public solemn assemblies in their own Country: Let me see thy face, let me hear thy voice: As if her voice, and face were very welcome, well-pleasing and desireable to him, *Psalms* 84:1. and 27:4.

*Reas.* 1. From the comeliness of the countenance and face of an holy Congregation. Partly, 1. By the holy reverence which the Presence of Christ putteth upon them, *Psalms* 89:7.

1. By the lustre which the graces of the Spirit dwelling in their hearts, and shining forth in their countenance holdeth forth, *Eccles.* 8:1. *Acts* 6:15.

*Reas.* 2. From the sweetness of her voice, whether, 1. In prayer, *Rev.* 8:3,4. *Psalms* 14:1,2. 2. preaching, *Rom.* 10:15. 3. Sing-

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ing, *Coloss.* 3:16. The word sweet in Hebrew signifieth mixed, as mixed as was that Voice of 1. Singing, 2. Weeping after their return, at the laying of the foundation of the Temple, *Ezra* 3: 11,12,13.

This sweatness sprung partly, 1. From the power and favour of the breath of the Spirit, breathing in all the Ordinances: In prayer, *Rom.* 8:26,27. In preaching, *1 Cor.* 2:4. In singing, *1 Cor.* 14: 15. and in all expressions, *1 Pet.* 4:11. 2. From the sweet savour of the graces of the Spirit, in the hearts and utterance of the Saints, *1 Cor.* 12:7.

*Use* 1. To teach us the Church needeth no mediations of Saints or Angels; for the Churches' own presence, and voice is amiable, and acceptable to Christ, *John* 16:26,27.

*Use* 2. To teach us so to order, all our solemn Assemblies, as no unsweet voice may be heard amongst us, nor any uncomely carriage, *1 Cor.* 11:10. Not fine cloathes but a sincere heart, *1 Tim.* 2:9,10. *1 Pet.* 3:3,4. Hypocrisy one gross sin makes public meetings loathsome to God, *Isaiah* 1:12, *Jer.* 6:7,9,10.

*Use* 3. To beware of loathing, and waxing weary of holy Assemblies. *David* thought them amiable, and longed for them, *Psalms* 84:1,2,3,4. and 63:1,2.

**Chap. 2. ver. 15,16,17.**

15. *Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grafts.*

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

17. *Until the day break, and the shadows flee away: turn my beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or a young Hart, upon the Mountains of Bether.*

**T**Hese words do see forth the estate of the Church, returned to *Judea*, after the captivity of *Babel*. 1. Their Annoyance by foxes, little foxes, *ver.* 15. 2. Their comfortable communion with Christ and Christ's with them, after the taking of these foxes, *ver.* 16. 3. The Churches earnest desire that Christ would, 1. Not long. 2. Nor far off withdraw himself

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her help, and comfort, till the shadow of the ceremonies vanish away, *ver.* 17.

In *ver.* 15. *Observ.* 1. What kind of enemies the Church was then annoyed with, foxes, little foxes.

*Observ.* 2. What annoyance they did to the Church, They destroyed the vines, the small vines.

*Observ.* 3. The course, that Christ and his Church will take with them, implied in that word of command, Take us the foxes, the little foxes.

Foxes are not the greatest and strongest ravenous beasts, but of a smallest size, and prevail more by craft, and subtilty, then by open violence and rage. The great Monarchies are compared to greater beasts, the Babylonian to the Lyon, *Dan.* 7:4. The Persian to the Bear, *Dan.* 7:5. The Grecian to a Leopard, *Dan.* 7:6.

The foxes were none of these: but the inferior officers under the Persian Monarch: such as the Samaritans, who craftily meant to hinder the Jews, by proffering help, *Ezra* 4:1,2,4,5,6, to 16. Such were *Sanballat*, *Tobiah*, who sought to disturb their work and scoffed at it, as ruinable by foxes, *Neh.* 4:1,2,3. and meant to come upon them like foxes unawares, *v.* 11. and conspired many ways to hinder them, 1. By Treaties, *Neh.* 6:2,5,6,7. 2. By false Prophets, *Neh.* 6:10, to 13. 3. By secret intelligences. *Neh.* 6:17,18,19. Such was also *Haman*, *Esther* 3:8,9. Such were also the usurpers oppressing the poor (as foxes destroying the small Grapes) *Neh.* 5:2,3,4,5,7,8.

*Doct.* 1. When the spouse of Christ hath been delivered from the Rage, and ravenous fury of Lyons and Bears, they are then subject to be annoyed by crafty and malignant foxes. This taketh in the two former points of this *verse*. Time was when the Church complained, as a vineyard destroyed by wild beasts and Boars, *Psalms* 80:13. and 57:4. But now by foxes *Tcxt.* *Cæsar* was a Lion, 1 *Tim.* 4:17, but *Herod* was a Fox, *Luke* 13:32. and so was his father before him, *Matth.* 2:8,16. pretending worship, but intending slaughter, and destroyed the tender grapes, the young children of *Bethlehem*, yea, he would have destroyed Christ himself, and sought it, *verse* 13.

Thus there Foxes seek to destroy the weak of the Church, 1. Sometime by murder, as *Herod*. 2. Sometime by interupting Church-work, *Ezra* 4. 3. Sometime by corrupting Religion, *Ezek.* 13:4.

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*Reas.* 1. From Satan's restless Rage, and variety of means to annoy the Church; has he is a murderer: so a liar, *John* 8:44. He can devour like a Bear: & cunningly deceive like a Fox. He perfected *Paul*. sometime by Tyrants, sometime by false brethren.

*Use* 1. To teach us our danger, such as are going for *England*, and such as stay at home. What though the tyranny of the Papacy, and Prelacy be subdued? yet now beware of Foxes, spirits of error. They will be like *Sampson's* Foxes, one sort of of them tied like *Sampson's* Foxes) by the tails in one Name of Independency: the other sort in one Name of Uniformity; but wisdom is justified of our children.

*Use* 1. To learn as watchfulness against these Foxes.

*Means*, 1. Growth unto unity of Faith, strength of stature in Christ, *Eph.* 4:13,14. 2. Pastors and Teachers given of Christ, that we may not be as children carried away with every wind of Doctrine by the craftiness of Deceivers, *Eph.* 4:11,12,13,14.

*Doct.* 2. Christ will take a course to take these Foxes, them and their young ones. Take us these Foxes, these little Foxes. God set *Esther* a work to take *Haman* in a Toil at a Banquet, yea, both he and his sons (his young cubs) were taken, *Esther* 7:6,10, and 9:14. *Rev.* 19:20. God taketh them sometime, 1. By taking them down, they fall from their high honours, *Esther* 6:10,13. 2. By chaining them short by strong edicts and Laws, *Ezra* 6:6,7,11,12,13. This taketh them short. 3. By exemplary punishment, *Esther* 7:10. and 9:14. This taketh them off, 4. By strong conviction, 2 *Tim.* 3:8,9. *Tit.* 1:11. This taketh them in.

*Reas.* 1. From the Father's interest in their Church, 1 *Thes.* 1:1. and his power and wrath against their enemies and annoyances, *Ezra* 6:12.

*Reas.* 1. From the Foxes disturbing and dissolving the work of Christ, *Acts* 9:4.

*Reas.* 3. From the wrong done to the Holy Ghost by these Foxes who will therefore destroy them, 1 *Cor.* 3:16,17.

*Use* 1. To discourage Foxes, *Psalms* 129:5, to 8. They themselves shall be a portion for Foxes, *Psalms* 63:10.

*Use* 2. For comfort to the spouse of Christ, *Psalms* 58:10.

*Use* 3. To teach us Christ, and his spouse have, 1. Fruits, 2. Friends. 3. Foxes in common.

*Fruits*] our vines have small Grapes, The vines, the particular Synagogues & the small or tender, grapes belong alike to both.

*Friends*] Take us. It shall be a like common service and office done to both.

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*The Foxes, little Foxes]* A like annoyance to both, enemies to both.

*Doct.* 1. There is a mutual union, and communion between Christ and his spouse, and sometimes a freedom in her to discern and profess it.

*My beloved is mine, and I am his]* Expresseth mutual union, communion between Christ and his spouse.

This mutual union and communion was transacted, and expressed at that time, 1. By their mutual Covenant, solemnly entered into in a day of public Humiliation, *Neh.* 9:38. with *Chap.* 10:28,29, &c. And God accepted it for his part, *Jer.* 29:10, to 13. This Covenant is the way of Church-union with Christ, *Ezek.* 16:8. 2. By removing public Disturbances, with open scandals, and corruptions. The Foxes (who disturbed them) were, 1. Some restrained, *Ezra* 6:6,7. 2. Some defeated, *Neh.* 6. 3. Some destroyed, *Esther* 17:0 [7:10]. with 9:14. Scandals, and open corruptions removed; 1. Strange Wives, *Ezra* 10:11,12. *Neh.* 13:23, to 30. 2. Usury and oppression, *Neh.* 5:1, to 13. 3. Pollution of the Temple by aliens, *Neh.* 13:5, to 8. 4. Profanation of the Sabbath, *Neh.* 13:15, to 22. And this is an Act of marriage-communion, *Isaiah* 1:25,26,27.

1. By establishing the Ordinances of God, in due order, the Priests and Levites in their places, *Net* 13:10, to 14. and *Chap.* 9:30, to 39. Where also a course taken for supply of Sacrifices and oblations. The members in Purity, Text. Hence Christ said, *To feed among Lilies*, The Lilies so taken for pure members, *Cant.* 2:2. and 7:2.

And this is an Act of Marriage-love, *Jer.* 3:14,15. *Isaiah* 62. v. 5,6,7.

4. By settling the Civil State in peace and righteousness, Magistrates, Nursing-fathers, *Zerubabel*, *Mordecai*, *Nehemiah*, also, and *Pethaiah*, at the King's hand (an Agent) for the people, *Nehem.* 11:24. The people quietly sitting down in their several inheritances, some in the City, (blessed are all the people) *Neh.* 11:2. others in other Cities, and Villages in the Country, *Neh.* 11:1. throughout the *Chapter*.

This is a fruit of Marriage love, *Isaiah* 60:7,18. *Zech.* 3. v. 10. The peoples safe peace, a sign of God's favour, though his servant (*the branches*, v. 8) to his people.

*Use* 1. To justify Church-Covenant How else shall a Church be either married, or espoused to Christ without a Covenant? And here was an express Covenant between the Lord & them,

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and them with one another, *Jer.* 50:4,5. Foretelling of the estate of the Church at this time, *Neh.* 9:38. with 10:1,28,29,

*Object.* 1. But here is no mention of Church-Duties, but of general moral Duties to keep God's Commandments [*Rutherf. pag.* 11. of *Due Right of Presbyteries.*]

*Answ.* Yes, expressly, *Neh.* 10:32, to 39.

*Object.* 2. But no Covenant with mortal men can be everlasting, as this was, *Jer.* 50:5.

*Answ.* 1. Yes, from one generation to another, this was so intended by the people. 2. Again, for ever, and for life are sometimes equipollent, *Exod.* 21:6.

*Object.* 3. No such name as Church-covenant in Scripture.

*Answ.* 1. Yes, *Zech.* 9:11. The Covenant, is of the feminine (Gender, and God speaketh to the Church. 2. The correlative is often mentioned, God's Covenant with the Church, which implieth her covenant with him.

*Use* 2. To instruct our Churches in the Trial of our standing; is the Lord Jesus ours, and we his? and can we wish boldness and comfort profess it? It may be doubted, 1. Though we have made a Covenant with God: yet not God with us, as he did with these here. For such as seek God with their whole heart find him, (*Jer.* 29:13.) And they that find him rest in him, and he in them mutually, *Zeph.* 3:17. *Psalms* 16:5,6. and 116:7. 2. All public scandals are not removed, or at least secret scandals not watchfully searched out, and avoided *Josh.* 7:11,12. 3. Ordinances not duly established, Elders wanting necessary supplies, *Neh.* 13:10. members not Lilies.

4. Civil State not so peaceable and unanimous.

*Use* 3. To teach Church-members, what manner of persons we should be, to wit, as Lilies. As Lilies, 1. For straightness, or uprightness. 2. For Royal Attitude, above humane culture, *Matth.* 6:28,29.

Wherefore should Presbyterians affect to have all Sects in the Church, when their estate might soon require a necessary to cast them out of the Church? And that were not likely to be helpful to them, seeing they desire disunion with the Churches.

In stead of a fourth *Use* of application of this Doctrine to every particular sincere Christian soul, let me annex this as a second Doctrine.

*Doct.* 2. There is a mutual union (and Fellowship) between the Lord Jesus and every sincere soul: and sometime a freedom

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in the soul, to discern and profess it. For this is such a privilege of the whole Church, as is common (*omnibus & singulis*) to every particular living member of the Church; as the whole Church is the Temple of Christ, 1 *Cor.* 3:16. so is every particular body in it, 1 *Cor.* 6:19.

As the whole Church is the body of Christ, *Ephes.* 5:23. and every particular Church a member of that body, 1 *Cor.* 12:27. So is each member of the Church, a member of Christ: So many members of the Church so many members of Christ, 1 *Cor.* 6. v. 15. As the whole Church, is a spouse of Christ, 2 *Cor.* 11:2. so is each member, and more intimately united, than man and wife. For Man and Wife are united in one flesh, 1 *Cor.* 6:16. but he that is united to Christ, is one spirit, 1 *Cor.* 6:17.

And as there is this Marriage union between Christ and the soul, so there is sometime a freedom to discern it, and profess it, *Rom.* 8:35. That love of Christ, is that by which he died for us, v. 34. and that was conjugal Love, *Eph.* 5:23. And he speaketh not of himself alone, but as, Who shall separate us from the Love of God? *Psalms* 16:5. *Lament.* 3:24.

This Union is wrought and founded, 1. In God's eternal donation of Christ to us, as of us. See *Perk. Chain. Chap.* 3:6, to him, by him in fulness of time to be brought on to grace & glory, *John* 17:2,24. and 10:16. 2. In fulness of time it is both wrought and revealed, 1. By the Word, 2. By the Spirit of God.

By the Word his wrought, 1 *John* 2:24. *Ephes.* 2:20,21. 2 *Cor.* 11:2. The Apostle spoused them by the Word preached, 2 *Cor.* 13:3,4,5.

By the Word it is revealed, *Psalms* 85:8. *Isaiah* 57:19.

*Reason*, from the power of the Word, both; 1. To prepare the soul for Christ, and for faith in Christ, 1. By conviction, *Tit.* 1:9. 2 *Tim.* 3:16. [[πρὸς ἔλεγχον]] and 4:2. [[ἔλεγχον]] compunction, *Acts* 2:37. 3. By humiliation, 2 *Cor.* 10:4,5.

2. To, 1. Minister the Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 13:6,8. 2. Beget faith in the heart, *Rom.* 10:17. whereby we receive Christ, 1 *Cor.* 6:17. *John* 1:12. *Ephes.* 3:17.

3. To manifest, or declare, and reveal, the love of God towards us, and our good estate in his sight, even our Union, and Communion with the Lord Jesus, *Acts* 10:34.

By the Spirit, this Union is, 1. Wrought. 1 *Cor.* 6:17. 2. Revealed, 1 *John* 3:24.

By the Spirit (I say) 1. Given us, *Rom.* 5:5. 1 *John* 3:24.

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2. Shedding abroad the Love of God in our hearts, *Rom.* 5:5.

*Quest.* 1. What is this Love of God?

*Ans.* Not that whereby we love God; (though that also he doeth include, *1 Cor.* 2:12. *Gal.* 5:22.) but that whereby God loveth us. And so the Apostle expresseth it in the uses following *ver.* 6,8.

*Quest.* 1. What is this shedding of it abroad in our hearts?

*Ans.* The pouring out of this love of God as oil into our Hearts. And that, 1. Abundantly, not sprinkling, but [[ἐκχυσίς]], 2. Sensibly, and manifestly.

*Quest.* 3. Wherein doth this Love of God abound? manifest it self?

*Ans.* In giving his Son to die for us, *Rom.* 5:6,8.

*Quest.* 4. To whom doth the Spirit of God reveal and commend this love of God?

*Ans.* To men; 1. Ungodly, 2. Without strength, *Rom.* 5:8.

And to such; no: so much in themselves, (for a World of such the Holy Ghost never commendeth God's Love unto) but to those that are such in their own sense, and apprehension, *Matth.* 9:13. *Matth.* 12:20.

*Ungodly]* and so, 1. Convinced, *John* 16:7,9, *1 Tim.* 1:15. Convinced of sin, especially against light, 1. Of Conscience, *John* 4:17,18,29. 1. Of Grace, *John* 16:7,9. *1 Sam.* 12:19. *Acts* 2:36,37. and 9:4,5. Hence confusion, the soul having no excuse, *Jer.* 3:25. *Job* 40:4.

2. Pricked or wounded with sense and bitterness of sin, *Acts* 2:37. *Jer.* 2:19. And that, 1. With Fear, *Rom.* 8:15. *Acts* 9:6. and 16:29. Through sense of danger, 1. Imminent. 2. Unavoidable. 3. Unsupportable. 2. With sorrow, *Isaiah* 61:3. Spirit of it, implieth, 1. Greatness of it, *Zech.* 12:11. 2. Continuance, *Luke* 13:18. 3. With loathing of sin, *Isaiah* 2:19,20, 21. as fit to vomit it up.

To man without strength, 1. Either of power to help our selves out of this estate, by our best performances; when *Paul* offered to be doing *Acts* 9:6, Christ let loose the Law against him, in those three days fasting and prayer, and convinced him, by discovering original sin, of his dead estate to duty, *Rom.* 7:8,9,10,11. 2. Of worth that God should help us, *Luke* 7:6,7. *Luke* 5:8.

From both which springeth weariness. For, *cum Opus, Onus superat vires, bine lassitudo.*

To men in such an estate, so ungodly weak, 1. The holy



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Ghost is given, *Isaiah* 61:3. 2. By him the Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts, 1. Commending God's Love in giving Christ, and Christ's love in dying for such, *Rom.* 5:8. 2. Commanding us to come unto Christ, *Matth.* 11:28. 3. Promising to give rest and ease to us, *Matth.* 11:28. 4. Giving us Faith, or working it in our hearts, *Phil.* 1:29. *1 Cor.* 4:13.

In this giving us the Spirit, Faith, lieth our union, *1 Cor.* 6. ver 17 *Eph.* 3:17.

*Reas.* 1. By these are we partakers of the Divine Nature, 2 *Pet.* 1:4. Every union is of two or more into one thing, as the persons are united into one Godhead, God and man into one Christ, one Person: Husband and wife into one flesh, Christ and the Scul into one Spirit, one spiritual life, which is the life of Faith.

*Reas.* 2. By these Christ comprehendeth us, and enableth us to apprehend him, *Phil.* 3:11. This is that which *Dr. Ames* calleth *Reception Passiva* (*Medul.* 1.1.c.26) *Ephes.* 2:5. *Vivavit, apprehensus fui.*

*Reas.* 3. By these we are good Trees (engrafted into Christ) and enabled to bring forth good fruit.

Thus have we union set forth in all his causes, 1. Efficient, 1. Principal, the Spirit. 2. Instrumental, the Word. 3. Material, or Subject matter, ungodly sinners, without strength, men sensible of such an estate. 3. Formal, Faith, or the Spiritual life of it. 4. Final, the Glory of Christ, the salvation of the Flesh, or the Actual and effectual application of all saving benefis to the Elect.

*Use* 1. To confirm the Doctrine of preparations to union with Christ, so that neither, 1. Moral merit of Congruity. 2. Logical consecretaries from these preparations of a false estate. 3 Physical power, of efficiency to beget Faith,

No merit of congruity. For there wanteth faith in them, without which it is impossible to please God, *Hebr.* 11:6. When a man hath done all he can, after faith received, he is but an unprofitable servant, in point of merit even of his dinner, *Luke* 17:10. How much less afore Faith?

No Logical consequence can be inferred of a safe estate, from all these before faith; no more then of a good fire from dry wood, unless fire be put to it.

Nor Physical Power: for such preparatory dispositions are not proportionable to regeneration or union, as any degree of heat in wood begot by fire, is fit to be blown up to a flame.

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They have not the force of the least disposition, having either any necessary, or certain connexion with faith to be introduced: but are rather material dispositions, which make the subject more capable of Faith, as *Siccitas ligni ad Ignem*; more capable partly, 1. By removing (in part) impediments, as knowledge of the truth removeth ignorance; sorrow for sin, and fear, removeth delight in sin, and carnal security. 2. By conferring something, whereof there is use in regeneration, as illumination, shame and sorrow, and fear for sin. Fears and sorrow for sin, as they are fruits of the Spirit, (though of bondage) they are gifts of the holy Ghost, and so of themselves do not withdraw us from God, but remain still in the Saints, whereby they are disposed to fear God, as the avenger of sin, 1 *Thes.* 4:6, *Heb.* 12:27, 28,29. These preparations be either, 1. Outward, as, 1. Hearing, and reading the Word. 2. Repetition of it, *Acts* 17:11,12. 3. Abstaining from gross sins, *Prov.* 1:23. 4. Frequenting godly company, *Prov.* 13:20. 2. Inward, as, 1. Conviction. 2. Contrition, or compunction, 3. Humiliation, which are opened above, proofs for some preparations, *Mark* 12:34. not so the wicked. *Psal* 119:155. *Acts* 2:37. See a resemblance of it, *Ezek.* 2, to 10.

*Use* 2. To teach us aright discerning of our relation to Christ whether we be his, and he ours, or no, and how we may discern and profess; to wit, by all the former works of the Word and Spirit.

*Object.* 1. But this is legal: Christ and the Gospel hold forth no such work.

*Ans.* Yes, Christ applieth that in *Isaiah* 61:3. to himself, *Luke* 4:18.

*Object.* 2. But that only showeth that Christ will help such souls as are so mournful and heavy, not that they ought to be so.

*Ans.* Yes, *Mat.* 9:13. *Peter* took this course, *Acts* 2:13, to 37. convincing and wounding his hearers by Law and Gospel. So did Christ to *Paul*, *Acts* 9:4,5,6. So did *Paul* to the *Romans*, *Rom.* 1:18, to chap. 3:23.

*Use* 3. To beware of slighting the Ministry of the Gospel in which all his work is wrought.

*Use* 4. For comfort to souls thus brought on to Christ, and to provoke such to admire and adore, the inestimable and unspeakable grace of Christ.

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*Use* 5. To acknowledge the Spirit given, before faith, though not as a Spirit of grace, but with faith, *Zech.* 12:10.

*Object.* But how can the Spirit be given before faith?

*Ans.* As the Word is given before faith, both to beget faith.

*Doct.* 1. The Church of Christ, in the Old Testament (even in her best reformation after the captivity) expected a day of greater light, and sudden departure of their shadows. *Till the day break (or dawn) and the shadows flee away, &c.* *Luke* 1:78,79. *Isaiah* 9:2. with *Mat.* 4:16. Which place implieth, 1. Light, day-light of knowledge, which was also fore-promised, *Isaiah* 11:9. and expected, *John* 4:25. 2. Light, day-light of the grace of the Gospel, *Eph.* 5:8. 2 *Pet.* 1:19. 3. Light, day-light, joy and comfort of the holy Ghost *Psalms* 97:11. Shadows, 1. Of ignorance, *Mat.* 4:16. 2. Of ceremonies, *Heb.* 10:1. 2 *Cor.* 3:13. *Col.* 2:17. 3. Of death, *Mat.* 4:16. *Luke* 1:79.

*Reas.* 1. From their expectation of Christ, and in him of all, 1. Knowledge, *John* 4:25. 2. Grace, *Isaiah* 11:1,2,6,7,8. 3. Comfort and joy, *Psalms* 72:7. *Isaiah* 35:10.

*Reas.* 2. From the accomplishment of all shadows in him, *Col.* 2:17.

*Use* 1. To teach us who live in the day-light of the Gospel, to look at shadows as departed, whether, 1. Of the moral law, as the Jewish seventh-day-Sabbath, *Col.* 2:16, 17. 2. Of the ceremonial law, as fulfilled in Christ, *Col.* 2:16, 17. *Col.* 2:14. 3. Of the judicial Law, so far, 1. As ratifying the ceremonies, *Lev.* 17:10. 2. As peculiar to the Jewish State, as marrying the brothers wife: Return of inheritances at the *Jubilee*; Divorce for displeasure. 3. As typing out something in Christ, *Deut.* 21:23. with *Gal.* 3:13. But not in the moral Law, *Rom.* 3:31. *Eph.* 6:1,2. *Jam.* 2:9,10,11. nor the judicials establishing the moral, as the Laws against, 1. Blasphemous, 2. Idolaters. 3. Seducers.

*Use* 2. To beware of rejecting all Ordinances, under pretence of greater day-light, *Isaiah* 30:20,26. In times of greatest light, yet teacher? visible, 1 *Tim.* 6:13,10,16.

*Doct.* 2. The Church restored to some good measure of liberty, purity, affectionately desireth the Lord not to be far off from her succour, till his coming, *Return my beloved, be like a young Hart, and Roe upon the mountains of Bether.*

*Liberty*] For it was after their deliverance from the captivity of *Babel*.

*Purity*] For they enjoyed Christ familiarly, *My beloved is*

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*mine, and 1 his, and Christ fed amongst lilies, pure people.*

*Like a Roe or young Hart]* That is coming, running to us swiftly, speedily; so, *v. 9.*

*Upon the mountains of Bether]* Mountains in *Gilead* beyond *Jordan*: whence that whole tract is called *Bethron*, *2 Sam. 2:29.* It fell out so in *Mordecai's* time, the Church was in distress: but Christ came quickly to her succour in the destruction of her enemies. So in *Nehemiah's* time (*Neh. 13:6,7.*) He soon returned to redress abuses.

*Reas. 1.* From a certain holy fear in the hearts of God's people, of a change of their good estate, *Psalms 22:11. Job 3:25,26.*

*Reas. 2.* From the providence and holy forecast of faith, to lay up in good times Preservatives, and Restoratives against bad times, *1 Chron. 29:18. Psalm 22:11.*

*Use 1.* To teach us to beware of carnal confidence, and dreams of stability in our best times, *Psalms 30:6,7.*

*Use 2.* To teach sincere Spouses of Christ, whether Churches or faithful souls, in times of greaest purity and enlargement, to lay in Preservatives, Restoratives against a time of change.

**Chap. 3. Ver. 1,2,3,4.**

1. *BY night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.*

2. *I will rise now and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.*

3. *The watchmen that go about the city, found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?*

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4. *It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and should not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.*

**T**His Chapter setteth forth the estate of the Church, from after the days of *Nehemiah*, to the time of Christ's coming, and sojourning in the flesh. And that in a twofold period, 1. In the days of the *Maccabees*, ver. 1, to 5. 2. In the time and Ministry of *John Baptist*, ver. 6, to 11. The estate of the Church in the *Maccabees* time was, 1. Partly full of calamity: a time of darkness set forth (1.) By resemblance to night, *By night I sought, &c.* (2.) By the absence of Christ, who is sought in vain (for the present) 1. *In her bed*, ver. 1. 2. *In the streets of the City*, ver. 2. 3. *Amongst the watchmen of the City*, ver. 3. 2. Partly sweetened with some comfortable issue upon her seeking, declared, 1. *By her finding of him*, ver. 4. and that soon after her departure from the watchmen, 2. *By her holding of him*, ver. 4. 3. *By her bringing of him into her mother's house*, ver. 4. 4. *By her charge to the daughters of Jerusalem*, to walk circumspectly, lest the peace of this State should be interrupted, ver. 5.

*By night*] That is in times of greatest darkness and public calamity, when *Antiochus Epiphanes* (that little horn) waxed great, and wasted the pleasant land, cast some of the host and stars of heaven to the ground: who took away the daily Sacrifice, and trod down the Sanctuary, cast down the truth to the ground, *Dan.* 8,9, to 12. when he robbed the Temple, murdered the people, spoiled the City, made Laws for prophanation of the Sabbath, oblation of swines flesh, neglect of circumcision, when he set up the statue of *Jupiter Olympius* (the abomination of desolation in the holy place,) when he burnt the books of the Law, and made it death to have a Testament; when he broke down the Altar and set up another: when he put women to death, who had caused their children to be circumcised; and hanged the children upon the necks of their mothers, 1 *Maccab.* 1:23, to the end of the chapter, This was a night of black darkness, a time of sad calamity.

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*In my bed]* Not in my bed of floth and securtry, (as some have taken it) for what ease could the Church take in the night of such calamity? But in my bed, wherein she was wont to find the gracious and amiable presence of Christ, 1. Embracing her soul with his loving kindness. 2. Casting in the seeds of his grace into her heart, that is, in the plate of the public duties of his worship and Ordinances, the Temple. So Temple is meant before, by the Spouses bed, *Cant.* 1:16. As the bed of idolaters was their Temples, and high places, *Isaiah* 57:7.

*I sought him whom my soul loveth]* Feeling my want of Christ, I desired and endeavoured to find fellowship with Christ.

*But I found him not]* The Sanctuary being polluted, and the daily Sacrifice taken away, and a prophane dunghill-idol set up in his place.

*Ver. 2. In the streets of the City]* That is, in the open Assemblies of the faithful, whether in, 1. The Synagogues. 2. The judgement-seats of *Jerusalem*, and *Judah*.

*But I found him not]* For behold, Altars there erected to idols, and incence burned to them: the books of the Law cast into the fire; the citizens of *Jerusalem*, some condemned, others fled and gone, 1 *Maccab.* 1:28. others going in procession to *Bacchus*, 2 *Maccab.* 6:7.

*Vers. 2, 4. The watchmen that go about the City]* That is, the Priests and Levites, who answered her with silence and astonishment.

*But a little after]* she came to *Modin*, she found some presence of Christ there in *Mattathiah*, and his sons, *Judas*, *Jonathan*, *Simon*, and the rest, that joined with them, who resolved and endeavoured in the Name of the Lord, to repair the ruins of Church and Common-wealth, 1 *Maccab.* 2:40. &c. To those the faithful Church repairing, and cleaving, (1 *Maccab.* 2:42,43) and finding deliverance and comfort from Christ, in the hand of *Judas Maccabeus* (1 *Maccab.* 3:6,7,8.) she let him not till she had brought him into the house of her mother, that is, the Temple and Sanctuary, 1 *Maccab.* 4:43, to 50.

*The chamber of her that conceived me]* That is, of the former old Church of *Israel*. For the former Church is the mother of the latter, and the whole Church of a part, the whole Church was wont to resort to the Temple,

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*Doct.* 1. The Spouse of Christ doth not always enjoy the like lightsome daylight of his gracious presence, and communion, but is sometimes overlclouded with darksome, and nightly seasons of affliction, desertion. The Spouse rejoiced in the presence, and communion of her beloved, a little before, *Chap.* 2:16. now complaineth of a dark night of affliction, desertion, *Psalms* 30:5. A night of weeping: a morning of joy, *Psalms* 119:24,25,28.

*Reas.* 1. For sin, (*Psalms* 39:11. and 38:4.) [1.] Past 2 *Sam.* 21:1. *Job* 13:26. [2.] Present, *Psalms* 30:6,7. Present sins of the Church at this time, in Text, 1. Affectation to be like the Heathen in Leagues, uncircumcision, Games, Names, as *Jason* for *Jesus*, *Menelaus* for *Onias*, See *Joseph. Antiq.* 12. *cap.* 6. 2. Dissensions amongst brethren, complaining of one another to foreign States, *Egyptian, Syria, Ibid.* 3. To come, to prevent it, 2 *Cor.* 12:7.

*Reas.* 2. For trial or taste, 1. Of what Christ hath done for us, *Mat.* 20:23. 2. Of what is in us, *Judg.* 3:4. 1. Good in us, *Job* 1:11,12. 2. Evil in us, 2 *Chron.* 32:31. with 25.

*Reas.* 3. For our profit, *Deut.* 8:16. to heal sin, *Isaiah* 27:9. to seek the Lord, Text, *Psalms* 77:2,6. *Lam.* 3:39,40. to learn holiness, *Heb.* 12:10.

*Use* 1. To teach us in our best estates, whether, 1. Of Churches. Or 2. Of persons in inward, outward man, to expect a change; And therefore, 1. Either to prevent evil by watchfulness against Sinne, *Job* 1:5. 2. Or to bear it holding forth not our own wenkness, but the graces of Christ in us, 1 *Pet.* 2:9. 3. And finally, so to profit by all, as to come like gold out of the furnace, *Job* 23:10.

*Use* 2. For instruction against discouragement in times of affliction, and desertion. It is no argument either, 1. Of want of God's love to thee. *Heb.* 12:6. 2. Of want of thy love to God. In these four verses the Spouse forsaken calleth Christ, him whom her soul loveth, four times, *ver.* 1,2, 3,4. As Christ is sometimes found of them that seek him not, *Isaiah* 65:1. so sometimes not found of them that seek him.

*Doct.* 2. In time of affliction and desertion, the Spouse of Christ seeketh him in the use of all means, public and private: And if she findeth him not in them, yet sometimes she soon findeth him after them.

*In the night]* Darksome time of affliction, and desertion,

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for she seeking Christ found him not.

*I sought him*, 1. *In my bed*, that is, in the place of public Ordinances, where, 1. Christ's embraces are most familiar. 2. The seeds of his grace are cast into her.

2. *In the open streets*] to wit, 1. In the Synagogues, *ver.* 1. In the public seats of judgement, as, *Jer.* 5:1.

3. In occasional meeting with the watchmen, *v.* 3.

*She soon found Christ after the use of means*] For it was but a little that 1 passed from them, and found him whom my soul loveth, *v.* 4.

*Quest.* 1. What is it to seek the Lord?

*Ans.* To seek the Lord, it, 1. Presupposeth our want or loss of God: for no man seeketh what he hath, but what he hath not. As was the case of the Church, *Judg.* 6:13. A sad thing to lose a child, a yoke-fellow, a man's self, how much worse to lose our God? 2. *Implyeth*, 1. In the object, union or communion with God in his, 1. Face, 2. Strength, *Psalms* 105:4. 2. Diligent use of all holy means, wherein God will be found, as, 1. Resorting to public Ordinances, *Psalms* 105:4. the Ark of God's Presence which the people in *Saul's* time neglected, 1 *Chron.* 13:3. 2. Fervent prayer, *Psalms* 77:1,2. 3. Putting away offences, seeking them out, to remove them, *Judg.* 10:16. 4. Panting after the Lord, 1 *Sam.* 7:2. *Psalms* 42:1,2.

*Quest.* 2. What is it to find the Lord?

*Ans.* It is to find union or communion with God revealed or renewed, whether in the enjoyment, 1. Of his favour 2. Accepting our persons, 1. Pardoning our sins. 2. Of his strength. 1. Subduing our corruptions, *Micah* 7:19. Temptations, Enemies, 2. Supplying our wants in inward, outward man, *Phil.* 4:19.

*Quest.* 3. Whether God is not ordinarily found in his Ordinances?

*Ans.* Yes, *Exod.* 20:24. *Isaiah* 45:19.

*Reas.* 1. From the presence of Christ there, *Mat.* 18:20.

*Reas.* 2. From the difference between *Jehovah* and idols, 2 *Kings* 18:29.

*Reas.* 3. From the difference of God's institutions, from men's inventions, *Gal.* 4:9. *Col.* 2:21,22. But sometimes not, as *Text*, *v.* 1,2,3.

*Reas.* 1. Through pollution, 1. Either in the Ordinances, as here. See the former *Doct.* pag. 65. 2. In the dispen-



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sers, *Micah* 3:5,6,7. 3. In the seekers some idol in their hearts, *Ezek.* 14:3,4. either, 1. Not seeking God sincerely, *Hosea* 7:14. 2. Overvaluing the Ordinances, *Judges* 17:13. 3. Undervaluing the Ordinances, *Acts* 17:28. with *v.* 32., 33. yea, so in God's people, *Prov.* 27:7.

*Reas.* 2. To make Christ more precious when found, *Cant.* 3:4. *When I found him, I held him, and would not let him go.*

*Quest.* 4. But if God be not found in in his Ordinances, yet is he not soon after?

*Answ.* Yes, 2 *Sam.* 7:4.

*Reas.* 1. To give credit, and encouragement to after-duties, as to, 1. Examination and repartion, *Acts* 17:11,12. 2. Meditation, *Heb.* 11:11. with *Gen.* 18:12.

*Reas.* 2. Supportance of weak spirits, *Isaiah* 57:13.

*Use* 1. To teach us with what intent to come to holy Ordinances, not to show our fine garments, *Mat.* 11:7,8,9. not to gaze at beauties, not to satisfy the Law or commandments of men, custom, *Ezek.* 33:31,32. no nor to seek common gifts, no not gifts of miracles (ss the sects of seeker do) but come to seek him, whom thy soul loveth, even with the whole heart, here finding, *Jer.* 29:13.

*Use* 2. To direct such as do seek Christ, and yet do not find him, what course to take, to wit, 1. See no idols or pollutions be found in thy heart. 2. Seek Christ further in the following appendant Duties, which are also Ordinances of God, 2. Repetition and examination of the Word. 2. Meditation. 3. Be not discouraged, but wait for the finding of Christ ere long.

*Use* 3. To reach such as do find Christ in ihe Ordinances, or soon after, to hold him, and not let him go; Christ held, 1. By faith, *Isaiah* 27:5. suffer htm to hold us more than we him, for our strength is but weakness in our selves, 1 *Sam.* 2:9. 2. By watchfulness against provoking sins *Isaiah* 63:10. 3. By holy fruitfulness, *Isaiah* 64:5.

*Doct.* 3. The Spouse of Christ that after long desertion, and much search hath at length found him, she steadfastly holdeth him, and largely improveth him to the public reformation of Church-estate, *v.* 4. or to the enjoyment of him, in purity and liberty of Church communion: Or she steadfastly holdeth him, till she may enjoy him, in purity and liberty of Church communion. The Spouse after a long

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night of affliction and desertion having fought him in the Temple, in the streets among the watchmen, when she found him, she held him, and would not let him go, till she had brought him into the Temple, and purged that, which was the place she calleth her owner's chamber, *The chamber of her that conceived her*. The story of this matter is recorded, 1 *Mac.* 4:43, to 58. *David* had been long absented from the Ark, the greatest part of the Reign of *Saul*/, afterwards finding God he could not rest, till he got the Ark pitched in his own house in the City of *David*, or close adjoining to it, 2 *Chron.* 8:11. And then he would have a Temple too builded, 2 *Sam.* 7:2. The people after long captivity in *Babel*, feeding God with all their hearts, *Jer.* 29:13. presently upon their return, set the Altar upon his Basis, and laid the foundation of the Temple, *Ezra* 3:2,3,10 with great affection, *v.* 11,12,13.

*Quest.* What is this holding of Christ, and not letting him go?

*Answ.* It is an act, 1. Of fervent prayer, *Gen.* 32:26. with *Hos.* 12:4. 2. Of faith, improving transient favours, to settled and constant presence of God with us, *Exod.* 33:12, to 15. 3. Of purification or repentance, cleansing out evil, else God will not stay with us, *John* 7:12. 4. Of fruitfulness, *John* 15:4,5.

*Reas.* 1. From the ordinary constant presence of Christ in his Ordinances, *Exod.* 20:24. *Psalms* 87:7. *Mat.* 18:20. 1 *Cor.* 3:16,17. 1 *Tim.* 3:15. The *Ninevites* wanting this, lest what they had, *Jonah* 3:10. No holding Christ, but in his Ordinances, 1 *Sam.* 4:22. and from the greatest expressions of Christ's love to his Church and Spouse in his Ordinances, *Psalms* 133:3. and 63:1,2,3. As a maid affected with the love of her beloved, is not satisfied without the enjoyment of the marriage bed.

*Reas.* 2. From the growing power of saving grace, not only in mention, but extension *Cant.* 4:16. *David* quickened with grace and peace, provoketh not men only, but Angels to serve and praise the Lord, yea, all creatures, *Psalms* 103:20,21,22.

*Use* 1. To teach such as have found Christ in private, not to rest in private manifestations of his grace in private duties, but to hold Christ fast, to find the same confirmed in public Ordinances, *Rev.* 15:7. with 16:1. He that hath got-

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ten the King's privy signet to his patent, would have the same confirmed by the broad Seal of *England*. It is a shrewd sign Christ was never truly found in private, when private revelations take off the appetite from public administrations. When Ordinances cannot be had through unavoidable necessity, God can dispense himself in hidden Manna, *Rev.* 2: 17. But where corn-fields are open, Manna ceaseth, *Josh.* 5: 11, 12.

*Use 2.* To teach such as have received Christ, to cleave constantly to him; not as they, *Gal.* 1:6. but as they, *1 Cor.* 7:35. *John* 15:4. *Eph.* 4:14. which is made a fruit of the Ministry, continued from *ver.* 11. It is there mentioned, as a notable [[κρυβεῖα]] (cogging) of Satan to draw the people out of conceit with their Ministers, whether for the Presbyterial or Congregational way. We hold not Christ, if we worship Angels or Saints, *Col.* 2:18, 19. If we deny repentance, *1 Cor.* 7:10. *Rev.* 2:4, 5. Churches, *1 Cor.* 3:17. Scripture, *2 Tim.* 3:16.

*Use 3.* To teach those who have found Christ in this country, to hold fast Christ, and to carry him along with you into the Churches of your mother *England*. There many of you were conceived, even in Christ's Chambers, or Congregations there.

*Use 4.* To teach us the Ordinary place and manner of regeneration; It is in our mother's house, and chambers, in the public congregation, *Rom.* 10:14, to 17.

### Chap. 3. ver. 5.

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

**D**oct. 1. IT is a weighty charge, laid upon all the children of the Church, in times of Christ's gracious and familiar communion with his Church in public Ordinances, to walk circumspectly. Or thus, In times of Christ's gracious, and familiar communion with his Church; in public Ordinances, it is a weighty charge laid upon all the children of the Church, to walk circumspectly. The

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Spouse (or Church) in *ver.* 4. had brought Christ into the Temple, the chamber of her mother, where she now enjoyed gracious and comfortable communion with Christ, upon the restoring and purging of the Temple in the days of *Judas Maccabeus*: Now therefore finding peace in her comfortable communion with Christ in public Temple-Ordinances, she chargeth (as by an oath, [[חטבעת]]) which is a most weighty charge) *all the daughters of Jerusalem*, (that is, all the children of the Church) *not to stir up, or awake her love, till he please*; that is, not to provoke Christ (by any indiscrete, or incircumspect, or offensive walking of their own, to arise out of her arms, and embraces, and to leave her deserted, and desolate again, as he had done before. This charge was needful, the holy Ghost foreseeing it would in those times be much neglected. For in process of time they did walk incircumspectly, and offensively, 1. By making leagues with Heathens, *Romans, Spartans, Judas Maccabeus*, 1 *Mac.* 8. of mutual aid in offensive, defensive Wars, But soon after Christ left him, (1 *Mac.* 9:18.) to slaughter. *Jonathan* he renewed the league, 1 *Mac.* 12:1, to 23. But he soon after miscarricd, 1 *Mac.* 12:48. *Simon* he renewed the league also, 1 *Mac.* 15:15, to 21. But he soon after was murdered, 1 *Mac.* 16:16. 2. By the conspiracies and wicked informations of malicious *Jews* against the State of their country to foreign Princes, as *Alcimus* with others, 1 *Mac.* 7: 5,6,7. and *ver.* 21,22. and *Chap.* 9:1. 1 *Mac.* 15:21. 3. By the Priests usurping the Kingdoms. *Aristobulus* the son of *Hircanus*, he would needs wear a Crowm, *Joseph. Antiq. Judaie.* 1.13.c.19. of which Tribe of *Levi* *Moses* spake nothing concerning the Kingdom, no more then of *Judah* concerning the Priest-hood, *Heb.* 7:14. 4. By corruption of Religion, First, of Doctrine, with Heresy, 1. Of *Pharisees*, justification by works, *Luke* 18:9. and 16:15. 2. Of *Sadduces*, by libertinism, *Acts* 23:8. Secondly, of worship, by men's inventions, *Mark* 7:3, to 9. Thirdly, of Government, the high Priest-hood being *annual, venal*: Hence Christ rarely found in the Temple, or Synagogues, till he came in the flesh, *Mat.* 7:29. *Zech.* 11:8,9.

*Reas.* 1. To prevent the alienation of friendly and sociable minds; hence the charge is, *by the Roes, and by the Hinds of the field*, Text. Roes and Hinds feed sociably with the sheep: but upon the least noise of Dogs, or Huntsmen, the flee and haste away.

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*Reas.* 2. To prevent the disturbance of Christ, expressed by stirring him up, and awakening him before he please. Christ is disturbed when he by any offensive carriages is provoked to withdraw himself from public communion with his Church in his holy Ordinances. In like sort the Lord threatened his departure from *Israel* upon the offence of *Achan*, unless it were removed, *John* 7:12.

*Use* 1. To teach us the relation, wherein Church-members stand to the Church, They are as daughters to her, any one singularly, Text: the whole Church met together in a Congregation is as a mother, *Cant.* 3:4. Sons they are to the civil State, *Lam.* 4:2. daughters to the Church, as Spouses to Christ. Even Magistrates and Captains are daughters of *Zion*. Though heads to correct their wicked Apostasies: yet members and daughters to be corrected themselves.

*Use* 1. Observe the power of the Church over her children, she hath power of laying a charge upon them, a power of adjuration as it were; the whole Congregation, Elders and brethren, have a motherly power.

*Quest.* How can the Church lay a charge which Christ chargeth not?

*Ans.* She layeth a charge of Ministerial, or declarative power of the will of Christ, as, *1 Tim.* 6:17,

*Use* 3. To teach us to keep this charge, it is our own case; the peace of the Church lieth much in the carriage of private members, *1 Thes.* 4:11,12. *1 Cor.* 10:32.

*Use* 4. To teach us Christ may please to awake, and be stirred up to afflict us, though we awake him not. This the Church here presupposeth, that he may please to awake, though we awake him not. If he so do, yet he will then be with us, as he was with *Joseph* in *Egypt*.

### Chap. 3. ver. 6,7,8.

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

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7. Behold, his bed, which is Solomon's: three-score valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.

8. They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.

**T**Hese words are a description of the Church of Christ, arising in the Wilderness in the days of *John* Baptist, and gathered by his Ministry. This Church, and *John* a principal officer in it, is described, and set forth, 1. By the admiration and inquiry of the old Synagogue after him, and his Ministry, *Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness?* Hence *John*, *John* 1:19, to 25. *Luke* 3:15. the Priest and Levites sent to enquire who he was, and why he did baptize, and all men wondered, if he were not the Messiah. 2. By the place of his arising, and of the Church with him, *in the wilderness*. See, *Luke* 3:2,3. *Mark* 1:3,4. 3. By the manner of his arising, *like pillars of smoke*; and the smoke, not sooty, and noisome (like the smoke of a chimney,) but *perfumed with myrrh, frankincense, with all the powders of the Merchant*, or as the word may be well read, above all the powders of the Merchant.

*Like pillars of smoke*] Which do, 1. Arise from fire, as that Church arose from the zeal and fervency of *John's* Ministry, *Luke* 1:17. *John* 5:35. 2. Ascend on high, as the same of this Church did ascend even unto *Jerusalem*, *Mat.* 3:5. yea, himself was received into *Herod's* Court for a season, *Mark* 6:20. 3. Fill the country, as this Church did with report and increase of it, *Mat.* 3:5,6 all sorts from all places flocking to it, *Matth.* 3:7. with *Luke* 3:10.

*Perfumed with myrrh*] A strong fragrant gum (as *Cant.* 1:13.) fit to preserve from putrefaction, *John* 19:39. And such was the powerful zeal of *John's* Ministry, strongly fragrant, is myrrh, and fit to preserve his hearers from Pharisical hypocrisy, and all false confidences, *Mat.* 3:7, to 10. and frankincense, of like stong fragrancly, and of chief use in making of the holy incense (*Exod.* 30:34.) which was a type of prayer, *Psalms* 141:1. To intimate the fragrancly,

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and fervency of his prayers; who taught also his Disciples to pray, even so far that the Disciples of Christ commend (as it were) his pattern to their Master, *Luke 11:1*.

*With all the powders of the Merchant]* Or above all the powders of the Merchant, *John* being indued with all the sweet and precious graces of God's Spirit, *Luke 1:15*. filled with the holy Ghost, and fitted to supply savoury instructions to all sorts of hearers, *Luke 3:7*, to *14*. according to their several callings, yea, he was graced above all the Prophets, or all that were born of women, *Matth. 11:9*. and *11. 4*. By the Ministry of *John* which consisted of a word, *1*. Of doctrine, *ver. 7*. to *11*. which doctrine concerned either, *1*. His bed or human nature, *ver. 7,8*. *2*. His chariot or office, *ver. 9,10*. His bed was the Temple of Christ's body, for so the bed was meant (*Cant. 1:16*. and *3:1*.) the Temple, and the Temple was a type of his body, *John 2:19,21*. in whom the God-head dwelt personally, *Col. 2:9*. Now this bed, or human nature of Christ is described by a double adjunct, *1*. Of *John's* pointing at him, Behold, his bed. *2*. Of the Angels strong guard about him, for fear of *Herod* and other enemies, *ver. 7,8*. fulfilled, *John 1:51*. *Mat. 2:13,18*. *2*. Of exhortation, *ver. 11*.

*Doct. 1*. God doth sometime raise up a Church out of a wilderness, furnished with a powerful Ministry both for preaching and prayer, even to the admiration of other Churches, *ver. 6*. So also, *Cant. 8:5*. So when God brought his people out of *Egypt*, *Numb. 24:5*.

*Reas. 1*. To declare the mighty power of God, *Isaiah 41:18*, *19,20*. *Isaiah 35:1* to the end, which is a Prophecy of this very Church of *John Baptist*.

*Reas. 2*. To take us aside from disturbances, and temptations in populous Cities, where either, *1*. Troubles of persecutions. *2*. Noise of worldly business might hinder our effectual attention to God's Word, *Hos. 2:14*,

*Use 1*. To behold the like favour of God to us (in some measure) in this wilderness.

*Use 2*. To teach us how to walk: Ministers in power, *1*. Of Preaching especially in evident preaching of Christ, Text, *ver. 7. 1 Cor. 2:2. Gal. 6:14*. *2*. Of prayer. It is the power of a Minister, to point at Christ, as all our peace, our *Solomon*. This maketh a wilderness blossom, *Isaiah 35:1. Luke*

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2:12,13,14. People not as pillars of chimney-smoke, *Isaiah* 65:5. but as pillars of smoke perfumed.

*Doct.* 2. The beholding of Christ, as our peace (as our *Solomon*) and the stirring up others so to behold him, sweeteneth and perfumeth all the graces of God in us. What made *John's* Ministry, and Church so swear, as, *ver.* 6? only or chiefly this Doctrine pointing at Christ God-man, as our *Solomon*, Behold, his bed, which is *Solomon's*, *ver.* 7. Hence *John* greater than all the Prophets, as more manifestly declaring this, *Matth.* 11:9,10,11. *Ephes.* 2:14. *2 Cor.* 5:19. *Micah* 5:5.

*Reas.* 1. From the emptiness of all other cisterns, *Jer.* 2:13. whither, 1. Covenant, 2. Ordinances. 3. Duties.

*Reas.* 2. From the safety of our peace in him, only peace is in resting on his righteousness, *Rom.* 5:1.

*Reas.* 3. From the delight of God's Spirit to breath in such Doctrine, *2 Cor.* 3:8. *Gal.* 3:5.

*Use.* To direct us how to preach and how to learn the way of grace and peace.

*Doct.* 3. The Lord kept a strong guard about the human nature of Christ Jesus in the days of of his flesh, *Verse* 7,8. *John* 1:51. *Matth.* 2:13,19. and 4:11. *Matth.* 26:53.

*Reas.* 1. From the honour of Christ, *Heb.* 1:6.

*Reas.* 2. From the malice and rage of Satan and his instruments, *Gen.* 3:15. *Mat.* 2:3,16.

*Use* 1. For comfort to the Church of Christ which is his bed on earth now, *Psalms* 34:7. and 91:11,12. *Heb.* 1:14.

*Use* 2. For warning to men to beware of wronging the Church, or the least member of Christ, *Mat.* 18:10, *2 Kings* 6:16,17,18.

### Chap. 3. ver. 9,10.

9. King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.

10. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst



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thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.

**I**N these verses are set forth, 1. The latter part of *John's* Doctrine touching the coach or charet of Christ *v.* 9,10. 2. His word of exhortation, First, to the daughters of *Zion*. Secondly, to behold King *Solomon*, and him with his Crown given him, 1. By his mother. 2. In the day of his espousal, and that day amplified by the adjunct joy of his heart in it, *ver.* 11. This coach or charter seemeth to be a distinct thing from the bed, *ver.* 7. which we heard was the human nature of Christ. But it is true wherein Christ was carried, and showed forth himself unto the people. This was his glorious Mediatorship, as he is called the Mediator between God and man, 1 *Tim.* 2:5. and wherein he rideth prosperously, *Psalms* 45:1. This Mediatorship of his is set forth, 1. By the efficient course, *Solomon* made himself a charet; for though Christ as man taketh no office to himself, *Heb.* 5:4,5. yet God his Father who gave it to him, is but one God with himself, *John* 10:30. And himself willingly offered; himself to it, *Psalms* 40:7,8. 2. By the matter, the matter of it was the wood of *Lebanon*. For Christ as God by his own Spirit framed his humanity in his mother's womb, who dwelt in *Nazareth of Galilee*, at the root of Mount *Lebanon*. And as the Temple of *Solomon* was made of the wood of *Lebanon*, even Cedar-wood (1 *Kings* 5:6.) which it not easily corruptible in that country: so Christ's flesh saw no corruption, *Psalms* 16:10. with *Acts* 2:31. And indeed the Mediatorship is expressly attributed to the human nature 1 *Tim.* 2:5. though the divine nature being united to it, supported him in doing and suffering, and made his whole Mediatorship of infinite value and virtue, *Acts* 20:28. Thus the Ark expressed Christ in his 3 offices & natures, the Shittim-wood his humanity; the Gold his divinity; the Crowns on the top, his Kingly office; the Law laid up in it, his Prophetical office; the Mercy-seat covering it, his priestly office; also the Shittim-wood within the Altar did signify the human nature; the brass that covered it, and kept it from consuming, was the divine nature, *Exod.* 27:1,2. 3. By the parts, which are three distinct offices, 1. Prophetical, expressed by pillars of silver, *v.* 10. All his Doctrine, 1. Being firm pillars of certain

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truth, *Yea, & Amen*. His Word beareth as all things, *Hebr.* 11:3. 1. Being most pure as silver, *Psalms* 12:6. *Prov.* 8:5, to 10. and 30:5. 2. Priestly, expressed [[רפי דתו זהב]], that is, his seat or that whereon he resteth, is gold, the abstract for the concrete; is silver before, and purple after, to express Purity, Solidity; such is his Priesthood, 1. As gold, 2. Not melted in the fire of God's wrath [for gold endureth the fire, 1 *Pet.* 1:7. *Job.* 23:10.] 2. Yielding a most precious Ransom of more value than gold (though it be of greatest value amongst men. 2. As the seat whereon all Christ's mediation resteth. For his other Officers rest on the Priestly. 1. The Prophetical, 1 *Cor.* 2:2. 2. The Kingly, *Rom.* 14:9. 3. Kingly, expressed in those words, The covering of it of purple, *ver.* 10. Purple is the Royal dress and wear of Kings. Hence when they would present Christ as a King (though in scorn,) they put on him a purple Robe, *John* 19:2,5. 4. By the bottom or ground of Pavement of it, translated midst: because the bottom of a Coach is in the midst. This bottom or ground of all, was love for the daughters of *Jerusalem*, or from respect of tenderness to them, *v.* 10. 2 *Cor.* 8:9. The second part of *John's* Ministry was a word of exhortation to the daughters of *Zion* to go forth and behold, &c. *ver.* 11.

*Ye daughters of Zion*] The children of the purer and higher part of the Church. *Zion* the chief part of *Jerusalem*, where the Temple stood.

*Go forth*] Leave house and nets, and custom, house and all to enjoy him. More distinctly, *Go forth*, 1. Out of your sinful distempers, *Luke* 3:4,5. 2. Out of wordly intanglements, *Matth.* 19:22. 3. Out of carnal confidences, *Matth.* 3:9.

*Behold*] 1. With bodily eyes, *John* 1:29,36. 2. With eye of Faith, looking for all salvation, life and grace from him, *Isaiah* 45. *ver.* 22.

*Behold him*] 1. As a present Royal Prince of peace crowned with sovereign Power both of Kingdom, Priesthood. 2. As most observable, and desirable; for the joy that his Crown in his espousals yieldeth, 1. To himself, 2. To us.

*King Solomon*] that is Christ, greater then Solomon, *Mat.* 12 *ver.* 42. Of whom *Solomon* was but a Type.

*The Crown wherewith his mother crowned him*] An allusion, it seemeth, to some custom, that the mothers of *A Bride-groom* is said to Princes, or great men were wont to use, in putting Crowns upon them in the day of their marriage, or espousal. What Crown *Bathsheba* put upon So-

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deck him- |self as a |Priest, and |the Priest |was decked |with an ho-|ly Crown,  
|Isai. 61:10. |Levit. 8:9.

*lomon* is not expressed in Scripture: unless it were meant in the day of his espousals to the State, in the day of his Coronation, which *David* condescended to upon her intercession, 1 *Kings* 1. 15, to 30. But the Crown which the Church of the Jews (who was a mother to Christ Jesus in some sense as being bred in her womb, & yet a spouse together with the Church of the Gentiles, as espoused to him) put upon Christ, was the acknowledgment of his Sovereignty and Priesthood of both which the Crown is an emblem, *Lev.* 8:9. This acknowledgment, *John* Baptist and the faithful gave him, *John* 1:33,34,45,49. *John* 3:29; to the end. Yea, every faithful soul is a mother to Christ, *Matth.* 12:50.

*The day of his espousals*] was the day, when God the Father contracted him to the Church, *Matth.* 3:17. In whom, not, with whom, I am well pleased with you; whence it is that after this, he is called *the Bridegroom*, and she *the Bride*, *Joh.* 3:29. and his Disciples the children of the Bride chamber, *Mark* 2:19. And *John* the Bridegroom's friend, *John* 3:29. And the King is said to make a marriage for his Son, and to bid his Guests, *Matth.* 22:1, &c.

And hence the Church in this song is hence-forward called his spouse, *Chap.* 4:8. not before.

*Doct.* 1. The Lord Jesus freely took upon him our human nature, that he might become for us our Mediatour, or that he might make himself our Mediator. Here is the efficient or matter of this Chariot put together. As the Father called him to it, *Heb.* 5:4,5. so he as God, and one God with the Father, give up himself to it, 2 *Cor.* 8:9. *Phil.* 2:6,7,8. He made himself of no reputation, *Hebr.* 2:14. As we were combustible matter, so Christ made himself of like nature. As he laid down his life freely, *John* 10:17,18. so he took upon him our life freely,

*Reas.* 1. That he might feel the wrath of God for our sakes and be burnt as combustible matter (*fuel to the fire*) that the children might be saved from it, *Heb.* 2:14.

*Reas.* 2. To complete himself for the Mediatorship, man must suffer for man: but the Godhead must dwell in this manhood, (*Solomon* must ride in this Chariot;) Both, 1. To support the manhood from sinking and perishing in the fire of God's wrath. 2. To make his mediation of infinite value and virtue. For thus God is obedient, and made under the

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Law, which is infinite debasement to God; God suffereth in Christ, in his own person, *Acts* 20:28.

*Use* 1. To support our faith the more in Christ's mediation.

*Use* 2. To renounce the modulation of Saints and Angels. The Virgin *Mary*, nor any Saint, or Angel did never make themselves such a Chariot; Christ made this Chariot for himself. He admits no companion to ride with him in it.

*Use* 3. To imitate the like-self debasement for Christ's sake and our brethren, *Phil.* 2:5,6,7.

*Doct.* 2. The Lord Jesus is gloriously and completely furnished with all the parts of a Mediator, to work our Redemption and Salvation for us, *Colos.* 2:9.

In Nature he is God, Man. In Offices he is, 1. A Priest to procure our Reconciliation by a golden sacrifice, golden, 1. To endure the fire. 2. To pay a rich Ransom for us. 2. A Prophet and King to apply this reconciliation to us. A Prophet, to reveal it to us, *Psalms* 45:5. A King, to subdue our hearts to accept and embrace it, *Psalms* 45:5.

*Reas.* 1. From the Fathers good pleasure, *Col.* 1:19.

*Reas.* 2. From our Necessity of such an one, *Hebr.* 7:25,26.

*Use.* For strengthening of our Faith in this Mediatour, all others are empty Cisterns to him.

*Doct.* 3. The ground and bottom of all the Administrations of Christ Jesus, is his love towards the children of the Church, *ver.* 10. *John* 15:13. *Rom.* 5:8. From first to last all free love, *Zech.* 4:7,9. *Deut.* 7:7,8.

*Reas.* 1. From the Independent good pleasure of his will, *Rom.* 9:15. *Ephes.* 1:5,6. *Deut.* 7:7,8. He loved us because he loved us.

*Use* 1. Let not so much Love of Christ be lost to us. It is not lost, if we be daughters of *Jerusalem*, or shall become such; that is, if we be, 1. Begotten in the Church to God. 2. Be espoused to Christ.

*Use* 2. To beware of misconstruing any Act of Christ towards us. as if there were some want of Love in it.

*Use* 3. To return all Love to God in all our ways, *Psalms* 116:1, and 18:1.

*Use* 4. To walk in all love to our Brethren, 1 *John* 4:11. 1 *Cor.* 16:14.

## Chap. 3. Ver. 11.

II. Go forth, O ye daughter of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.

**D** Oct. 1. It is in holy exhortation to stir up the children of the Church, to go forth and behold the Prince of our Peace (the Lord Jesus) with the sovereign honour put upon him by the faithful, in the time when his Father give him to the Church, *Zech.* 9:9.

That Crown was their acknowledgement of him, 1. To be the Lamb of God, his Priesthood, *John* 19:36. 2. To be the Son of God, the King of *Israel*, *John* 1:49,34. to be him that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost, *John* 1:33. 3. To be the Messiah, *John* 1:41. and 45. (with *Deut.* 18:18.) which implieth his Prophetical office also, *John* 4:15.

The Father solemnly gave him (as an espousage) to the Church, *Matth.* 3:17. and 17:5. For in him be declareth himself well pleased with them. What it is, 1. To go forth, 2. To behold Christ, see opened above, *pag.* 79.

*Quest.* 1. How far should we go forth of our sins, that we might behold Christ?

*Answ.* 1. To have such a sight of sin, as setteth it ever before us, *Psalms.* 51:3. So that we neither can nor dare. 1. Deny it. 2. Excuse it.

*Answ.* 2. To have such a sense of sin, as maketh it our greatest burden, *Prov.* 18:14. At least greater then we can bear, *Psalms* 38. *ver.* 4.

*Quest.* 2. What is it to go out of our selves to behold Christ?

*Answ.* 1. To submit to God's just hand in his Judgments upon us, *Levit.* 26:41.

*Answ.* 2. To bemoan our own utter insufficiency to come to Christ, or turn to God, *Jer.* 31:18. utter unworthiness that he should help us [This may be referred to acceptance of punishment, *Lev.* 26:41.]

*Quest.* 3. What it is to go forth of wordly entanglements, that we may behold Christ?

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*Ans.* 1. When we can part with all creature-comforts to enjoy Christ or the Ordinances in which he is laid up, *Matth.* 19:27. *Matth.* 13:44. not as the Rich-man, *ver.* 21,22.

*Ans.* 2. When we grow more serious in Christian duties than Wordly business, else we are choaked if the strength and vigour of our hearts be taken up with the World, *Ezek.* 33:31.

*Quest.* 4. When do I behold Christ with his Crown?

*Ans.* 1. When my heart looketh at him as our Crowned, or Sovereign, 1. Saviour, *Isaiah* 45:22. 2. King. 3. Prophet, *John* 6:68.

*Ans.* 2. When I mourn the more over him and after him, *Zech.* 12:10. *Psalm* 51:4. 1 *Sam.* 7:2.

*Reas.* 1. From the forsaking of our own mercy, and contempt of so great salvation, if we will not go forth to behold Christ thus crowned.

*Reas.* 2. From the day of the gladness of his heart, in such a day of his Coronation, and our fellowship in his joy, when we go forth to behold him crowned. It is a joy to Angels, *Luke* 15. *ver.* 10. Much more to us, most of all to Christ, *Luke* 15:6,9,23, 32. *Luke* 10:21.

*Reas.* 3. From the benefit redounding to our selves hereby; by 1. Going forth. 2. Beholding Christ thus crowned, we become spouses to Christ our selves. The brazen Serpent healeth by sight, *Numb.* 21:8,9. Presence at one marriage breedeth many more, 2 *Cor.* 3:18.

*Use* 1. To teach Christians, the daughters of *Zion*, to hearken to this word of exhortation, in all the particular parts and meaning thereof, as is opened in the *Questions*.

*Use* 2. To teach the Daughters of *Zion*, that the beholding of Christ crowned, and going forth to behold him, will be no sad work nor sad time with them.

*Use* 3. To observe the priviledges of the faithful; They are sometimes called his brethren, sisters, yea, mothers, *Matth.* 12. *ver.* 50. and Text, but spouses also, Text; which is a greater and nearer Relation, for enjoying of which, a man may forsake all other amongst men, *Gen.* 2:24.

*Use* 4. To allow the lawful use of gladness and mirth in days of marriage and espousals; for from hence is the similitude fetched.

Yet so as to beware of, 1. Riotous abuse of the creatures to Gluttony, Drunkenness. 2. Wanton abuse of young people.

## CHAP. 4. ver. 1.

1. *Behold, thou art fair my love: behold, thou art fair: thou hast Doves eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of Goats, that appear from mount Gilead.*

**T**His whole *Chapter* is a Prophetical History of the estate of the Church in three Periods, 1. In Christ's time under his Ministry, *ver. 1.* to 6. 2. After his ascension, under the Ministry of the Apostles, and so forward, 3. After their departure, during the first ten Persecutions under Heathen Emperors, *ver. 7.* to 16.

The Church in Christ's time is described and commended, 1. By her beauty, 1. Of the whole body, *Behold, thou art fair my love: behold, thou art fair*] 2. In her members and parts, whether, 1. Common Christians and Disciples, resembled to 1. *Eyes*, and them like *Doves*, yet *within her looks*, 2. *Hair* and it likened to, 1. *A flock of goats*, 2. Them looking *from mount Gilead*. 2. Officers, or Ministers, or chief members, resembled, 1. To teeth, *ver. 1.* 2. To lips, *ver. 3.* 3. To Temples *ver. 3.* 4. To breasts, *v. 5.:3.* Both sorts, Officers & common Disciples; their strong union to Christ set forth by her neck, *ver. 4.* 2. By the Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, finishing that period, *ver. 6.*

*Behold, thou art fair: behold, thou art fair*] Fair twice repeated, implieth by an usual Hebraism, a superlative Fairness, that she was very Fair. As High, high, is very high; Low, low, is very low, *Deut. 28:43.* And behold, behold, twice repeated, argueth, this Fairness, or Beauty, was very evelly, and conspicuous, or discernable.

[These parts of fairness in her carriage, may all be referred and handled in her *Dove's eyes*] *Fair*] 1. In the comeliness of the several parts, & members described, *ver. 1,2,3,4,5.* whereof in their place, 2. In their carriage, 1. Flocking after Christ, *Matth. 4:25.* 2. Leaving all to follow him, *Matth. 19:27.* 3. Hanging upon his mouth, and wondering at the gracious words and deeds coming from him, *Luke 19:48.* and *9:43.* and *10:39,42.* 4. Abundant in their affection to him, *Luke 7:37, 38,* to *47.* and *Chap. 8:2,3.* 3. In Christ's presence with them, *John 3:29.* Hence they are as the children of the Bride-chamber, *Mark 2:19.*

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*Behold, behold*] This beauty of the Church was well discerned, 1. Of the children of wisdom, *Matth.* 11:19. 2. Of the Greeks and strangers, *John* 12:21. 3. Of the Pharisees, and Elders even enemies, *John* 12:19.

*Thou hast Dove's eyes*] Doves were noted above in *Chap.* 1:15. For their, 1. Resorting by flocks to their resting place, *Isaiah* 60:8. 2. Chastity. 3. Loathing of uncleanness. There is with all in their eyes, 4. Bright clearness. 5. Simplicity.

Which implieth, That the Church of that age, 1. Referred by flocks to Christ, *Matth.* 4:25. *Luke* 12:1. 2. Saw more clearly sundry truths about Christ, then the Fathers had done, *Luke* 10:23,24. Or then their present Governors, *John* 9. v. 39. 3. Was of a simple and innocent look and demeanour, *Matth.* 10:16. *John* 1:47. 4. Looked with a chaste eye after Christ alone, *John* 6:68. 5. Loathed the unchaste uncleanness of Pharisaical pollutions, *Matth.* 15:1,2.

*Within thy locks*] which implieth, their eyes were somewhat darkened by a veil of their own ignorance. For though they saw sundry truths more than their Fathers, yet they were still ignorant, 1. Of the Death and Resurrection of Christ, *Luke* 18:32,33,34.

*Thy Hair is as a flock of Goats, looking down from mount Gilead*] Hair though it hang close upon the head, yet it may in time fall off, or be cut off. Such were many common Christians at that time, 1. For multitude, *Luke* 12:1. 2. For hanging upon Christ the Head, *Luke* 10:48. 3. For falling away from him, 1. Either of themselves, *John* 6:66. 2. Or cut off by the practices of the Pharisees and Priests, *Matth.* 27:20. *John* 12. ver. 42,43.

*As a flock of Goats*] Assembling together in companies, as they did to Christ. 2. Often without a shepherd, as this people were, *Mark* 6:34.

*Looking down from mount Gilead*] Goats affect to feed-upon craggy Rocks, even in much danger [*Pendentum Capream summa de Rupe videbis casuram speres, decipit illa canes.*]

So this people were in danger for feeding on Christ, *John* 9. ver. 22.

*Doct.* 1. The spouse of Christ (whether Church or Christian soul) is very fair in the sight of Christ, and of good men too, when they are ardent in their affection, and resort to Christ, near and chaste according to their knowledge, and content to stand in jeopardy, in feeding on him.



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This Doctrine continueth the sum of the exposition of the *verse*. Christ saith his Church is fair, fair, and he calleth all men, especially good men, that have eyes to see to behold, behold it for and her beauty is in her Dove's eyes, to Christ, and in her feeding in jeopardy, as Goats on mount *Gilead*.

Or thus: The spouse of Christ is very fair in the sight of Christ, and he would have her so looked at in the sight of men. when they are frequent in reforting to Christ, sincere and simple in their acknowledgement of him, ardent & chaste in their affection to him, and venturous in their feeding upon him.

This hath been opened and cleared, in all the parts of it, in opening the meaning of the words.

*Reas.* 1. From the concourse in this Bride, of all such things as maketh her fair and amiable, and acceptable in her husband's eyes; As, 1. When she leaveth all to cleave to him, *Psalm* 45. 10, 11. 2. When she resorteth much to him. It is uncomely, when she will not come at him, *Jer.* 2:31. *Est.* 1:12. When she is sincere and simple in acknowledgement of him, for himself, not for by-respects. The mother of *Zebedee's* children looking at worldly respects, were disdained of the rest, *Matth.* 20:20. to 24. 4. When her affection is chaste and ardent to him, 5. When she is willing to run all hazards, and ventures with him.

*Use* 1. To teach us how to discern of our comeliness, or deformity by our expressing the like carriage to Christ, as this spouse, or the contrary.

*Use* 2. To take off the jealousy of honest poor Christians, who fear the Lord taketh no pleasure in them, because of their ignorance. He acknowledgeth the beauty of Dove's eyes, though under locks.

*Use* 5. For crmfort to such as flock to Christ; & sincerely and simply take his Word, and chastly cleave to him, and are willing to run hamds with him. The Lord, 1. Calleth them his love. 2. Accounteth them fair, very fair. 3. Encourageth them to behold it, and discern it.

Which is also an encouragement, so to carry our selves towards Christ, that he may so encourage us.

## Chap. 4. ver. 2,3.

2. *Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one beareth thorns, 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 pomegranate within thy locks.*

**C**oherence see in *verse 1. pag. 79.* Thy teeth are like a flock that are even shorn, &c.

The teeth of the spouse are set forth, 1. By a similitude to a flock for their store; a flock whether of Sheep, as *Chap. 6:6.* of Goats, as *Chap. 4:1.* 2. By their Equality, even shorn. 3. By their cleanness; which came up from the washing. 4. By there fruitfulness, every one bearing twins, none barren amongst them, *ver. 2.*

The teeth are set in the mouth, 1, Partly to help speech, by beating the breath of the lungs upon them. 2. Partly to chew meat, not for themselves, but for the stomach, & so for the whole body. The teeth chewing the meat, make it easy of digestion.

These teeth were the Ministers of the Church in Christ's time, to wit, the Apostles, *Matth. 10.* And to them soon after were added the 70. Disciples, as Evangelists.

These, 1. For number are called a flock, *Luke 12:32.* 2. For their use, 1. They help the breathings of the Church to God in prayer, and the breathings of the Spirit of God to them in preaching. 2. They chew the strong meat of the Word, to the nourishment of the Church, of the stronger men of the Church. Otherwise they are as Beasts to give milk to *Babes, ver. 5.*

3. For their equality, even shorn, none brusking out beyond, or above his fellows. The teeth of innocent sheep, or goats are even set: the beasts that have tusks (some teeth longer than others) are Boars, Lions, Dogs ravenous beasts, *Peter's* supremacy was not yet known *Matth. 16:19.* with *John 20:23.* The affectation of preeminence was, 1. Distastful to Christ, *Matth. 18:1,2,3,4.* *Matth. 20:25,* to 29. a, Disdainful to the Apostles themselves, *Matth. 20:21,* to 24.

4. *For their cleanness or purity, coming up from the washing,*

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to wit, from *John's* Baptism. For all the Apostles were baptized by *John's* whence *Peter* made it a matter of necessity, that when a Disciple was to be chosen an Apostle into the room of *Judas*, the must be one of them who had been conversant amongst them from the baptism of *John*, Acts 1:21,22.

5. *For their fruitfulness, every one of them bearing twins none barren*] Teeth are not wont to bring forth, or be fruitful; but sheep to whom these teeth be compared, they are wont to be fruitfull, and their ordinary best fruitfulness is to bear twins at a time. And such was the fruitfulness of the Ministers at that time. Hence the Disciples return from preaching with joy, and Christ saw Satan, like lightning falling from heaven, Luke 10:17,18.

*Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely*] ver. 3. The lips are instruments of speech, at the teeth were, and so signify such as deliver either, 1. The Speech and Doctrine of Christ to his Church in preaching, 2. The Speech of the Church to Christ in prayer.

Lips pour out. Prayer, *Psalm* 17:1. Preaching, *Prov.* 8:6.

The Ministers of the Church appointed by Christ, were the lips as well as the teeth of the Church.

Their Ministry, 1. For the matter of it, was a thread of scarlet, which it a Princely wear, *Lament.* 4:5. It was touching the Kingdom of God and the coming of it; *Matth.* 10:7. 2. For the manner of it; 1. As a thread for slenderness, and tenuity (*renui filo* woven) Not plump nor swelling with human eloquence, but savouring of fisher-like tenuity, and simplicity. 2. Yet as a thread of scarlet deeply dyed in grain, with the Royal majesty, and authority of Christ by the power of his Spirit.

*Thy Temples are like a piece of pomegranate within thy locks*] The Temples of the head, are in the upper part of the forehead; by which the whole body watcheth or resteth.

*Pomegranates*] (in Physick) they are of much use, for Restraining, and healing sundry diseases.

They are commended [*by Fernelius in Method. Medend.* l 5. c.3. 1. For repressing or restraining, 1. The heat of cholera. 2. The malignity, acrimony, and rottenness of Fevers. 3. The looseness of the body. 2. For comforting & strengthening the stomach, & bowels, to the preventing of faintings & swoonings.

The Pomegranates were of much use in the old Tabernacle, and Temple; *Aaron's* coat was hanged round about with pomegranates, and Bells, Bells to express the shrill found of his My-

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stery: Pomegranates for restraining and healing the distempers and diseases of the people, *Exod.* 28:34,35. This office the Church-officers (or Governors) do perform to it. They, 1. Re-press and Restrain, 1. Passions, and heats amongst brethren. 2. The malignity, and rottenness of any sinful distempers. 3. The looseness, and dissolutenes of the people. 2. Comfort the feeble-minded, and strengthen the weak.

The Church-officers, or Rulers (in special, the Ruling Elders) are fitly therefore resembled to a Pomegranate: yea, to a *piece of Pomegranate*, because it is not the whole body of the Pomegranate, that is thus medicinable, but broken in pieces, and then it is useful, both juice and rind.

*Within thy locks*] 1. Because though Christ established this discipline and delivered it to the Church in the days of his flesh, *Matth.* 18:15, to 20. yet it was not then exercised openly, in the execution of it, till after the Resurrection, 1 *Tim.* 5:17. *Acts* 14:23. 1 *Cor.* 5:1, to 5. Meanwhile it was covered as the Dove's eyes were with some obscurity. 2. Because discipline is exercised in the presence and with the consent of the people, *Matth.* 18:17. 1 *Cor.* 5:4.

Ver. 4. *Thy neck*] See in the next Sermon, for though it be set next before breasts, as being so set in the natural body: yet it is not so peculiar to any special office, but belongeth alike to all the numbers, as knitting them alike to the head.

Ver. 5. *Thy two breasts are like two young Roes, that are twins feeding among Lilies.*]

The breasts give milk to Babes, and signify the same Church-officers formerly resembled to teeth, as chewing meat to strong men in Christ, so hereto the breasts yielding milk to the Babes in Christ.

*Two breasts*] Because they were sent two and two together, *Matth.* 10:2,3,4. *Luke* 10:1.

*Twins*] As being of equal power and commission.

*Roes*] Not tarrying long in a place, but speedily skipping over all the Cries of *Israel*.

*Feeding among Lilies.*] For they were sent not to the Gentiles, nor Samaritans; but, 1. To the lost sheep of the house of *Israel* *Matth.* 10:5,6. 2. To the true-hearted and well-affected amongst the Israelites, to abide and feed with them, *Matth.* 10. *ver.* 10,11.

*Doct.* 1. It is a great part of the beauty (or Fairness) of the Church, when their Officers walk one to another, in equality:

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to the Lord in purity: to the flock in faithful, fruitful, powerful, simplicity, and sociableness. For in the description of this Church, which is acknowledged by Christ to be very fair (*ver.* 1) there be put seven parts in all, in which her beauty consisted, and four of them he their Officers, resembled by Teeth, lips, Temples, Breasts.

And in the Teeth their comeliness lay in equality one to another. Their coming from the washing, from *John's* Baptism, holdeth forth purity in their Hearts, Lives, Administrations.

To the flak they walk, i/FauhfuHy di.'pcniing a fi; portion; 1. Chewing strong meat to stronger Christians. 2. Milk to Babes. 2. Fruitful, everyone bearing Twins. 3. Simply without affectation of carnal eloquence, lips slender as a thread. 4. Powerfully, restraining all distempers, and abuses, and lips red as scarlet.

5. Sociably, feeding among Lilies, amongst the upright. See for equality of Church-Officers, *Matth.* 20:25,26. 1 *Pet.* 5:1. [[συν[ν]πρεσβύτερος]], and *ver.* 3. For purity, See 1 *Tim.* 5:2,22. 1 *Thes.* 2:10. Faithfulness, *Luk.* 12:42,43,44. Fruitfulness, *John* 15:16. *Rom.* 1:13. Simplicity, 1 *Cor.* 2:4. Power *Tit.* 2:15. *Rev.* 2:2. 1 *Cor.* 2:4. Sociableness, 1 *Thes.* 2:7.

*Reas.* 1 From the equality of the ministerial commission. All Apostles had equal commission, *Matth.* 28:19,20. *John* 20:23.

*Reas.* 1. From the holiness of their message. Hence their purity, *Isaiah* 52:11.

*Reas.* 3. From the Nature and end of their calling. They are Stewards, 1 *Cor.* 2:4. Hence faithfulness, 1 *Cor.* 4:2. They are Fathers, hence fruitfulness, 1 *Cor.* 4:15. They are dispensers of the Spirit, 2 *Cor.* 3:8. and Rulers, 1 *Tim.* 5:17 Hence from both they walk powerfully. They are Nurses, 1 *Thes.* 2:7. Hence they walk tenderly and sociably.

*Use* 1. To argue the great deformity of such Society of Christians, as live without Officer, They want Teeth, Lips, Temples, Breasts.

*Use* 2. To teach Ministers and Elders, what is our place in the body, and how we ought to discharge the same. When we come to chew the bread of life to the people, come as sheep shorn from our wool, that causeth sweat, *Ezek.* 44:18, And as newly warned in renewed acts of Faith, Repentance.

*Use* 3. To teach the people what use to make of your Offices.

## CHAP. 4. ver. 4,5.

4. *Thy neck is like 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 Lilies.*

**W**E have seen the description of the beauty of the Church in Christ's time, the beauty of her, 1. Common members, in his, 1. Eyes 2. Hair. 2. Ministers, in his, 1. Teeth. 2. Lips, 3. Temples 4. Breasts.

How we come to nice a view of the Reality, Strength of her union and communion with Christ in both sorts of members: Thy neck is as the Tower of *David*, &c. ver. 4. The very naming of the comparison cleareth it, that *Solomon* here speaketh not of *Pharaoh's* daughter, nor of any *Shulamite*, nor any other wife or concubine of his. For it were an uncomely and monstrous reesemblance, to compare the neck of any woman to a Tower.

The neck is set forth, 1. By the similitude, of the Tower of *David*. 2. And this Tower amplified, 1. By the end, builded for an Armory. 2. By the adjunct, whereon there hang a thousand Bucklers. And the Bucklers amplified by their subject, all shields of mighty men.

The principal use of the neck in a man's body, is to knit and join head and body together, though it hath other uses also subservient: as, 1. To convey all intercourse of spirits, as sense, motion, between head and body. 2. To convey meat from the teet hand mouth to the stomach. 3. To convey cool Air, to refresh rhe lungs and heart, and so to breed vital spirits. 4. To convey and respire the breath back again to the teeth, and lips, and so to form speech, to declare God's mind and our own to one another.

That which knitterh Christ and the Invisible Church together, and so every true Christian soul is the spirit of faith. The Spirit uniteth us to him, 1 *Cor.* 6:17. *John* 1:12. and not every spirit, but as it worketh, and acteth faith in us, 2 *Cor.* 4. ver. 13.

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That which knitteth a visible Church to Christ, and so each true visible member of the Church, is the confession of Faith, breathed from the Spirit of Grace, such as that of *Peter*, *Matth.* 16:16,17. This Faith and Confession of it, is like the Tower of *David*, builded for an armory. It seemeth *David's* mighty men, or at least many mighty men, thousands of them hung their shields upon it, which after the Temple was built, were laid up in it, *1 Chron.* 23:9. See *2 Sam.* 5:7,9. So Faith and the sincere confession of Faith is given us of God for our chiefest armory. All the strong shields and defences of the Mighty and Powerful Saints of God, have hung upon their Faith, and their Faith upon Christ, *Psalms* 91:1,2,3. Hence Faith is called a shield, *Ephes.* 6,16.

And mighty it is to overcome, *1. Satan*, *Ephes.* 6:16. *1 Pet.* 5:8,9. *2. The World*, *1 John* 5:4,5. *Heb.* 11:33,34. *3. Lusts.* *2 Pet.* 1:1,4. And all the mighty ones of God, have found their greatest strength to be in the strength of their Faith in Christ, *Heb.* 11. throughout. The like strength is there in the sincere profession of Faith, *Matth.* 16:16,17,18. The Lord will have ever some or other visible Church, built on this Rock, *ver.* 18. Yea, a Church of sincere believers may be dissipated, and dispersed, but so they are not destroyed, but multiplied, as the Church of *Judea*, (*Acts*8:4.) in *Samaria*, *Acts* 8:5,6. In *Antioch.* *Acts* 11:19,20,21. Or if they were all put to sword or fagot, they might be killed, but not destroyed: they would be translated to the Church of the first-born in Heaven, *Heb.* 12:22,23. not only in spirit, as now, but face to face. This Faith and the confession of it, was in some members of the Church in Christ's time very strong, *Matth.* 16:16,17. *Matth.* 8:10. *Matth.* 15:28. Yea, even weak faith is of a mighty strength, in regard of the Power of Christ, whom it leaneth on, *Mark* 9:23,24,25. *John* 4:49,50. *Mark* 1:40. *Matth.* 17. *ver.* 20.

*Doct.* 1. Faith, and the confession of it is the strength and beauty of the spouse of Christ, whether Church, or soul.

*Their strength]* For it is an armory, and full of shields, shields of mighty men.

*Their beauty]* For this neck of faith and confession of faith, is one of the parts of the spouse's beauty, which Christ acknowledgeth, *ver.* 1,4. *Abraham's* strong faith, was his Strength, Beauty, *Rom.* 4:19,20,21, So *David's* faith, *1 Sam.* 17:45,46, 47. with 37. So the three Princes profession of faith, *Dan.* 3. *ver.* 17,18.

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*Reas.* 1. By faith God bestoweth his greatest and steadfast blessings to us. By it, 1. He uniteth us to Christ, *John* 1:12. *Gal.* 2:20. Faith is the formal cause of our life in Christ. 2. He justifieth us from sin, *Rom.* 4:5. 3. He purifieth our hearts, *Acts* 15:9. 4. He saveth us, *Ephes.* 2:8.

*Reas.* 2. By faith our greatest enemies are overcome; Satan, *Ephes.* 6:16. 1 *Pet.* 5:8,9. the World, 1 *John* 5:4,5. *Heb.* 11:33,34. *Dan.* 6:23. the Flesh, 2 *Pet.* 1:1,4.

*Reas.* 3. By faith we give the greatest glory to God, *Rom.* 4:20. For there is a double act of our faith, and both of them glorious to God. Faith. 1. Emptieth the soul of all conscience in its own, 1. Strength, 2 *Chron.* 10:12. No might in us, &c. 2. Worth, *Luke* 7:6,7,9. 2. Looketh to Christ for all. 2 *Chron.* 20:12. Our eyes are to thee. When it is recompensed with the beauty of a good Report, *Heb.* 11:2.

*Reas.* 4. By Faith the same good is done in the soul, that is done the neck in the body; as by the neck, 1. We receive by sense and motion to the body from the head, to by faith we receive spiritual sense and motion from Christ. 2. We receive wholesome nourishment into the body. So by Faith the Word becometh wholesome and profitable to us, not without it, *Heb.* 6:2. 3. Air mispired to refresh our lungs and heart: So by Faith we receive the Spirit, *Gal.* 3:14. 4. We breath our speech: So by Faith we speak and utter spiritual words to, 1. God, *James* 1:6. and 5:15,16. 2. Man, 2 *Cor.* 4:13.

*Use* 1. To show the estate of a man without Faith, he is as a man without an head; Christ is afar off from him above him, he wanteth a neck to close with him. And such is the estate of man, who hath made shipwreck of Faith, like one whose neck is broken, 1 *Tim.* 1:19. Though the grace of justifying faith cannot be broken. *Luke* 22:32. yet temporary faith may be broken off, *Luke* 8:13. and the Doctrine of faith forsaken, 1 *Tim.* 1:19. and confession of faith denied as in *Peter*. The estate of a weak faith is the weakness of the whole man, *Matth.* 14 *ver.* 31.

*Use* 2. To teach such as have Faith, to live by it, *Hab.* 2:4. *Gal.* 2:20. Not to live upon it as *Peter* did, *Matth.* 26:33,35. and *David*, *Psalm* 30:6.

*Use* 3. To keep also the profession of our faith without wavering, *Heb.* 10:23.

*Use* 4. For a sign of fath, If it knit us to Christ, and derive spiritual sense and motion from him. If it draw in the Spirit



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of the Word, and so make it profitable; It it open our breathings out of gracious speech, to God in prayer; to men in conference.

**Chap. 4. Ver. 6.**

*6. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away  
I will get me to the mountains of myrrh, and to the  
hill of frankincense.*

**I**N this *Verse* we have set forth the last Act of Christ toward the end of the period, of that state of his Church, which was gathered by his Ministry, to wit, his departure from them by Death.

Where his departure is set forth. 1. By the strong sweetness, and fragraney of the place, whither he was to depart, *A mountain of myrrh, an hill of frankincense.*

2. By his voluntary departure thither, *I will get me to the mountain, &c.* [[לילך]] *ibo mihi.*

3. By the end, and also the effect of it, which was double, 1. The vanishing of the shadows of the Ceremonies. 2. The breaking forth of the daylight of the Gospel, revealing the light of God's favour. Whilst (or till) the day break, and the shadows flee away, &c. [[ע]] implieth the end of the thing, as *Psalm 110:1,1. Dan. 4:32.* The day-break mentioned, first before the fleeing of the shadows, because though the shadows were virtual abolished by the Death of Christ, yet not actually so manifested till the day-light of the Gospel brake forth, and battered them.

*Doct.* 1. The mountain whereon Christ died, was as a mountain of myrrh, and hill of frankincense. Not for that, myrrh was offered him there, *Mark 15:23.* For that he there refused: though that also was past of his Passion, that he tasted ofit,

*Reas.* 1. As being the place where myrrh, and other spices wanted to be used in embalmings, were prepared for him at his Death, *John 19:39.*

*Reas.* 2. From the sweet smelling savour of his Death to God, *Eph. 5:2.* Whereof all the sweet savour of the old sacrifices were but a shadow, *Gen. 8:21. Levit.19, &c.*

*Reas.* 3. From the power full efficacy of his Death, to perfume

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our hearts, drying up all our superfluous moistures, and rotten distempers, as myrrh and aloes, and frankincense, and the like strong gums, and spices, are wont to dry up the superfluous, and rotten humours of dead bodies, and so to preserve them, *Rom.* 6:6.

*Reas.* 4. From his ascent from thence to heaven, which is a mountain of spices, *Cant.* 8:14. From his suffering in mount *Golgotha* arose his Ascension from mount *Olivet*, *Phil.* 2:8,9.

*Doct.* 2. Christ went up to his Death willingly. I will get me, &c. *Luke* 9:52. *John* 10:18.

*Reas.* 1. From his Fathers will and commandment *John* 10. ver. 18. *Psalms* 40:6,7,8.

From his unspeakable love to his people, *Rom.* 5. ver. 8. *John* 15:13.

*Object.* *Matt.* 26:39,42,44.

*Ans.* That only argued the extreme bitterness of the cup of his Passion, the terrors of God's wrath seasing upon him and his desire; the commandment of God and salvation of his people, might have been wrought otherwise, if it might have been done, 1. By the will of God. 2. With the safety of his sheep. If not, he freely and absolutely gave up himself to suffer.

*Reas.* For the joy that was set before him, *Heb.* 10:8,9.

*Doct.* 3. By the departure and Death of Christ, the shadows of ceremonies vanished away, and the day-light of the Gospel brake forth, *Coloss.* 2:14. *Heb.* 10:8,9.

*Reas.* 1. From the accomplishment of the ceremonies in Christ's Death and departure, *Coloss.* 2:17. Whence their abolishment. Gospel-light brake forth by his Death, 1 *Tim.* 1:10.

*Reas.* 2. From the perfection of Christ's sacrifice, *Heb.* 10:14. If the ceremonies had still continued, it would have argued Imperfection in his sacrifice, *Heb.* 10:1, to 4.

*Reas.* 3. By the Rending of the veil of Christ's Death (*Matth.* 27:51 with 2 *Cor.* 5:14.) Christ cometh to be seen with open face, 2 *Cor.* 3:18.

*Use* 1. To teach us to find the Death of Christ, of like fragrantcy and efficacy to us as Christ esteemed it for our sakes, we shall find it so to us if we find, 1. Our consciences pacified, in his blood. 2. Our consciences purified by his blood, *Heb.* 9. ver. 14. [Simile see *Mark* 5:29.]

*Use* 2. To behold the unspeakable love of Christ so to esteem the place of a seull (*Matth.* 27:33.) as a mountain of myrrh, an hill of frankincense, & so willingly get himself to it.

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*Use 3.* To account it a sweet mercy, if the Lord Jesus call us to suffer any affliction for his sake, as he suffered much for us, and though the very place sweet and comfortable, *Phil. 2:17,18.*

*Use 4.* To teach us the ground of the precious sweetness, and comfort of the death or all the servants of Christ. Their death is precious, *Psalms 116:15.* By it, 1. They glorify God, *John 21:19.* 2. They edify men, *Phil. 2:17.* 3. They gain life and glory to themselves, *Phil. 1:21,23.*

*Use 5.* To teach us now not to walk in ceremonies, much less in nightly shadows of ignorance, errors, uncleanness, and in any way of darkness, but as becomes the children of light, in ways of light, *Rom. 13:12,13,14.* 1 *Thess. 5:5,* to 8.

**Chap. 4. Ver. 7.**

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

**T**Hese words are an Historical Prophetical description of the estate of the Church, gathered by the Ministry of the Apostles next after the Ascension of Christ.

The Church is here described, 1. By her beauty, and it amplified. 1. By the completness of it, all fair. 2. By the transcendent excellency of it. Thou art all fair, thou art all fair. 3. By the denial of any blemish or spot in it, *ver. 7.* There is no spot in thee.

2. By Christ's call of her to remove, with him from *Lebanon*, and to look from *Amana* from the top of *Hermon* and *Shenir*, from the Lions' dens, and from the mountains of Leopards, *ver. 8.*

3. By the Ravishing beauty of a sister-Church at that time in one, 1. Of her eyes, 2. Chain of her neck.

4. By the Fairness, Sweetness of her Love, *ver. 10.*

5. By the smell of her ointments, *ver. 10.*

6. By the abundant sweetness & wholesomeness of her lips and words.

7. By the smell of her Garments, & the strong favour of the sweetness thereof like that of *Lebanon*, *ver. 11.*

This description doeth decipher to us the estate of the Apostolic primitive Church. The Church was acknowledged Fair before, yea, exceeding fair, and no spot till now. In Christ's

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own time, it was fair, fair, (that is, very fair) but now all fair,

Fairness or beauty tieth in three things met together. 1. The integrity of all the parts, none lacking or superfluous; if any had been lacking, the body were married, or lame: if any superfluous, the body were monstrous. 2. The symmetry or fit proportion of all the members to one another. 3. The good complexion, or colours of them all. All these three we found in this Church, in perfection. 1. Integrity of all the parts, both 1. Officers Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers, Elders, Deacons. 2. Private members added in abundance, *Acts 2:41,47*.

2. They were fitly compacted and joined together, [*Eph. 4:16. Coloss. 2:19*] 1. To the head, 1. By the Spirit, 1 *Cor. 6:17*. 2. By Faith, *Gal. 2:20*. 2. One to another, by joints and bands, *Ephes. 4:16. Coloss. 2:19*. That is, 1. By the Holy gifts of the Spirit, 1 *Pet. 4:10. Acts 2:33*. Great grace was upon them all. 2. By the Ordinances of Christ, and the dispensation of them amongst themselves, *Acts 2:42. 1 Cor. 12:13*. Word, Worship, Sacraments, Discipline. 3. The good complexion of all, was their Simplicity, Power, wherein they walked before God and men, 1 *Cor. 2:4. Acts 4:13. and ver. 33,34*. The transcendent beauty of this Church lay, 1. In abundant supply of all Officers, Ordinary, Extraordinary. 1. In abundant measure of Spirit and Spiritual gifts, *Acts 2:4. and 6:3. Acts 2:33*. Great grace upon all.

*Object.* But how doth Christ say there was no spot in them, but all fair, when as some hypocrites were found amongst them? *Acts 5:1*.

*Ans.* It is not the creeping in of some hypocrites, that bereaveth the Church of her full beauty, if so be they be soon discerned, and according to their offences proceeded against, else they are spots and blemishes, *Jude 12*.

*Doct.* 1. The primitive Apostolic Church was in Christ's eye, the most completely and abundantly fair, of all that ever have been before it, or shall be after it, upon the face of the earth. For no Church thus witnessd of, throughout this song: no not that gathered by Christ his own Ministry, *ver. 1*.

*Object.* But is not that a dishonour to Christ, that their work should be advanced above his?

*Ans.* No: Christ himself acknowledgeth, and told his Apostles beforehand, that it should be so, *John 14:12*. Nor is this any weakness in Christ, but only argueth, that Christ putteth forth greater power in the estate of his exaltation, then he did in

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the estate of his humiliaion. For it was the same hand of Christ, that fathered his Church both in the days of his flesh, and after his Resurrection But it was more honour to him, to put forth his Power after his Resurrection, than before.

*Reas.* 1. From the Divine Power and Glory now put upon Christ, in eminent measure after his Death, to take away the ignominy of his Death, and to recompence it, *Matth.* 28:18. *Phil.* 8, to 11.

*Reas.* 2. From the mighty power requisite to convince and subdue the World, from idolatry to the faith of Christ, *John* 16:7,8. 2 *Cor.* 10:4,5.

*Reas.* 3. It was meet the pattern of all Churches should go before, and exceed all the rest.

*Use* 1. To reprove the ignorance and arrogance of such who speak of the Apostolic Church, as an Infant and Rude in comparison of after-ages The Churches in *Constantine's* time abounded in wealth and honour, but not in Spiritual beauty.

*Use.* 2. To be ready to give more ample Testimony, of other Churches than our own wherein ourselves live, in case we see the Lord to delight to honour them more with the Presence and power of his Spirit, Christ calleth the Church, wherein himself lived and ministered, fair: but this all fair. His Church might have thousands ascribed to it, this ten thousands.

*Use* 3. To teach us wherein the chief beauty of Churches lieth; to wit in Spiritual fulness, 1. Of Officers. 2. Of Gifts, 3. Of simplicity and power in dispensing both.

*Use* 4. To teach us that not abuses, but the toleration of them, is the blemish and deformity of a Church.

*Use* 5. That there may be a modified state of perfection in a Church, even in this world, which is here attributed to this Apostolic Church not in respect of justification only, (for so all Churches of Saints are perfect, but this Church-state here is singular) but also in respect of holy, 1. Constitution. 2. Administration.

*Use* 6. To direct particular souls to breath after a like testimony from Christ, of complete beauty without spot. This obtained, 1. In Justification, *Jer.* 50:20. *Isaiah* 44:22. *Psalms* 51:7 2. In sanctification, 1. A perfection of parts, *Luke* 16. 2. A perfection of degrees begun, 1. In a vigilant warfare against all sin, *Rom.* 7:15,20. hence that testimony of *David*, 1 *Kings* 15:5. 2. In a constant sepious endeavour after perfection, *Phil.* 3: 12,13,14. Hence such called perfect, *ver.* 15.

## Chap. 4. ver. 8.

8. *Come with me from Lebanon (my Spouse) with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions dens, from the mountains of the leopards.*

**T**His verse holdeth forth the second argument, whereby the Apostolic primitive Church is described, to wit, Christ call of her to remove with him from *Lebanon*, and to look from the top of *Amana*, from the top of *Shenir* and *Hermon*, from the Lions' dens, from the mountains of the Leopards. Where observe, 1. The style he gives his Church, *my Spouse*, and here first of all in this Song. 2. The act he calls her to, to come with him: *Come with me, with me, &c.* 3. From whence he called her to come, 1. *From Lebanon.* 2. *From the top of Amana, Shevir and Hermon,* and thence to look. 3. From the danger of savage cruelty; 1. *The Lions' den.* 2. *The mountains of the Leopards.*

*My Spouse*] Christ so calleth his Church now first after his suffering in our human nature, his human nature, and his sufferings in it being the ground of our union, and conjugal communion with him. That time was called the day of his espousals, *Cant.* 3:11.

*Lebanon*] Is a famous hill in the utmost bounds of the land of *Israel*, northward.

*Amana*] An Hill more northward than *Lebanon*, on the west of *Syria*, looking into *Syria*, *Mesopotamia*, *Silicia*, and all *Asia* the less.

*Hermon and Shenir*] Two names of the same hill, *Deut.* 3:8,9. though happily given to divers parts or it called also *Sirion*, and *Sion*, *ibidem*, and *Deut.* 4:48.

*The Lions' dens, the mountains of Leopards*] *Jerusalem* and the Temple in our Saviour's time, was made a den of thieves or robbers, *Mat.* 23:13. but after his ascension, in the Apostles-times, the Rulers and people grew more fierce and cruel, spilling the blood of *Stephen*, and making havock of the Church, *Acts* 7:59, and 8:1,3.

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So then this verse setteth forth Christ calling his Spouse, the Church of the Christian *Jews*, 1. To come away from the dens of ravenous persecutors at *Jerusalem*, and to prepare her self to sojourn amongst the *Gentiles*. 2. To look out northward over *Lebanon*, *Hermon*, *Amana*, towards *Antioch* in *Syria*, to *Phœnicia*, *Cyrene*, *Cyprus*. And so in fullness of time it came to pass: upon the persecution of *Stephen*, the faithful Disciples wandered and travelled into those parts of *Phœnicia*, *Cyrene*, *Cyprus*, and as far as *Antioch*, and preached the Gospel, some to the *Jews*, and some to the *Gentiles* also, and the hand of the Lord was with them, so that great numbers turned to the Lord, *Acts* 11:18, to 21. whereof when tidings came to the Church at *Jerusalem*, they sent *Barnabus* to them, that he should go as far as *Antioch*, to see the estate of the Church and Disciples there, and to order and establish them, *ver.* 22,23. Afterwards when the Churches of the *Gentiles* increased in number and in grace, and the *Jews* increased in blasphemy and rage against the Gospel, Christ called his Church, and Saints at *Jerusalem*, to leave these Dens and Mountains of Lions and Leopards, *Acts* 13:46. and 22:21.

*Doct.* 1. The Lord Jesus hath his special respects and seasons, wherein he doth acknowledge his people as his Spouse. In all this song he never called his people by this style of Spouse before now: but, *My love, my dove, my fair one*, and the like, *Cant.* 1:13,14. and 4:1. but here my Spouse, and *ver.* 9,10,11,12. and 5:1. *Isa.* 62:5. (*Hos.* 2:19,20.) In the New Testament, *John* 3:29. 2 *Cor.* 11:2. *Eph.* 5:23,25. *rev.* 19:7. and 11:2,9.

*Reas.* 1. In respect of his incarnation, and time of Ministry with his people, in his own person, *Cant.* 3:11. *Joh.* 3:29. Marriages should not be, but in the same kind: it was a great self-denial to Christ, and love to us, that he would stoop to take up our nature.

*Reas.* 2. In regard of his death now past; *Cant.* 4:6. when Christ, 1. Reconciled us actually to his Father, *Rom.* 5:10. 2. Purchased us his Spirit, *Gal.* 3:1.

*Reas.* 3. In respect of gathering of the dispersed lost sheep of the house of *Israel*, into a Church-estate by the Ministry of *Peter*, and the other Apostles, *Acts* 2:38, to 41,42,47.

Though the two former of these were virtually done from

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the beginning of the world (*Rev.* 13:8.) yet now actually. The Covenant was made also as with *Abrahm* (*Gen.* 17:7.) so with the whole people on Mount *Sinai*, *Jer.* 31:32. (in which respect he is called their husband there:) yet they having apostated, and the body of the people, having degenerated, God's Saints were as it were a company of lost scattered sheep in Christ's time, *Matth.* 10:6. *John* 11:52.

*Use* 1. To teach us how and whereupon to ground our conjugal union with the Lord Jesus, to wit, 1. Upon the union of his human nature (which is our nature) with his divine nature, *Heb.* 1:14. 2. Upon his death and the virtue thereof, communicated to us by his Spirit, which was purchased by his death, *Gal.* 3:14. The Spirit of a Spouse forsaketh all for her beloved, *Psal.* 45. 10,11. even self and all. 3. Upon our gathering into the fellowship of his Church, by professed subjection to the Lord, and his Ordinances, *Act.* 1:41,42.

*Use* 2. To teach us answerably to become like Christ in putting on the divine Nature, 2 *Pet.* 1:4. Also in suffering any thing for his sake. And in yielding up our selves to holy Covenant with him even before the Church.

*Doct.* 1. The Lord Jesus giveth his people an holy call, to depart from a Church, when Mount *Zion* becometh a mountain of Leopards, and a den of Lions; which implieth, when the Church is degenerate, 1. From a flock of kids and lambs, to a den of Lions and Leopards. In true conversion to Christ, Leopards and Lions become Lambs and Kids, *Isa.* 11:6,7,9. 2. When they are grown unchangeable, incurable in evil, *Jer.* 15:23. 3. When they grow fierce and cruel against the Lord and his servants, *Jer.* 11:7,1. *Acts* 8:1. and *Chap.* 13:45,46,50,51. and 19:9.

*Reas.* 1. From the Lord's going along, and his pretence with them in such a case. Text, *Come with me, come with me, my Spouse*, *Mat.* 10:23.

*Reas.* 2. From the propagation of the Gospel by such dispersion, *Acts* 13:46,47.

*Use.* To approve our calling hither.



## Chap. 4. ver. 9.

9. *Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my Spouse; thou hast ravished my heart, with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.*

**I**N this verse the Apostolic Church is described by, 1. An adjunct relation, a *Sister, Spouse*. 2. The effect of her comeliness, *Thou hast ravished my hearty my Sister, Spouse*, which is the more eminent by the ingemination; 3. By the means wherewith she did so ravish him. 1. Inward, with one of thy eyes. 2. Outward, with one chain of thy neck.

Where oberve, 1. The compellation or title (or style) he giveth her, *my Sister, Spouse*. 2. The gracious acceptance she found with Christ, *Thou hast ravished my heart* (and ingeminated for the vehemency and excellency of it) *Thou hast ravished my heart*. 3. The holy enticements, wherewith she did ravish him, 1. *With one of thine eyes*. 2. *With one chain of thy neck*.

*My Sister, Spouse*] the style implieth that Christ now speaketh not to the Mother-Church of the *Jews*, but to a Sister-Church, some Church of the *Gentiles*. Such a Church as is also a Spouse, betrothed to Christ.

*Thou hast ravished my heart thou hast ravished my heart*] That is, thou hast strongly affected my heart, so as my heart is tather with thee then with my self; ravishment is a force put upon a person loving, whereby he is more for the person beloved, then for himself. And when the heart is ravished, the person is willingly and heartily taken up with affection and attendance to another more then himself, 1 *Cor.* 8:9. This Sister-Church with whom Christ was so affected, was the first Christian Church beyond *Lebanus*, the Church of *Antioch* situate between *Lebanus* and *Armana*. The Church at *Jerusalem* hearing of the grace of God vouchsafed to *Antioch*, sent *Barnabus* thither, who coming to them, and beholding the grace of Christ amongst them, was much taken with it, and exhorted them with full purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord: and much people were added to the Lord, *Acts* 11:20, to 24. yea, *Barnabas* was so much affected wish

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the lively work of Christ amongst them, that he travelled from thence to *Tarsus* to fetch *Saul* to them, and both of them carried at *Antioch*, a whole year and taught much people, insomuch that the Disciples there were first called Christians, *Acts* 11:25,26. *Agabus* also came down to them with other Prophets, from *Jerusalem*, ver. 17,18. and five Prophets and Teachers of note were with them, *Acts* 13:1.

*With one of thine eyes*] The eyes of the Church which look out for the Church, and watch over it, are the Teachers and Pastors of it. Amongst whom *Saul* and *Barnabus* the Lord chiefly delighted into send them forth, and join them together in one office, or ambassage as one man to enlighten the *Gentiles*, all the neighbour Countries, *Acts* 13:2, to ver. 26,27. of chap. 14. But the eyes of the Church, whereby her self looketh at Christ, and all the good things of Christ, are, 1. Knowledge. 2. Faith, *John* 8:56, Ignorance is blindness, *Rom.* 2:19. In this one eye of faith this Church excelled, in looking unto Christ only, as sufficient to salvation, without the ceremonies of *Moses*, which the *Jews* would have put upon them, *Acts* 15:1,2,3, &c. to 21. yea, herein they excelled many of the Church at *Jerusalem*.

*And with one chain of thy neck*] The neck that joineth the body of the invisible Church to Christ the head, is faith (as afore, ver. 4.) the neck that joineth the visible Church is profession of faith; one chain about this neck was the holy Law, made by the Apostles and Elders at *Jerusalem*, together with the messengers of the Church at *Antioch*, which the Church received, and wore with great consolation, *Acts* 15:18,19,31. For Laws are binding as chains, *Cant.* 1:10. other Churches after them wore the same chain for their establishment, and ornament, *Acts* 16:14. It is called a chain, 1. Not only for its comely binding, as an wholesome Law. 2. But also as binding *Jewish* and *Gentile* Churches together in a bond of peace.

*Doct.* 1. The Lord Jesus acknowledgeth a neighbour-Church, as a sister, spouse unto himself. So, ver. 10,12. and chap. 5:1.

*Reas.* 1. From the sisterly relation of one Church to another, *Cant.* 8:8.

*Reas.* 2. From his partaking in the same nature with us, *Heb.* 2:

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11. to 14. that he might redeem us from bondage«s our elder brother, *Lev.* 15:48.

*Reas.* 3. From the same affection he bearerh to us, as to a Sister, *Matth.* 12:50. Spouse, 2 *Cor.* 11:2.

*Use* 1. To teach Churches (neighbour-Churches) 1. Mutual solicitude and care one for another, *Cant.* 8:8. *Gen.* 4:9. 2. Mutual help one to another, *Cant.* 8:8. 3. Mutual Hearkening, and attention to one another. The neglect whereof had like to have been the ruin of a Tribe in *Israel*, *Judg.* 20:13.

*Use* 2. To comfort Churches in the Lord's abundant brotherly love and conjugal affection to us all, notwithstanding our multiplicity, so be it we be knit to him in truth of heart. In a man it is adultery to have many spouses, because he cannot impart his entire love unto them all, but Christ hath abundant store of Love to us all.

*Use* 3. To teach us to return Brotherly, Conjugal affection and service to Christ again, *Matth.* 12:50.

*Doct.* 2. The Lord Jesus is strongly affected, and greatly ravished with his spouse (whether Church, Soul) when they do believe on him, only for their salvation, and withal do take it for their Ornament and honour to profess their subjection to such Laws as his Synods hold forth to them, from his Word, for that end, 1 *Chro.* 16:9.

*Reas.* 1. From the sovereign honour put upon Christ in both; In the former, (believing on him only for salvation) we hold forth the sovereignty, and all-sufficiency of his Priesthood, *Heb.* 7:25,26 and 10:14. In the Latter (wearing it as our Ornament, the Laws held forth to us from his word, by his Ordinances) we hold forth the sovereignty, and all-sufficiency of his Kingdom, Prophecy. And not arrogating all-sufficiency to ourselves, 1 *Cor.* 14:36.

*Reas.* 2. From the strong and near union, & communion, which hereby we do exercise, and enjoy both with Christ, with his Churches. It is the sum of the saving Doctrine of the Gospel, Faith, Love, 1 *Tim.* 1:13. Hence these two put in practice obtain all the benefits of the Gospel.

*Quest.* But how can Christ be said to be ravished by any Acts of ours?

*Answ.* 1. His ravishing with love to us, is rather the asuse of such acts of ours to him, then the effects thereof, *Jer.* 31:3. Yet it is other wise expressed, Christ speaking to us after the manner of men, after the manner of affectionate Lovers.

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*Answ.* 1. Christ so speaketh of himself, in regard he by bit Spirit is so affected in the hearts of his children, when they see the spouses of Christ so walking towards Christ, their brethren.

*Answ.* 1. The acts of Christ in us, are ways and means of manifesting Christ's grace toward us, *John* 14:21,23. *1 Kings* 3:10. to 13, *Gen.* 22:16,17,18,

*Object.* But doth not this attribute too much to the creature?

*Answ.* No: *1 Pet.* 3:21. *Acts* 1:40. Baptism though a creature is said to save us: and we in some sense to save our selves.

*Use* 1. To teach us how to knit the heart of Christ to us, in ravishing affection, to wit, 1. By cleaving to Christ, with full purpose of heart for all our salvation, *Acts* 11:23. *Psalm* 91. *ver.* 14. 2. By hearkening to any word of admonition, or direction from our brethren, from his Word dispensed in any Ordinance of his, *Provs.* 15:14.

*Use* 1. For comfort to a faithful Church and Soul, that there are such strong affections in Christ towards them.

*Use* 3. To teach spouses amongst men, how to gain upon one another's affections, *Prov.* 5:19.

#### Chap. 4. ver. 10,11.

10. *How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love then wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!*

11. *Thy lips, O my spouse! drop as the honey-comb: honey and milk are under the tongue, & the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.*

[ **C**oherence see in *verse* 7. *pag.* 97]

To wit, 1. Of her Love which he sets forth, 1. By the fairness of it. How fair is thy love, my sister, spouse? 1. By the bitterness of it above wine, How much better is thy love than wine? wine is 1. Strong (spiritful) 2. Sweet. 3. Cheerful (*Psalm* 104:15 ) her love more.

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2. Of her smell, the smell of her, 1. Ointments, amplified à *minori*, above all spices, *ver.* 10. 2. Garments, by a simile of the smell of *Lebanon*, *ver.* 11.

3. Of her speech set forth, 1. By the readiness, and fluency of it, Thy lips drop. 2. By the sweetness of it, as the Honeycomb, 3. By the wholesomeness of it, even unto Babes, Honey and milk are under thy tongue, *ver.* 11.

*My sister, spouse*] the same (and such like Gentile-Churches) as was mentioned in *ver.* 9. to wit, the Church of *Antioch*, whose love was, 1. Fair, comely. 2. Strong and spiritual. 3. Sweet and pleasant. 4. Cheerful, and cherishing the hearts of the poor Saints at *Jerusalem*.

When they prepared a liberal contribution for the poor Saints at *Jerusalem*, and sent it by the hands of *Barnabas* and *Saul*, *Acts* 11. *ver.* 29,30. The like by more far love was seen in the poor Churches of *Macedonia*, 2 *Corinth.* 8:1, to 5.

Their love was, 1. Fair and comely, for poor men to send relief to others. 2. A strong love, for deeply poor to send rich liberality. 3. Yet more strong & sweet, to pray the messengers with much intreaty to receive it. 4. A cheerful love, 1. Not only *effective*, in cheering the Saints at *Jerusalem* 2. But *subjective*, in offering and giving it in abundance of joy, beyond the Apostles' expectation.

This kind of love and benevolence, the Apostle calleth it *an Odour of a sweet smell*, *Phil.* 4:18. As if it were sweeter and better then wine, as a sweet-smelling sacrifice of savoury relish to God and man. All this love the Lord Jesus here accepteth and praiseth as done to himself, because it was for his sake done to his Saints, and members: and so he will acknowledge it at the last day, *Matth.* 25:40.

The smell, 1. *Of thine Ointments*] Is the good report of the graces of God's Spirit, above all spices, far exceeding all the moral and civil virtues of the heathen, *Rom.* 1:8. *Coloss.* 2:5. 1 *Thes.* 1:6,7,8. 2. *Of thy Garments*] Is the good favour and report, 1. Of Christ's righteousness imputed, 2. Of their gracious conversation before God and men, whereby they adorned the Gospel of God.

*Like the smell of Lebanon*] Full of sweet Trees growing in it, which yield a strong fragrant smell afar off.

*Lips and tongue*] Being instruments of speech, are put for speech.

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*Thy lips*] That is, thy Doctrine, thy Ministry, thy Speech and conference.

*Drop as the Honey comb*] That is, Distill, flow out, 1. Readily, without pressing. 2. Sweet matter, like Honey, *Row.* 1:15. 2 *Cor.* 11:7. So he taught the Elders to do, *Acts* 20:35.

*Honey and milk are under thy tongue*] That is gracious and wholesome nourishment for old men and babes, 1 *Cor.* 3:2. 1 *Pet.* 2:2.

*Doct.* 1. It much affecteth the heart of Christ, when the love of his Church is cheerfull and bountiful: her Ministry and conference, gracious and edifying; Her graces, and carriage, fragrant, and savoury.

*It much affecteth the heart of Christ*] For his question implieth his admiration of it, How fair is thy love? how much better than wine?

*When the love of his Church is cheerful and beautiful:*] For then it is fair, and better then wine.

Fair love is when it well becometh the Church, 1. In respect of grace, as they have freely received, so freely to give. 2. In respect of equity and justice, to minister carnal things to those who have ministered spiritual things to them, *Rom.* 15:26,27.

*Better it is than wine*] When it is as theirs was, 1. Cheerful, 2. Bountiful.

When their Ministry and conference (for both are included it, Lips, Tongue, is, 1. Gracious, That is, 1. Freely dropping, not mercenary, not pressed. 2. Sweet matter, and wholesome, like honey. 2. Edifying of nourishing even to Babes, like milk, and honey.

*Her graces and carriage are fragrant and savoury*] Her graces and carriage are her Endowments, Ointments, Departments, Garments are fragrant, and savoury, above all spices, natural or moral virtues.

*As the smell of Lebanon*] Steaming forth of fragrant and savoury odour afar off.

Proof of, 1. Love, Cheerful, and Bountiful, 2 *Cor.* 9:13, 14,15. and *verse* 7.

Proof of, 3. Ministry and conference, gracious and edifying, 1 *Pet.* 5:2. *Eph.* 4:29. *Coloss.* 4:6.

Proof of, 3. Graces and carriage, fragrant and savoury *Rom.* 1. *ver.* 8. 1 *Thes.* 1:7,8.

*Reas.* 1. Christ is affected, when his members are affected with our beneficence, with our gracious administration,

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conferences, conversation, *Philem.* 7. *Matth.* 25. *ver.* 40.

*Reas.* 1. From Christ his delight in a people, when he blesseth them with such a gracious Ministry, and the Ministry with such a blessing in the hearts, and lips, and lives of his People.

*Reas.* 3. From the joy the Lord taketh in the fulfilling of his will, even because it is his own work: as he rejoiceth in all his creatures, as being his work, *Psalms* 104:31. So much more here. As also he rejoiceth in that his Holy Will is done, *1 Sam.* 15. *ver.* 22.

*Use* 1. To encourage every Church of Christ, to walk in cheerful, and bountiful love, as to him, *Luke* 7:47. So to all his members. Christ accounteth your love fair, i. Cheerful, Bountiful.

*Use* 2. To teach Ministers in their dispensation of the Word, 1. To preach freely, readily, as any Honey-comb dropping full. 2. To preach sweet, wholesome, nourishing doctrine, yea, even to Babes, as well as to riper Christians. Yea, all the members of the Church, to be full of gracious and holy conference, *Coloss.* 4. *ver.* 6. Yea, even dropping Catechism-instruction (as milk for Babes) to our children, contrary to them, *Rom.* 3. *ver.* 13,14.

*Use* 3. To exhort Christian Churches, and People to be furnished, 1. With such Ointments of inward grace. 2. With such garments of outward good conversation, as maybe of good report before all men far and near, *1 Pet.* 2:12. *Matth.* 5:16.

#### Chap. 4. Ver. 12.

12. *A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse: a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.*

**T**Hese words describe the estate of the Churches, both in the Apostles times, and during all the ten primitive Persecutions.

The Church is described by five other arguments over, and above the former seven: to wit, 8. By her amenity or pleasantness, a Garden, *ver.* 12. an Orchard, *ver.* 13. *Hebrew,* a Paradise, a Fountain, a Spring, 9. By her restraint privacy and Retirdness, and Reservedness, a Garden enclosed, a Spring

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shut up, and Fountain sealed, *ver.* 12. 10. By the fragrant sweetness, & wholesomeness of her members, expressed in a similitude of the choisest, and sweetest Spice-shrubs and trees, thy Plants are an Orchard of Pomegranates with pleasant fruits, Caphire (or Cypress) with Spikenard, Spikenard, Saffron, Calamus, & Cinnamon, withal Trees of Frankincense, Myrrh, and Aloes, with all the chief spices, *ver.* 13,14. 11. By her Original Derivation and propagation of exemplary purity, a fountain of Gardens, a Well of living waters and streams from *Lebanon*, *ver.* 15. 12. By her Prayer in this estate, 1. For the arising of the North-wind, and coming of the South. 2. For the savourable blowing upon her garden, and that set forth by the end; that the spices thereof may flow forth. 3. For the coming of Christ into his Garden, and eating his plealant Fruits, *ver.* 16.

*Doct.* 1. The estate of the Christian Church, in her primitive times, was as a Garden enclosed, a Spring or Fountain enclosed or sealed, *v.* 12. He speaketh of a Christian Church, not the Jewish Church; for he calleth her, *a Sister chuch*, & of her in her first & pure times; for he describeth the members as fragrant, *ver.* 13,14. and her self as exemplary, and fruitful in propagation of pure waters, from the mountains of *Israel*, *ver.* 15. A Garden, or Orchard (*ver.* 13.) in the Original Paradise, as if this were the Garden of *Eden*. All the world out of the Church is as a wilderness or at best as a wide field, where all manner of unclean, and wild beasts live and feed. Only the Church is God's Garden, or Orchard his Paradise For Paradise was both a Garden, and Orchard, *Gen.* 2:8,9.

As the Garden of Paradise, 1. For the habitation of such as are renewed after the Image of God, as it was the habitation of *Adam* in innocency, *Gen.* 2:8. After his fall, he was put out of the Garden, *Gen.* 3:23

1, For the variety of fragrant, and pleasant, and wholesome Trees and Herbs, Text, *ver.* 13,14, *Gen.* 2:8,9. And so in the Church store of all variety of the saving and savoury graces of the Spirit and them set as in Garden-beds in due Order, *in areolis*.

3. For the presence of the Tree of life there, *Gen.* 3:9. and so of Christ in his Church, especially in that first Church-frame,

*A spring or fountain*] To wit, of the waters of life, to wit 1. The blood of Christ, *Zech.* 13:1. 2. The saving graces of the Spirit



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dispensed and running forth in the Channels, and conduit Pipes of the Ordinances, *Psal.* 87:7. *Ezek.* 47:1. *Rev.* 21:1. A fountain rolling and bubbling out 1. Cooleth the thirsty, and refresheth them, *Isai.* 44:3. 2. Clcanseth the filthy, *Ezek.* 36. 25. 3. Maketh fruitful, *Psal.* 1:3.

*A Garden enclosed*] Or barred, as *Hebrew*: and in the margin; and so a spring bound, the same word in *Hebrew* with the former.

*Enclosed*] not with a wall of defence by civil Magistracy: for they were rather shut up with locks and bars.

And shut up, and barred they were, 1. By the dreadful Presence of God in the most of his Church, discovering and censuring hypocrites, and scandalous persons *Acts* 5:13. *Rev.* 2:18. with 23. Christ is a jealous God, and will soon discern hypocrites, *Matth.* 2:11. 2. By the Institution of Christ, enjoining professed purity, both in the matter of the Church, and the form thereof, 2 *Cor.* 6:17,18, 3. By the rage of Persecutors, under whom the Church was shut up in prisons, and dungeons, under locks, bars, and fetters, *Rev.* 2:10. And by this means they that were out of prisons, were fain to assemble in private places, woods, dens, and the like, and that before day: not in the open face of Towns and Cities.

*Use* 1. To teach a necessity of separation between the Church and the World. If a whole Nation be received into the Church, 1. It will make the Church as *Sardis*, the body of the Church dead, a few names living, which will bring sudden danger of ruin, *Rev.* 3:1, to 4. 2. It will bring in many members unsuitable to the herd, *Song.* 5:9. and to the body which is a golden Candlestick, *Rev.* 2:1. 3. It will pollute the Ordinances, *Matth.* 22:11. 4. It will impeach the liberty of the Saints to choose their own Officers, *Acts* 1:23. & 6:2,3. & 14:23.

*Use* 2. To teach every Church-member, to watch over himself, and one another, to keep Christ's garden clean from weeds and vermine; This was *Adam's* calling, when God put him into his Garden, *Gen.* 2:15. If we eat of the forbidden fruit, as *Adam* did, God will cast us out of his Garden, as he did *Adam*. We are not to grow wild, or unsavoury, or unclean, but as a Garden, a Spring.

*Use* 3. For comfort to the Church, that the Lord accounteth her as a Garden, as a Spring as a Paradise, that himself walketh in it, and groweth in it as a Tree of life, that he protecteth us.

## Chap. 4. ver. 13,14.

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 chief spices.*

**T***Hy plants]* That is, thy members; the members of the primitive Churches (for of them he continueth speech) planted in the House or Church of God. For so Church-members are said to be planted, *Psalm* 92:13. The Lord's planting, *Isaiah* 63:3. Pomegranates, Camphire with Spikenard, Spikenard with Saffron, Calamus and Cinnamon, with all Trees of Frankincense, Myrrh, and Aloes, with all the chief spices.

*See for all these Ferne-|lius de Me-}thod. Meden-|di, l.4.c.7. |l.5.c.7.c.19,21,22,26,27,l.6. |c.12.13.14. |15.*

Of these phants it may be observed, 1. All these excel in fragraney and sweetness, either to the Smell or Taste or both, 2. All these as they are pleasant for the smell or Taste, so they are wholesome & medicinal: some are cordials, refreshing the spirits, preventing swoonings, comforting the heart, brain and stomach, as Pomegranates, Camphire, Saffron, Cinnamon: some are restrictive, drying up distillations, Laxes, Fluxes, Ulcers, as Camphire, Cinnamon, Frankincense: some help forward Concoction, and Conception, as Spikenard and Saffron, Calamus, Cinnamon; some cleanse tough fleame, and Choler, and open obstructions, as Aloes. 3. They are complanted & coupled together, as may make their savour most sweet, and fragrant, Camphire with Spikenard, Spikenard with Saffron, Calamus and Cinnamon. And their virtues also well coupled, Camphire cheereth the spirits, Spikenard digesteth cold humours, Saffron attenuateth flegm, comforteth the heart & stomach. 4. They comprise all sorts of ranks, or statures: some are herbs, as spikenard, and Saffron: some are Shrubs as Calamus & Cinnamon, some are Trees as Pomegranates, Myrrh, Aloes, Camphire, and Frankincense are low trees, 5. All these do yield their chiefest Fragraney, and whole-

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someness in braying or bruising. pounding and cutting, grating or grinding, beating and burning: which all imply hard usage. The explication and application of all these may be expressed, and summed up in this.

*Doct.* 1. The members of the primitive Churches, even all sorts of them, were most fragrant, and most wholesome, especially in the times of persecution.

*The members of the primitive Churches]* for he speaketh of the Plants in Christ's Garden or Orchard, in the Apostles' times, and after them whilst the primitive persecutions lasted.

*Even all sorts of them]* Whether, as herbs for low stature, poor Christians and meanest, as shrubs for middle stature, Christians of middle rank, as Trees for eminency, Christians of greatest eminency.

*Tertull. Apologet. | Plin. in Epist. | ad Trajanum.*

*Most Fragrant]* They were, 1. Sweet-smelling sacrifices to God, *Phil.* 2:17. *Coloss.* 1:24. 2. Of good name and sweet report before men, *Caius Seius Vir bonus, tantum quod Christianus.*

*Most wholesome]* 1. Restraining, or Purging out all abuses amongst themselves, and offences. 2. Setting forward concoction and conception in public Ordinances, and private Feasts and meetings. 3. Cordial, comforting and encouraging one another.

*In times of persecution]* To wit, when they were beaten and bruised, grated and grinded to dust in the teeth of wild beasts, burned and tortured with all manner of torments,

*Reas.* 1. From their fellowship with Christ his Death, in all their sufferings, 2 *Tim.* 2:12. 1 *Pet.* 4:13. Now his Death was most, 1. Fragrant, *Eph.* 5:2. 2, Wholesome, *Isaiah* 53:5.

*Reas.* 2. From the glory we give to God by suffering for his sake, *John* 21:19. Whence God also delighteth, to glorify us, 1 *Pet.* 4:14,16,16.

*Reas.* 3. From the precious Graces necessary to such sufferings, which are all of them most savoury and wholesome. Faith, and Love, and Patience, necessary to suffer persecution. All these are of good report, and most honourable & serviceable; Faith, *Hebr.* 11:2. Love, Patience, as expressing much fortitude and strength of spirit.

*Use* 1. To teach us what manner of persons are fit to be planted in the Orchard of the Church, such as whose life it sweet and savoury, and whose death is more savoury: and both most wholesome, *Rev.* 2:2,3. and 9:19, 1 *Thess.* 1:6,7,8. *Phil.*

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1:11. The contrary is dishonourable to God and destruction to the Church, *Rom.* 2:24. *Ezek.* 36:20,23.

*Use* 1. To teach Church-members to live and die, serviceably, and honourably, and sociably, *Psalms* 92:13,14. *Gal.* 5:13. *Psalms* 1:20. Spice-trees are sweet when they grow, and wholesome: but most of all when they are cut, and bruised, and beaten, and burned; so here should Church-plants be.

*Use* 5. Not to strange, nor shrink at persecutions; It is our glory and improvement to best behoofe, *1 Pet.* 4:22.

*Use* 4. For comfort to sincere and fit Church-members; It is a comfort, 1. That God looketh at us as sweet and wholesome, when we look at our best fruit as loss, and dross, and dung in point of justification, *Phil.* 3:7,8. 2. That our greatest afflictions turn to the greatest service, and advantage both to God and man, *Phil.* 1:12,13,14.

#### Chap. 4. ver. 15.

15. *A fountain of gardens, a Well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon,*

**I**N the 12. verse the Lord Jesus had described his primitive Church as a garden enclosed, and as a fountain sealed. How a garden, he amplified, *ver.* 13,14. in describing the precious, fragrant and medicinal herbs, and shrubs, and trees that grow in it. Now in this verse he further amplifieth that attribute of a fountain, a fountain of gardens, that is, not only a garden, but a fountain of gardens, or Churches, such a fountain as is also a Well, that is, a deep fountain of living waters, and the streams thereof issuing from *Lebanon*, a mountain of *Israel*, a gooly mountain, *Deut.* 3:25. that yieldeth all the materials of the Temple of *Solomon*, *1 Kings* 5:6. Thus are we come to the eleventh argument, wherby the primitive Church of the Apostles is described, her original propagation of Churches, & derivation of exemplary purity unto them.

*Doct.* 1. The apostolic Primitive Church, was a fountain of Churches, a Well, of living waters, issuing forth from the mountains of *Israel*.

*Gardens*] That is, Churches, as, *ver.* 12.

A fountain (of gardens) 1. For their fruitfulness in propagation of Churches, partly, 1. By the sounding of the Word from them to other Towns and Villages, *1 Thes.* 1:8. 2. By

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their patience and constancy in suffering [*Sanguis Martyrum*, was *Semen Ecclesiæ*.] Phil. 1:12,13,14. 2. For their exemplary purity, to Churches in after-ages; all plantations and reformation of Churches duly gone about are attended according to their pattern, 1 *Thes.* 1:7. 3. For perennity (perpetually springing and running over:) as in like sort, *a Well*] for profundity or depth of living waters. Hence the New *Jerusalem* which is not yet come, is described, for it shall be built upon the Lamb's twelve Apostles, and so become suitable to the Churches planted, and watered by their Ministry, *Rev.* 21:14.

*A Well*] For depth of living waters, 1. Of Christ's Spirit the fountain of living waters, *John* 7:38,39. and so of the graces of the Spirit, which, 1. Accompany salvation, *Heb.* 6:9. 2. Edify the Church. 2. Of all the holy institutions of Christ, in which the Spirit, the graces of the Spirit are conveyed, *Isaiah* 12:3. especially the Ministry of the Word, which diggeth deep into the Word for the explication, application of it.

*Streams from Lebanon*] *Lebanon* being a goodly mountain of *Israel*, yielding both the river *Jordan*, and other springs and brooks, to water all the coasts of *Israel*: Timbers for materials to *Solomon's* Temple, holdeth forth the Lord himself, who is the mountain of provision, of Protection to his people, *Psalms* 125:1,2.

And in special streams from *Lebanon* holdeth forth, the holy Scriptures of the Prophets and Apostles of *Israel*, by which the Churches (yea, all the Churches) are watered, and made fruitful, and edified.

*Reas.* 1. From the virtue and efficacy of the Kingdom of God, that is, of the Church, which being hid in three pecks of meal leavened all, *Mat.* 13:31.

*Reas.* 2. From the course which the Apostles and first planters of Churches took in preaching the Gospel, They first attended to preach the Gospel in great Towns and Cities, and there to gather Disciples into Church-estate; from whence the Gospel and Church-order should be derived to all the Country-Town about them. Thus they first preached at *Jerusalem*, *Samaria*, *Antioch*; and look at the Churches planted by *Paul*, we shall find them first seated in Cities and great Towns, as *Rome*, *Corinth*, *Ephesus*, *Philippi*, *Colessæ*, (a City of *Phrygia*) *Thessalonica*, &c.

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*Use 1.* For imitation of this primitive state of Churches for that estate was a fountain, for exemplary pattern to succeeding Churches, to wit, 1. In the choiceness of our materials, *ver.* 13,14. all of them, sweet and savoury, medicinal Christians, as Pomegranates, Camphire, &c. nor briars, and thorns, &c. 2. In our inclosure and separation from the Wilderness of the world, A garden inclosed, a fountain sealed. 3. In joint concurrence of Elders and Brethren in Church-Acts, all the plants, and shrubs, and herbs here were medicinal, as well as some choice officers. 4. In duties of brotherly love one to another, *ver.* 10. 5. In ravishing the heart of Christ, *ver.* 9:6. In growing up to an universal beauty, *ver.* 7. Not to conform to other Churches, but as they conform to this; when streams are corrupt, have recourse to this fountain.

*Use 2.* To teach us to cleave to the fellowship of the Churches, they are Christ's gardens, where he dwelleth and walketh, *Cant.* 8:19. There all his fresh springs be, *Psalms* 87:7.

*Use 3.* In drinking of no waters, nor watering our Gardens, with any streams, but such as spring from the mountains of *Israel*, *Heb.* 8:5.

**Chap. 4. ver. 16.**

*16. Awake, O North-wind, 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.*

**T**His whole verse may be taken either for a prayer of the Spouse, (the, Church) and then it consisteth of two petitions. 1. For the breath of the Spirit upon the gracious, gifts (her sweet spices) to the end that they might flow forth 2. For the coming of Christ into his garden to refresh himself with the fruits of his own gifts bestowed on her. For though the Spouse herself be a garden, and is therefore thought (by some) not so fit to call herself, my garden: yet as in a society of students, though themselves be

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the college collectively, yet distributively they may call themselves our college; so the Church though a garden collectively, may distributively speak of the garden, as our or my garden. Or else the former part of the verse may be taken (as is it by most) for the speech of Christ, commanding or calling his Spirit, to breath upon his garden, for the same end as aforesaid, that the spices of it may flow forth. And the latter Part is the prayer or desire of the Church, that he (whom she calleth her beloved) would be pleased to come into his garden, to refresh himself in eating his pleasant fruits. The sense and use is the same, whether the former part of the verse be taken either, First, as the words of Christ; or secondly, as the words of the Spouse.

*Arise O North*] Some understanding the North, as an enemy to gardens, and an hindrance to the flowing out of the favour of Spices, take the speech as a command to it, to arise, not to blow upon the garden, but to be gone and blow away. And therefore they say blow is in the singular number, and hath reference only to one of the winds which is more favourable to gardens, the *Southwind*; *come oh South, and blow*, &c. But the winds being meant not literally, but spiritually, even for the Spirit of Christ blowing out of one quarter, or another, it may be from any quarter useful and beneficial to the Church. And when a verb of the singular is put to more winds then one, it implieth both of them should blow either jointly, or severally upon the garden. A verb singular put to a nominative plural, or many nominatives, is put distributively, or universally, for all and singular, for both and singular. The wind then is the Spirit of God compared to wind, *John* 3:8. And this wind or Spirit breathing, 1. Either in the Ordinances of God, as the Word, *Ezek.* 37:9,10. 2. Or in the Providences of God, 1. Whether adverse, and so the Spirit sanctifieth afflictions, *Job* 23:10. As a wind to fan and cleanse. 2. Or prosperous, giving free passage to Church-Ordinances and duties. So the Lord stirred up the Spirit of *Cyrus* to favour the Church, *Ezra* 1:1,5. And thus the Church might desire, and Christ did command *Constantine* the great born Northward in *York*, to come and take the Empire upon him.

*Prov.* 25:23. *And blow upon my garden*] The North-wind, *Constantine* out of the North, to ddrive away the

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terrible blasts of the Eastern persecutors and to breath favourably and wholesomely upon the Church, cooling the noisome heats of persecutions which the Church had long endured. And the South wind, warm and moist breathings of the Spirit to come in all the Ordinances and Providences of God, towards the Church.

*That the spices thereof might flow forth]* That is, 1. That the Ordinances of Christ in his Church. 2. The Graces of the Spirit in the Church, which were retrained from their free manifestations (somewhat) by persecutions (as much as lay in men to restrain) might have free passage.

*Let my beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleasant fruits]* That is let Christ be pleased, 1. To Accept. 2. To Bless the fruits of his own Ordinances, Graces, which himself hath planted in them. As when Christ is said to come and sup with us, *Rev. 3:20. John 14:21,23.* It is because, 1. He manifesteth his acceptance of us, and or our duties, *John 14:21.* 2. He blesteth the same to be servicable, and useful to his Glory.

*Doct.* 1. The most precious members of the Church, stand in need of the Gracious breathings of God's Spirit upon them, to make them graces and duties savoury and serviceable, *2 Cor. 2:14,15,16. Rom. 15:30,31 1 Cor. 15:10.*

*Reas.* 1. From the unsavouriness of the vessel of our hearts, Partly, 1. By original corruption, which deriseth our whole man (every part in part) *Rom. 7:21.* 2. By some folly or other, found in the carriage and conversation of the best Christians, *Eccles. 10:1.* 3. By some cross providence straitening us, *2 Cor. 2:12,13.* Or from the restraint and impediments put upon the best gifts of the best Church-members, 1. By Satan, *1 Thes. 2:18.* 2. By the prejudice, or other averseness and obstinacy in men, *1 Kings 22:8.*

*Reas.* 2. From the insufficiency of the best gifts of the best Christians to bring forth a savoury fruitful act, without assistance of the Spirit to every act, *2 Cor. 3:5. 1 Cor. 3:6,7.* The ground of which is the Ordinance of God, making, 1. Christ our Life, *John 14:6. 1 Cor. 1:30.* 2. Faith and conduit-pipe, and our life from Christ, *Gal. 2:19,20.* Whence all our fruit is on him, and we can do nothing but by him, and his Spirit quickening and acting us, *Hos. 14:8. John 15:5.* and Faith deriving strength from him, *Gal. 2:19,10.*

*Use* 1. To teach Church-members (even the most precious) not to trust upon precious gifts received. Self-confidence was



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*Peter's fall and foil, Matth. 26:35.*

*Use 2.* To teach us which way soever the winds blow, I mean whatsoever changes come upon us, to seek to express the favouriness of God's Grace therein, *Isaiah 40:30,31.*

*Use 3.* To reprove unsavouriness, in Christians enjoying all Ordinances, and Providences, and changes of both. We want not such liberties, from outward encomagements, which they desired, *Isaiah 4:4, to 7.*

*Doct. 2.* It is the affectionate desire of the spouse of Christ, that he would come and eat of his own pleasant Fruits, which himself hath planted in them.

*Affectionate desire]* For they call on him as their beloved. His fruits they be, *Hos. 14:8. John 15:5. Phil. 1:11.* He, 1. Planted them, *1 Cor. 4:7.* 2. He keepeth and watereth them, *Isaiah 27:3.*

These fruits are pleasant, 1. To the spouse as to a woman to bring forth fruit (children) to her husband, *Gen. 30:20. John 16:21.* 2. To Christ, *Psalms 147:11.*

Christ cometh to eat of those, 1. When he manifesteth his acceptance of them in his Word to our consciences, *Gen. 22:12.* 2. When he blesseth them to be serviceable, 1. To his Glory and the Glory of his Father, *John 4:34.* 1. To the good of his Church and People.

The spouse earnestly desireth, that Christ would thus come, and eat these fruits of his own Grace in her, *Rom. 15:30,31.*

*Reas. 1.* From her love to him, she worketh them for him, *Cant. 7:13.*

*Use.* To reprove the hypocrisy of self-fruitfulness, *Hos. 10:1.*

#### Chap. 5. Ver. 1.

1. *I Am come into my Garden, my sister, my spouse, I have gathered my Myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my comb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!*

**I**N these words Christ giveth a Gracious answer to the desire of his spouse, which she put up to him, in the last work of

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the former *Chapter*, Her desire was that her beloved would come into his Garden, eat, his pleasant Fruits, *Chap.* 4:16.

In these words Christ, 1. Telleth her, He hath granted her desire, 1. I am come into my Garden, my sister, spouse, 2. I have gathered my Myrrh with my spice. 3. I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey. 4. I have drunken my wine with my milk.

2. Inviteth his friends, to eat and drink, yea, to drink abundantly. *v.* 1. Eat, O friends, drink & drink abundantly, O beloved. This Christ performed in course of story, when after the long and grievous persecutions of the Church, in the primitive times, for the space of 300, years, he came at length and visited his Church, In his vicegerent, a Gracious and Religious Emperor *Constantine* the Great.

1. *Constantine* coming into the fellowship of his Church, Christ in him came into his Garden [or Church, as *Chap.* 4:12] For in Spirit Christ was in her before, in all the time of her fragrant sufferings, *Chap.* 4:13,14. In him the Church saw the presence of Christ, coming into them, as *Jacob* did in *E-sau*, *Gen.* 33:10.

2. *Christ gathered his Myrrh and his spice*] When, 1. He accepted their sufferings, and made their Martyrdoms glorious, even in the consciences of most men. This implied in the white Robe given them, *Rev.* 6:11. 2. He gave them the fruit of their sufferings, 1. To overcome *Pagan* idolatry. 2. To advance the Name of Christ & Christian Religion by sufferings, *Rev.* 12:11.

3. *Christ his honey-comb and honey*] Is wont to express, Sweetness, Wholesomeness of his Word, and other Ordinances of his worship.

4. So doth his wine and milk. See for both, *Psalms* 19:10. *Isaiah* 55:1. *Cant.* 1:2.

And Christ is said to have eat, and drunk these, 1. When he accompanied the dispensation of these with his Lively and Powerful Presence, to make them sweet and powerful nourishment, 1. To strengthen. 2. To quicken Grace. 2. When he made them effectual to the conversion of thousands, even multitudes of all Nations, not only subject to the Roman Empire, but among Parthians, and Scythians, and Indians.

*Christ inviteth all his friends to eat and drink abundantly of the good things of his Church*] When by the peace and liberty, procured and proclaimed to the Church, by *Constantine*, all that were well affected to Christ, and Christianity, were freely en-

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couraged to enter into the fellowship of the Church, and openly to enjoy all the priviledges of Churches, not only for necessity and delight, but even for abundance, which at length brake forth to superfluity in high preferments and large settled endowments of Church-maintenance.

*Doct.* 1. Christ will at length come, and graciously, visit his spouse. When they are fervent and affectionate in prayer, pleasant in fruit fulness, patient in sufferings.

Christ here telleth his Church graciously (as his sister and spouse) that he is come into her: but when came he? 1. When she had earnestly desired him to come into his Garden, *Chap.* 4:19. Let my beloved come into his Garden. 2. When she had pleasant fruits, for him to feed on, *Ibidem*; and eat his pleasant fruits. 3. When her plants were savoury, and fragrant, as Myrrh, and Frankincence, Calamus, and Cinnamon, Spikenard, & Saffron, which are most savoury, when put to suffer bruising, and pounding, cutting and burning, as hath been opened in *ver.* 13,14.

1. *Fervency in prayer*] prevaileth much, *Jam.* 5:16. *Dan.* 9:20, to 23.

*Reas.* 1. From the work of his own Spirit in it, *Rom.* 8:26,27.

*Reas.* 2. From the acceptableness, and amiableness of the persons a spouse, *Cant.* 2:14.

1. *Pleasantness of Fruit*] Which argueth, 1. The fruit to be sweet which hasteneth his coming. 2. Cheerfully brought forth which also hasteneth his coming. *Isaiah* 64:5.

*Reas.* 1. From the Father's acceptance of fruitfulness, *John* 15:2,8.

*Reas.* 2. From Christ's delight in a cheerful giver, *1 Cor.* *ver.* 7.

*Reas.* 3. From the root and cause of both these, Christ by his Spirit, *John* 15:5. *Phil.* 1:11. *Hos.* 13:8. Upon me is thy fruit, &c. *Gal.* 5:22,23.

3. *Patience in suffering*] Finding no disappointment: it is not lost, *Psalms* 9:18. *Heb.* 10:3,37.

*Reas.* 1. From Christ's suffering in them, *Isaiah* 63:9. *Zech.* 2:8. *Acts* 9:5.

*Reas.* 2. From ripenning all the graces of the Spirit, by suffering, even a while, *1 Pet.* 5:10.

*Use* 1. To direct us how to hasten the enjoyment of Christ's presence with us. Means, 1. Fervency and frequency in prayers, not as is said, *Job* 15:4. 2. Pleasant fruitfulness. It we regard

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iniquity, Christ will not hear us, *Psalms* 66:18, Or four fruit, *Matth.* 6:5. If we bring forth bitter fruit, but not to him, it is not accepted *Zech.* 7:5,6. If we bring forth fruit grudgingly, or as of necessity 3. Patient and joyful suffering, *Heb.* 10:34, to 37.

*Use* 2. To direct us the same course, for our profitable and comfortable enjoyment of God's Ordinances. For in this way Christ cometh, and both accepteth our sufferings and administrations, and feedeth upon them, that is, causeth us to feel the sweetness and fatness of them, and to feed thereon, *Psalms* 63:5. and 65:4, *Acts* 9:31.

*Use* 3. To teach us how to esteem of Church-Ordinances, even as wine and milk, honey, and honey-comb; *Isaiah* 55:1. *Psalms* 19:10.

*Doct.* 2. When Christ doth graciously visit his Church, and partake with them in his Ordinances, he doth freely invite all his friends to partake with them and to feed abundantly. Christ was now pleased graciously to visit his Church; He accepted their sufferings, gathered his Myrrh with his spices. He partaked with them, in his Ordinances, not only causing *Constantine*, (as a Christian Magistrate) to enter into the Church, but himself also accepted their administrations, and caused his people to feed and grow by them. I have eaten my honey, with my honey-comb; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Now therefore he inviteth freely and cheerfully all his Friends, all that wish him or his Church well, to come and partake in the good things of his Garden, and to refresh themselves there abundantly, *Matth.* 22:4,9,10.

*Reas.* 2. From the bounty of Christ, who doth not love to eat his morsels alone, *Job* had but a measure of his full Spirit, *Job* 31:17.

*Reas.* From Christ's faithfulness, and constancy in Friendship, where he hath begun it, *John* 13:1. Now Christ knoweth friendship will not hold, where Ordinances are neglected, *Jonah* 3:8,9,10. with *Nahum* 1:1,2. God's jealousy hath reference to the second Commandment, which requireth cleaving to the Ordinances, *Exod.* 20:5,6. Yea, God affecteth keeping friendship to posterity as in men, *Prov.* 27:10. 1 *Sam.* 9:1. So in himself, *Isaiah* 41:8.

*Reas.* 3. From his removal of all impediments, and provision of all encouragements. Persecutions then in *Constantine's* time were blown over [as before, *Cant.* 2:11.] and so now with us.

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Provision is made for sweet and wholesome nourishment and dainties, honey, honey comb, wine, milk, Text, *ISAiah 25. ver. 6.*

*Reas.* 4. From the safety of feeding upon Spiritual food, even to abundance, without fear of exerce, (which in bodily food is dangerous, *Luke 21:34.* Not so here) *Eph. 5:18,* Because here spiritual food doth enlarge strength of digestion, as well as fill the heat: as fire the more it feedeth upon fit Fuel, the most it may.

*Use 1.* To teach us to feed heartily on the spiritual Gifts, Ordinances, Administrations of the Church, For therein Christ feedeth on them: and we with him. And thereby we invite all well-willers to Christ and the Church to come in, and partake with us. The scandalous lives of Church-members, is a great stumbling to the friends of Christ, which many times takes off their appetite from joining and feeding with us.

*Use 1.* To teach us, what manner of persons Christ inviteth into his Church to partake in fellowship with himself and them, his friends; not his enemies, *Psalms 50:16,17.* but his friends.

In friends there is, 1. Mutual reconcilment, *Amos 3:3. Job 22:1. Coloss. 1:21.* 2. Obedience out of Love, *John 15:14.* 3. Communication of counsels and secrets, *John 15:15.* 4. Communion of friends and enemies, and all good things in common, *Psalms 139:21,22.* and *97:10.* Hatred of sin, not because it hath, or will do us a shrewd turn, but of love to God.

*Use 3.* To teach the friends of Christ, not to sleight this invitement, Christ taketh it ill, if his call be neglected, *Luke 14:17,18.* with *24.* But listening to this call, therein provide well for your children; Their fathers friend will be a faithful friend to them.

*Use 4.* To teach the friends of Christ, when they come into his Church, to feed on his Ordinances, and Graces liberally, and abundantly, make we meat and drink of them. No danger here of excess, *Psalms 36:8.*

Means of appetite: 1. Sense of spiritual wants, and Misery. Passover to be eaten with four herbs, *Exod. 12:8. Prov. 17:7.* Here beware of clogging and choking our hearts with earthly cares and comforts, *Luke 21:34* and *8:14.* 2. Purge out noisome lusts and passions, *1 Pet. 2:1,2.* 3. Spiritual exercise, *1 Tim. 4:7,8.* 4. Company with good stomachs, *Rom. 11:14.*

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*Use 5.* For comfort to such as partake with profit in the Ordinances; Christ accounteth you, as his Friends, his beloved. He bids you welcome to his house, and giveth you both dainty meat, and store of it, a good stomach.

**Chap. 5. Ver. 2.**

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

**T**Hese words, with the rest of this *Chapter*, do describe the estate of the Church from the times of *Constantine*, and after them, to the times of the restoring of the Church by the Ministry of *Luther*, and other late Divines. After that Christ by *Constantine*, had filled the Church with abundance of peace, wealth, and honour, the Church fell into a state of carnal security, and spiritual drowsiness.

Which security or drowsiness is set forth, 1. By a similitude of sleep, I sleep (saith she:) & this amplified by the contrary estate of her heart, but my heart waketh, *v. 2.* And her waking expressed and set forth, by the effect, her discerning of his knock & voice. 2. By the carriage of Christ towards her in this estate, and her carriage towards him, 1. In his carriage towards her, he sought to awake her, 1. By knocking. 2. By calling, 1. With an affectionate compellation to open to him, Open to me my sister, my love, my Dove, my undefiled. 2. With a great complaint of the wetness of his head & locks, as a strong reason to open to him, *v. 2.* 2. In her carriage to him she expresseth her neglect of him, upon very sleight pretences, and excuses, *ver. 3.*

Afterwards follow, in Christ's carriage towards her, some more effectual means, to awaken her: with her yielding to it, *ver. 4, 5.* with the effects thereof, *ver. 4, 5.* to the end of the *Chapter*.

*I sleep]* The Church, forfeited with abundance of peace and plenty, in *Constantine's time*, neglected the purity, and power of Religion, and whilst they grew sensual and sluggish, the Enemy came and sowed tares in Doctrine, worship, Government, As building of Temples to Saints, laying up the relics of

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Saints in them, with much devotion, yea, prayers unto Saints, ceremonies annexed to Sacraments, choice of meats, affectation, & applauding of Monkish life; leaning to Traditions, Virginitie, &c. Afterwards Images & their worship, conceit of Purgatory, &c. but in *Constantinus* time, Ecclesiastical dignities of Bishops, Metropolitans. But my heart waketh, 1. Unto sincere devotion, according to their knowledge, especially in the more sincere sort of Church-members.

2. To discern some such gross Heretics, as quenched the heart and life of Christianicy, as the impiety of *Arius*, denying the Godhead of Christ; of *Macedonia*, *Eunomius*, denying the Person of the Holy Ghost; of *Nestorius*, dividing the Person of Christ, God, Man: of *Eutyches*, confounding the Natures against which they strongly wrestled in the four first general Counsels.

*Doct.* 1. The Church (or Spouse,) of Christ is subject to fits of spiritual sloth and drowsiness especially after great peace & plenty. So *David* enjoying peace & plenty slew *Uriah* his friend, who in his adversity, spared *Saul*, his enemy; yea his heart soon smote him, for touching the skirt of his garment. So *Solomon* after enjoyment of much abundance of peace and plenty, was lulled asleep by his idolatrous wives and concubines.

*Reas.* 1. From the removal of sensible distresses, which in times of distress stir up to watchfulness, *Esther* 5:15. *Isaiah* 26. *ver.* 8,9.

*Reas.* 2. From the confidence in creature-comforts and cumber with Wordly employments, which make us apt to sit loose from God, *Psalms* 30:6,7. Hence choking of the Word, *Luke* 8:14. and 21:34. And sleep is the choking, or clogging, and binding up of the senses. This spiritual sloth resembleth sleep. 1. As sleep is *Ligatio sensuum*, a binding up of the senses: So in this Spiritual drowsiness there is a senselessness, not discerning of things befalling us, good, or evil, *Hos.* 2:7,8, *Isaiah* 42:25. And going about duties duly and heavily. 2. Asia sleep many dreaming fancies, *Isaiah* 29:8. So here all those fond imaginations of corrupt opinions, superstitious devotions, ambitious usurpations of Church power in Bishops, and Synods. 3. As in sleep, there is danger, 1. Of losing dearest Jewels, as *Sampson* his hair, *Judges* 6:19. 2. Of finding greatest mischiefs, *Judges* 4:21. 2 *Sam.* 4:7.

So here the Church, 1. Lost the sight of Christ.

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2. Found distress after, even the rising of Antichrist.

*Use 1.* To discern our own danger, after long peace and plenty. The like causes of slumber lie upon us.

*Use 2.* To provoke us now to watch against this spiritual drowsiness, *Deut.* 8:7, to 14.

*Use 3.* To caution us how we take up all for sound antiquity, which the ancient Divines of those times (after *Constantine*) delivered. For they were often asleep, and though in the main vitals of Christianity, they were awake, yet in many other points they gave way to an inundation of many corruptions, which bred even Popery itself.

*Use 4.* To stop the mouths of Papists, who bid us tell the time, when the corruption of Religion crept in. If the ancient Writers were then asleep, no marvel if they did not note the precise time of every corruption, as it crept in amongst them.

*Doct. 2.* The spouse (or Church) of Christ even when she herself sleepeth yet her heart waketh, and she may discern both in her self.

*I sleep]* by spiritual sloth and dulness through, 1. Binding up of the spiritual senses. 1. Many dreaming fancies, *Isaiah* 29:8. *Psalms* 30:6. *Jer.* 45:4. 3. Danger of losing any thing that may be lost, though never so grievous; see above.

*My heart]* Heart is sometimes put for all or any faculties of the soul, as for, 1. The mind and judgement (which are the understanding) 1 *Kings* 3:9. 2. The memory, *Luke* 2:51. 3. Conscience, 1 *John* 3:20,21. 4. Will, *Jer.* 17:9. *Prov.* 4:23. and 23:7. 5. Affections, *Isaiah* 65:14.

Here meant, 1. The will and conscience, in the members of the Churches in *Paul's* conflict, *Rom.* 7:14,15. Yet not excluding the rest of the parts of the inner man: for here is some discerning of the inward estate, which is an act of the mind and judgement. 2. Some members of the Church, who may be to the Church, as those parts be to the soul; some hearty Christians may be as the heart of the Church, as *Athanasius*; these of more knowledge may be as the mind and judgement, others as the memory, others as the affections, such as are more full of good affections.

*Waketh]* Heart is awake when it, 1. Discerneth and is sensible of what toucheth the vitals of Christianity, or Religion, in Doctrine or worship, though neglective of discipline. 2. Discerneth the Voice of Christ. It is the voice of my beloved, Text.



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3. Discerneth its own estate: I sleep, Wake In heart.

*Reas.* 1. Of heart awake in a dull or fallen estate, 1. From the Spirit of God living in us, 1 *Cor* 2:12. and keeping alive his own work in us, 1 *Tim.* 1. *ver.* 14. 1 *Pet.* 1:5. *Psalm* 121. *ver.* 4. 2. From the seed of God remaining in us, which is immortal, and immortal things sleep not, 1 *John* 3:9. 1 *Pet.* 1. *ver.* 23.

*Reas.* 2. Of discerning its own estate, I. From the hearts waking. Hence some stirring of conscience. a. From the reflex Act of conscience upon it self, 1 *Cor.* 11:31, *Rom.* 2. *ver.* 15. 3. From the rule written in the heart, *Psalm* 40:8. The rule giveth light: and the conscience is, as the eye to discern it. 4. From experience of our former estate, and sensible difference between former and present estate, *Job* 29:2,3,4,5.

*Use* 1. To show two principles in a child of God, Flesh inclining to sleep, Spirit to wake.

*Use* 2. Against the error of total Apostasy. If the heart be awake, when the spouse sleepeth, neither she nor her heart is dead.

*Use* 3. To show there is somewhat of God, and of spiritual life, restraining in a fallen estate.

In his 1. Will, 1. A general purpose to please God in all things. 2. An owning, and choosing his cause, and his people in ill times.

2. Judgement, 1. To discern of good from evil, in vital points of Christianity.

3. Conscience, 1. Of duties of Religion. 2. Of Tenderness and aptness to conviction, 1 *Sam.* 12:13. and *Chap.* 24:10.

4. Affection, 1. In secret love to Christ. 2. Joy in the well-fare of the Church. 3. Dissatisfaction to his own estate, when it is dull and sleepy.

*Use* 4. To show a discerning spirit in a child of God of his own estate, both his, 1. Sleeping. 2. Waking.

*Quest.* But may he not sometimes think all dead in him?

*Answ.* In some pang of desertion and temptation, 1. He looking only at his own corruption. 2. God hiding his face. 3. Satan calling a mist upon the better part.

*Use* 6. To teach the children of God, to discern some good in themselves as well as much evil, we may not misjudge, not belve our selve, no more than others.

*Use* 6. To look well to our hearts to keep them awake.

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Means, 1. Abundance of Spirit, be filled with it, *Eph.* 5:18. want of spirits in the body causeth slumber and sleep, so here. 2. Walk and sleep in the light, 1 *John* 1:7. darkness inviteth sleep. 3. Life of faith, else the spirit will be wearied with duty done in his own strength, *Isaiah* 40:30. and weariness will cause sleep. 4. Fear of God, *Jer.* 32:40, Fear keepeth awake. 5. Waking meditation, 1. Of the excellency of spiritual blessings above earthly, *Heb.* 11:26. 2. Of the eyes of many set upon us, 1 *Cor.* 4:9. 3. Of the good of posterity. And therefore have all in a good posture.

*Use* 7. For comfort to such as have some life (any spiritual life) left in a fallen estate, so it was with the Spouse.

*Doct.* 3. The Church and Spouse of Christ, even in her sleepy and drowsy estate, may discern the voice of Christ, whether knocking, or calling, in both his love. *It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me my Sister, &c.* knocking implieth more then calling, calling is by word of mouth, so God calleth upon a sleepy soul, by his Word of reproof, and exhortation, &c. *Mat.* 26:40,41, *Mar.* 14:37,38. But knocking implieth some stroke of hand which maketh a greater noise and mere sensible: may be felt as well as heard. Thus God knocketh, when he striketh, 1. Either upon the conscience by inward terrors, *Rev.* 3:20. 2. Or upon the outward man by afflictions, *Psalms* 32:4. and 39:10,11. *Mich.* 6:9,13. In course of story Christ knocked with hard strokes upon the Church after *Constantine* by *Constantius* his perfection of the *Homoousians*, and death of *Constans*; by the apostasy and persecution of *Julian*; by the short reign of eight months of *Joninian*; by the perfection of the *Homoousians* by *Valens*. *Psalms* 30:6,7. *David* was then asleep, yet then he could discern the voice and knock of God in *Shimeis* railing, 2 *Sam.* 16:10. and yet saw love in it, *Psalms* 110:75. 2 *Sam.* 16:12.

*Reas.* 1. From the waking of the heart of Christ's Spouse, even when her self is sleepy, Text. Hence easy acknowledgement of his voice a with whom her heart is most affected.

*Reas.* 2. From the sheep-like disposition and affection of the Spouse of Christ unto him as her shepherd. Hence the discerning of her shepherd's voice, *John* 10:4. And if a sheep (a brutish creature) can discern the voice of the shepherd, how much more may a Spouse of Christ discern his voice,

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who is more sensible than a brute beast in her greatest drowsiness whilest her heart waketh.

*Reas.* 3. From the strong inclination of faith, to work by love, *Gal.* 5:6. and so to discern love in all providences about us, *Job* 23:10.

*Use* 1. To teach us that Christ in the sleepy estate of his Church, will come himself to awaken us. For, 1. He sleepeth not himself, *Psalms* 121:3,4. and he watched over us day and night, *Psalms* 121:4. left any hurt us, *Isaiah* 27:3. 2. He is the healer and restorer of the decays and falls of his people, *Psalms* 103:3. *Hosea* 14:4. *Psalms* 23:3.

*Use* 2. To enquire whether a true Spouse of Christ, may not sometimes be in such an estate, that she doth not discern the voice of Christ, nor his love in it?

*Answ.* Yes, in case, 1. The soul be not only asleep, but the heart also in a swoon, as, 2 *Chron.* 16:10. not so *David*, 2 *Sam.* 12:13 2. The soul want, 1. The experience of faith, as in young Christians. 2. The strength of faith, *Mat.* 14:31. 3. The exercise of faith.

*Use* 3. To learn us so much heart-waking, as to observe, 1. God's knocks, 2. His love in them.

*Doct.* 4. The voice of Christ whether knocking, calling to his Church asleep, tendeth to stir her up to open to him, *Rev.* 3:20.

*Reas.* 1. From the cause of all the evils both of sin and misery that lie upon the Church, to wit, 1. Christ not being within, *John* 11:21. 2. Our hearts shut towards him, *Psalms* 81:11, to 14.

*Reas.* 1. From the healing of all our evils by his presence, *Psalms* 84:11. a sun for all light, shield from all evils, *Mal.* 4:2.

*Quest.* 1. But how cometh Christ to stand without abroad from his Spouse? Is she a Spouse, and hath not him in her heart?

*Answ.* Christ is always within his Church, and in the hearts of his people in some measure, since they first believed, *Eph.* 3:17. But yet much of Christ is without us, much of his, 1. Light, 1 *Cor.* 13:9. 2. Life and holiness, power of godliness, *Rev.* 7:23,24. 3. Peace, *Phil.* 4:7. 2 *Corinth.* 7:5. So in a true Church there may be fundamental truths held and some measure of true worship: yet many errors received sundry superstitions crept in, many contentions amongst brethren, and so far forth Christ is without.

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*Quest.* 2. What is the duty Christ here calleth upon his Church to do, when he saith, *Open to me?*

*Ans.* It is to lift up our hearts to him, as *Psalm* 24:7. and 25:1. when the Spouse of Christ is full of her self, full of the world (creature-comforts and cares) her heart standeth shut to Christ. As at that time the elders were full of ambition, and covetousness: and the brethren full of superstition, and contention. In this case the Lord Jesus calleth to his Spouse, to take off her heart from these things, and to be enlarged to longing desires after him, to receiving spiritual life from him.

*Quest.* 3. But why doth Christ call upon his Spouse to open to him? He himself hath the key of *David*, *He openeth*, *Ec. Rev.* 3:7.

*Ans.* He openeth by his Word, and works (knocks) sanctified to us by his Spirit, and therefore he calleth to his Spouse to open, because his call is his key, whereby he doth open.

*De Grat. & lib. | Arbit. l. 1.c.11*

*Use* 1. To refute the Popish abuse of such Scriptures, to the maintenance of Free will; *Bellarmino* objecteth who will knock, when he knoweth there is none within can open? when he only hath the key himself? *An stultus non esset, Ec?*

*Ans.* 1. The Spouse of Christ is not in a carnal estate, but partaker of the Spirit, and so any do that towards opening, which corrupt nature cannot.

2. Christ exerciseth his key, when he calleth and knocketh, *Lazarus* had no strength to arise out of his grave, but the call of Christ enlivened him, and enabled him, *John* 11: 43,44.

*Use* 2. To teach all the Spouses of Christ (whether Churches or souls) what course to take when Christ calleth and knocketh; for it argueth that then, 1. We are either dead, as *Rev.* 3:20. 2. O we are asleep, Text. It bchoveth therefore now to open our hearts to him, and to take them off from things here below.

*Motive* 1. There be many afflictions within us: which are as so many knocks, and strokes from God's hand.

*Motive* 2. There is much of Christ without us.

*Use* 3. To prevent despair, and discouragement in relapsed souls, Christ seeketh us out in our lost estate, and restoreth

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*Use* 4. For comfort to sincere Spouses of Christ, Christ hath never enough of us, till he have as in heaven: and would have us to be like affected to him.

*Doct.* 5. Christ calleth upon his Spouse with very gracious loving terms, to return to him, even then when she hath carried ba self very unlovely towards him. The Spouse was here fallen asleep in the midst of plenty and peace, discerneth the voice of Christ calling, and knocking to her, yet lets him tarry without doors all night, till his head and locks were all bedabbled with dew-drops, and rain, but he calleth still upon her to open to him wiith most sweet and amiable terms; My Sister, my Love, my Vote, my Undeiled.

My Sister] 1. As speaking not to the Church of the Jews, but to a Sister-Church of the Gentiles (though not the same) Cant. 4:9. As partaking of the same nature with us, Heb. 2:11, to 14. that he might Redeem us from Bondage, as our Elder brother. 3. As being tenderly and familiarly affected to us, enjoying the same Parents with us, Matth. 12:50. John 20:17.

*My love*] Which implieth, 1. That not only she is the object of his love, but the adequate object of it, all his love is centred in her: especially that love which affecteth nearest union, marriage-union. A man loveth his parents, children, friends: but calleth none of them his love, but his wife. 2. That (which floweth from the former) he forsaketh all for her, and all that he endureth for her, and doth for her, he thinketh it but little, *Gen.* 19:20. *Ephes.* 5:25.

*My Dove*] 1. For innocency and simplicity, and meekness, *Mat.* 10:16. The Dove-like Spirit lighting upon Christ, made him meek and gentle, *Mat.* 3:16. And such be would have us to be, *Mat.* 11:29. *Col.* 3:12. Though there is a sinful simple silliness to be avoided, *Hos.* 7:11. 2. Chaste *Cant.* 1:15. & 4:1. 3. Mournful, *Isaiah* 38:14. 4. Sociable, flocking together, *Isaiah* 60:8.

*My undeiled*] 1. As Christ beholdeth her in himself, clothed with his righteousness, *Jer.* 50:20. 2. As she should be, *Rom.* 7:16,17. [2 *Cor.* 8:12.] 3. As Christ will at length make her to be, *Eph.* 5:27.

*Object.* But doth not Christ thus sow pillows under the Churches elbows to speak thus kindly to her in her drowsy and backsliding condition?

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*Answ.* No, for, 1. The words are chiefly directed to such as mourn in Zion, for the blemishes found in her, hence, *my Dove*.

All these answers |are as so many Rea-|sons of the Doctrine.

*Ans w.* 2. Christ doth faithfully discover her sin unto her. 2. In her own sense and conscience, *I sleep.* 2. In describing the annoyances befallen himself, *My head is filled with dew, &c.*

*Answ.* 3. Love is most effectual to melt and break the heart, *Zech.* 12:10. 1 *Sam.* 12:20,21,22.

*Answ.* 4. Description of what we should be, doth most lively convince our contrary frame, and course, *Deut.* 32:15. [*Rectum est Index sui & obliqui.*]

*Answ.* 5. Sharp reproofs were not comely in Marriage festivities, and songs between bridegroom and bride.

*Use* 1. To teach Churches to see our calling, and so every Spouse of Christ.

*Use* 2. To provoke such as are not Spouses, nor Churches to Christ, to enter into that relation and fellowship: all his love it to his Church.

*Use* 3. To teach us how to prize Christ, seeing he so highly, and affectionately prizeth us.

*Use* 4. To reach us to beware of ill thoughts, and malignant affections, towards the Church and Spouses of Christ.

*Use* 5. To direct us how to apply our selves to the recovery of fallen Churches and Christians, *Gal.* 6:1.

*Use* 6. For comfort to sincere Churches and Christians.

*Ver.* 2. *For my head is filled with Dew, and my locks with the drops of the right.*

These words express: a Reason or Motive to the Spouse to urge her to open to him, taken from the great annoyance he felt by standing without doors all night, *My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.*

*My head*] That is, the hair of my head: that is, the common sort of Christians, that hang upon Christ, as the hair upon the head.

*My locks*] That is, Christians met in assemblies amongst themselves; not only in the open face of the Church (for the Church is the spouse her self:) but also in private and reti-

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red companies, such as were the Monkish societies, which grew in request at that time.

*Filled with dew, and drops of the night*] That is, bedabbled, and drenched with manifold superstitions of the night, even forming from the darkness of error and ignorance.

*Doct. 6.* Whilst the Church is asleep, Christ standeth without her solemn assemblies; and when he standeth without, both private Christians, and their public and private meetings are filled with superstitions, and errors of ignorance. So it was in those primitive times under Christian Emperors after *Constantine*, though their hearts were awake to discern such fundamentals of religion, as struck at the vitals of Christianity, as the heresies of *Arius*, *Sabellius* and *Marcedonius*, *Nestorius*, *Eutyches*, yet setting open the doors of their Church too wide, much ignorance and hypocrisy crept in amongst them, solemn duties were performed, with much lukewarmness, and coldness, and deadness. Then Christ was neglected, the people not stirring up themselves to lay hold on him. Then were the people filled with superstitious errors of the invocation of Angels, power of nature and free-wiil. Sacraments power more then of seals, good works meritorious of heaven, Monkish life and Virginitie to be of high price, &c. and so many ceremonies brought in, that *Augustine* complaineth (*Epist. 119.*) the condition of *Jews* was more tolerable then of Christians, for they were subject to divine institutions, but Christians loaden with human inventions. Sleep is *legatio sensus, & motus*. The Church then is asleep, when a spiritual drowziness falleth upon her, that, 1. She heareth not Christ speaking lively and powerfully to her, and tasteth not the sweetness of him in his Ordinances, *Isaiah 42: 18, 19, 20.* 2. She performeth good duties in an outward form, without life and power, *Isaiah 64:7.* Christ standeth without, 1. When he taketh no pleasure to breath in his own Ordinances, *Amos 5:21.* 2. When himself is not the chief desire and delight of his people's souls. The hair (the body of Christian people) were filled with error and superstition, and scandal also in civil practice.

*The locks*] The private companies of Christians, as the Monks in their cloisters, and deserts: and with us our private meetings for edification.

*With the drops of the night*] The cold distillations of ignorance and error, *Isaiah 6:4, 7.* when we stir not up ourselves

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to lay hold on Christ, Christ hideth his face from us; when the Church or watchmen of it sleep, the enemy cometh and soweth tares, *Matth.* 13:25.

*Reason* of Christ's standing without, 1. From our neglect of him, we closing with creature-comforts with all our hearts and strength; He is not entirely sought, and so is excluded by us for want of lifting up our hearts to him, *Psalms* 24:7,9. 2. From his holiness, not to prostrate holy precious pearls to full stomachs, *Prov.* 27:7. 3. From his faithfulness to us, to make himself more desirable by withdrawing himself for a season, *Hos.* 5:15.

*Reasons* of abundance of error and superstition, 1. Christ's absence. As the absence of the sun is the cause of all the dark nights, and cold dews thereof. 2. Satan's malice, *Mat.* 13:25. 3. The just punishment of ingratitude, 1 *Thes.* 2:10,11. They that walk not in Gospel-light revealed to them, shall fall lower than the law, yea, then the dim light of nature. The smoke of the bottomless pit at last overwhelmed the backsliding Christian world, *Rev.* 9.

*Use* 1. To shake us out of spiritual sleepiness, see the evil of it: It shutteth Christ out of doors; It openeth a flood-gate of error and superstition to the corruption of private Christians and private meetings. A sleepy spirit is a fore-runner of some great, 1. Fall into sin. 2. Fall into affliction.

*Use* 2. To teach us: It is grievous to Christ to be excluded our public assemblies, he complaineth of it here; we complain, we find not him in public assemblies, and he Complaineth we do not open to him.

*Use* 3. To teach us that Christ hath a care of the preservation of the meanest and lowest Christians, that they may not be defiled with errors and superstition.

**Chap. 5. ver. 3.**

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

**C**oherence see in *ver.* 2. *p.* 113.] We have seen the Churches security and drowsiness in her great plenty, we have



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seen Christ's gracious carriage, towards her to recover her, and awaken her in the former verse. In this verse we have set forth her unkind and ungracious dealing with him, in delaying to answer his desire of opening to him, and that upon very slender and frivolous pretences: Which are four. 1. The putting off of her coat. 2. The difficulty, or inexpediency of putting it on. 3. The having washed her feet. 4. The inconvenience of defiling them. All which may be reduced to these two. 1. The undisposedness, and unfuitableness of the Spouse to such a service, *I have put off my coat, washed my feet?* 2. The impossibility or inconvenience of undertaking such a duty: *How shall I put on my coat? How shall I defile my feet?* The coat may be put either for an inward or outward garment; an inward, *Gen. 3:21.* an outward, *Gen. 37:3,23,28.* They stripped *Joseph* of his party-coloured coat, and sent that to his father, and sold him to the Merchants, doubtless not naked, but with some inner garment upon him. This coat of the spouse here may be, 1. The inner coat of sanctification, and holy duties, as, *Col. 3:12.* 2. The outward garment of Christ's righteousness, which covereth both our, I. Persons. 2. Duties, *Rom. 13:14. Phil. 3:8,9.* This was fulfilled in those ancient Churches after *Constantine's* time, partly in the neglect of holy duties, 1. To God, in spiritual cleaving to him, but leaning to the intercessions of Saints: They attributed more to free-will, good works then stood with grace. 2. To man, in enmities and emulations amongst brethren, *Rev. 8:7.*

*I have washed my feet]* No: in the waters of the Sanctuary, in holiness (as Christ warned his Disciples feet, *John 13:10.*) for that would stir us up to open to Christ: but in waters of men's inventions, as at that time, in the worship of Saints, and afterwards of images, in the adorning of the worship of God with many human inventions, and specially in cleaning themselves from the defilement of human Affairs, by Monkish devotions, and sequestrations from the world.

*Doct.* 1. The Spouse of Christ that hath lost her communion with Christ by forsaking his institutions, and taking up her own inventions, she will be slow to reform her course to enjoy his communion. The Spouse here had shut Christ out of his Church-assemblies, by forsaking this way of holiness, and righteousness, and washing her with

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her own voluntary devotions. And now see how loth she is, to put on her former cost of righteousness and holiness, which Christ had given her, and neglect her own way of clcansing her feet, *Hos. 7:1. Jer. 13:27.*

*Reas. 1.* From Christ's withdrawing himself from us, by reason or such unclean paths He walketh with us, and dwelleth in us (so as to reveal himself to us and in us) but in his own ways, *2 Chron. 15:2,3.* when we take our own ways, he is gone, till we return; when he is withdrawn, we do nothing, *John 15:5.*

*Reas. 2.* From our drowsiness and sleepiness growing upon us, when he is withdrawn, *Psalm 13:1,2,3.* and our selves have, 1. Laid down his institutions, which kept would keep us awake, *Psalm 119:93.* 2. Taken up our own inventions, which lull us asleep *1 Kings 12:28.* two calves, and then it's far to go up to *Jerusalem.*

*Reas. 3.* From the multiplication of abuses in the Churches sleepiness, *Locks filled with drops, Text.*

*Reas. 4.* From the appearance of many impossibilities, or at least, difficulties and inexpediencies of reformation unto former purity: *How shall I put on my coat? How shall I de-file my feet?* *Jer. 18:12.* and *2:25.*

*Use 1.* To show us to what degree of spiritual security and sloth a Spouse of Christ may fall into. This sleep is not in a chair, a nap, as it were; nor is it a resting upon a couch with clothes on, &c. but this sleep is prepared and purposed. 1. Her clothes are put off. 2. She hath washed her feet, which cooleth the body and fitteth for sleep. 3. She is gone to bed. 4. She knoweth not how to stir.

*Use 2.* To shew us how hardly a soul, or Church declining from Christ is recovered. So many pretences of impediments, that how can it be done? and with much undisposedness of spirit, and estate.

*Use 3.* To beware of the occasions of this backsliding, 1. Neglect of Christ's institutions, either, 1. Not observing them. 2. Observing him perfunctorily. 2. Cleaving to our own inventions, *Isaiah 29:10.* with 13.

## Chap. 5. ver. 4.

4. *My beloved put in his hand by the whole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.*

**I**N these words the Spouse acknowledgeth, that notwithstanding her sinful and shameful neglect of her beloved, knocking and calling, he used some more effectual means to prevail with his Spouse to awaken her, to seek after him: together with the effect it wrought in her. Parts two. 1. The means Christ used to stir up his Spouse effectually to open to him: *My beloved put his hand into the hole of the door.* 2. The effects this wrought in her. 1. In her affections, *My bowels were moved for him*, or towards him. 2. In her actions. 1. *1 rose to open to my beloved.* 2, *My hands dropped myrrh, &c.* ver. 5:3. *I opened to my beloved*, ver. 6.

*His hand*] That is the power of his Spirit, *Luke 11:20.* with *Mat. 12:28.* 2 *Kings 3:15.*

*By the hole of the door*] That is, by faith in the heart, quickening that. For as the heart is the door, *Psalms 24:7.* so faith is that hole whereby Christ entereth into the heart, *Acts 14:27.* and *16:27.*

*Doct.* 1. Outward means will not prevail to awaken a sleepy Spouse, till the Lord putteth the power of his Spirit, to stir up faith in the heart. Christ had used before, 1. Knocks of affliction in a way of providence. 2. Gracious and affectionate calls in way of Ordinance; *ver. 2.* But neither of these prevailed to stir her up to him, *ver. 3.* yet now when he putteth forth his hand by the hole of the door, now her bowels were troubled and moved for him, *1 Cor. 3:6,7.* *Isaiah 57:17.*

*Reas.* 1. From the incurable diseases and distempers of the soul by any created means. Ordinances. and afflictions, providences, they are all of them creatures. Now all the creatures and Ordinances, were made for man, for the service of man, *Mark 2:27.* Hence man is above them: they are too weak to reach him, to rule him. Hence the heart is said to be desperately wicked, no man knoweth it, *Jer. 17:9.* And if they know it not, how shall they heal it? only the hand

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of God that made it can heal it. See a simile, *Job* 40:19.

*Reas.* 2. From the efficacy of the Spirit, It is the hand, the finger, the arm, the power of God, yea, God himself, *Isaiah* 53:1. *1 Cor.* 2:4.

*Use* 1. To teach us not to rest in the use of means, instructions, corrections, &c. The heart of man is above them, *Prov.* 17:22. *Prov.* 29:19. nothing but God can tame and change the heart, no nor awaken a dull heart. Therefore with all outward means use the prayer of faith.

*Use* 2. To acknowledge the finger and hand of Christ (the work of his Spirit) in all effectual working upon our hearts, in begetting grace, *John* 3:5. in stirring up grace, *Hag.* 1:14.

*Doct.* 2. The Lord doth not leave his Spouse long, nor much, but he first leaveth some renewed work of his grace and Spirit upon her heart. Christ was now about to withdraw himself from his Spouse, for her unkindness, but he first putteth in a work of his Spirit upon her heart, *John* 14:18.

*Reas.* 1. To uphold the heart in desertion by such an experience, *Psalms* 77:6.

*Reas.* 1. To stir up the heart to be the more affectionate, and serious in seeking after him. *Text.*

*Use* 1. To answer the objections of the Spouse against her self. I see nothing of Christ in me: yes, in every true spouse of Christ there is somewhat left before desertions.

2. To forecast for defection, after a new visitation of the Spirit, especially after unkind dealing of Christ before.

*Doct.* 3. When the faith of the Spouse is wrought upon by the Spirit of grace, her bowels are moved towards Christ. [*fremuerunt, tumultuati sunt* [[107]]] Partly, 1. With shame for her unkind neglect of him. 2. With grief and sorrow for the same. 3. With longing desire after him, *1 Sam.* 7:2. *Zech.* 12:10.

*Reas.* From the life of faith, which, 1. Highly prizeth Christ, *Cant.* 5:10. 2. Deeply abaseth itself, *Psalms* 73:22. *1 Sam.* 24:10.

*Use* 1. To show us the best fruit of unkind dealing with Christ, shame and sorrow.

*Use* 2. To teach us a sign of, 1. The Spirit working. 2. Faith living and moving; by the moving of the bowels for Christ.

## Chap. 5. ver. 5.

5. *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 lock.*

**I**N the former verses, we heard that when the Spouse put off the call of Christ, by slender and frivolous excuses, the Lord used more effectual means, to awaken and stir up his Spouse to hearken to his call, and to open to him: *He put in his hand*, that is, the power of his Spirit, to stir up faith in her heart. Hereupon followeth a threefold act of hers; 1. She rose up to open to her beloved. 2. Her fingers dropped myrrh, pure myrrh, upon the handles of the locks. 3. She opened to him. Her rising up was not opening to him, but a necessary preparation to it, she could not come to the door, but she must rise up out of bed, and go to the door.

*Doct.* 1. The souls, (or Spouses) effectual preparation (or rising up) to open unto Christ, springeth from Christ, effectually stirring Faith in her heart towards him.

Preparation to come to Christ is called for, *Amos 4:11*. The want of it reproveth, 2 *Chron.* 12:14. *Hos.* 5:4. *Isaiah* 64:7. This preparation lieth, 1. In forsaking (both, 1. In affection, loathing, abhorring, bewailing. 2. In action, forbearing, denying, parting with) all false, 1. Lust, (as here the Spouse, must leave her bed of sloth, security.) 1. Trusts. 2. In hanging and thirsting after him, *Mat.* 5:6. 5. In resolving to cleave to Christ, and follow him, whatsoever losses, or crosses may be-tide him, *Luke* 9:23. *Mat.* 13:44,45. All these spring from Christ giving or stirring up faith, *Prov.* 16:1, If all preparations be of the Lord, much more this, *Heb.* 11:8. and *ver.* 24, to 27.

*Reas.* 1. From our utter inessiciency by nature to bring forth any good fruit, *Mat.* 7:16,17,18.

*Reas.* 2. From the necessary concurrence of Christ, abiding in us (and so united to us by his Spirit, and faith) to the doing of any spiritual good work, *John* 15:4.

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*Reas.* 1. From the proper efficacy of Faith, for, 1. Defiance of the creature, *Heb.* 11:24, to 27. 2. Affiance on Christ.

*Object.* But Christ may help the soul to do such acts, by an act of his Spirit to us in a transient passage.

*Answ.* 1. This were to multiply miracles without need, to do an act of faith without the gift of faith, is as much as to see without eyes.

*Answ.* 2. Between death and life there is no *medium*, we are quickened when dead, *Eph.* 2:5. nor between being in the old *Adam*, and New. In Generation natural, there be preparations, not in Creation, such is Regeneration, 2 *Corinth.* 5. *ver.* 17.

*Use* 1. To compose a difference in opinion about preparations to Christ; some say there be saving preparations to Christ and to faith in him: others deny it. Two sorts of preparations, 1. To union; and that is either, 1. Of *Moses* working both, 1. Conviction. 2. Compunction, which the Gospel also may do, *Acts* 2:23. with 36,37, 2. Of *John Baptist*, which is both unto union, and revelation of union. 2. To revelation of union, *Luke* 3:4,5,6. either, 1. To plerophory of faith, as, *Mat.* 5:3, to 6. 2. To assistance, 2 *Tim.* 2:21. 3. To glory, *Rom.* 9:23.

*Use* 2. For comfort to such in whom these preparations are found. They do tend to open the door to Christ, that is, to a larger and clearer manifestation of him in the heart, which will follow; and also Christ and faith are in such an heart, as in whom such preparations are found.

*Doct.* 2. The duties which the spouse performeth, whether, 1. In removing impediments of obtaining Christ, 2. In making way to receive Christ; do all of them express the favour, and virtue of the death of Christ.

*Her bands and fingers]* are by a Metonymy, the operations, or acts, and duties which she did. As we say a man's writing is his hand.

These Duties be, Humiliation, Meditation, Prayer; they all express the favour and virtue of the death of Christ. For myrrh respecteth his death, *Cant.* 4:6. And was used about it, *John* 19:19. Hence, *Psalm* 45:8. It was the first and principal ingredient, in the holy oil, *Exod.* 30:23,25. signifying the anointment of the Spirit of Christ.

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*Reas.* 1. From the power of Christ's death, to crucify both, 1. Lusts, *Rom.* 6:6. 2. The world, *Gal.* 6:14.

*Reas.* 2. From the necessity of the favour of Christ's death, to make Christ most durable: and his loss and absence most grievous, *Zech.* 12:10.

*Use* To exhort to rise up out of a bed of security, and sloth, and to settle to holy Duties; sweet and gracious droppings of the Spirit of Christ's death may thus distill upon us.

**Chap. 5. ver. 6.**

*6. I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone; my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him: I called him, but he gave no answer.*

**I**N these words is expressed, 1. The third action of the awakened Spouse, *I opened to my beloved.* 2. The event of that opening: *My beloved had withdrawn himself, was gone.* 3. Her complaint, 1. Of the absence of her heart, when he spake and called to her; *My soul was gone when he spake.* 2. Of his absence now, notwithstanding her calling and seeking after him; *I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he answered not.*

*Doct.* 1. The Lord Jesus doth sometimes withdraw himself, and is gone from his Spouse, even when her heart is open to receive him, *Psalm* 22:2. and 44:23,24. with *ver.* 17,18. and 80:4.

*Quest.* 1. What is it for the Spouse to have her heart open to receive him?

*Answ.* Her heart is open to him, 1. When she removeth the locks and bars that keep him out, as pollutions in his worship, *Judges* 10:13, to 16. 2. When her heart is enlarged and open to him in her best affections [See the like, 2 *Cor.* 6:11,12.]

*Quest.* 2. What is it for Christ to withdraw himself?

*Answ.* Not in presence of his essence, for that being infinite is every where present, *Psalm* 139:7, to 10.

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Nor wholly in the presence of his grace. For she could not open to him nor seek after him, without his grace present and assistant, *John* 15:4,5.

But in the presence, 1. Of the peace of his grace in our consciences, *Job* 13:24,26. 2. Of the power, of his grace, his gracious efficacy; 1. In our duties, 1. Either not guiding assisting with them, 2 *Chron.* 31:31. and *Chap.* 35:21,22. 2. Not accepting them, *Psalms* 80:4. 1. In his Ordinances, 1. Either removing them from us, *Psalms* 74:1,9. 2. Or leaving them powerless to us, *Mat.* 7:29. 3. In his helpful providences, *Psalms* 44:9, to 14.

*Quest.* 3. What is it for Christ to be gone?

*Answ.* Not only to withdraw himself behind the door, or a little aside near hand; but to remove himself afar off, not to be found in haste, but after long and earned seeking, *Psalms* 22:1. Why art thou so far?

*With respect to |time past. Reas.* 1. From the Spouses unkind, and ungracious withdrawing, and withholding herself from him, and neglecting to open to him upon very light frivolous pretence, *Cant.* 5:2,3,6. *Job* 13:26. It seemeth in his youth *Job* had grieved God's Spirit by not hearkening to God's call, and some such like way; and now he conceiveth God to requite him.

*With respect to |time present. Reas.* 1. From the trial of what is in us, both graces, and weakness, 2 *Chron.* 32:31. 2 *Cor.* 5:7.

*Reas.* 3. For the subduing of some carnal confidence in us, *Psalms* 30:6,7.

*Reas.* 4. To give us a taste of the bitter cup which Christ drunk for us, *Mat.* 20:23.

*With respect to |time to come. Reas.* 5. To prevent evil to come, 2 *Cor.* 12:7,8,9.

*Reas.* 6. To cleave close to Christ afterwards *Cant.* 3:4. *I held him and would not let him go.*

*Reas.* 7. To make us experienced and compassionate to others in their afflictions, 2 *Cor.* 1:4,5,6.

*Use* 1. To warn us to beware of slighting Christ's call, or putting him off with delays.

*Use* 2. To teach us to look at desertions not as a desperate estate in case, 1. Desertion provoke us to diligent search after



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Christ, Text, to a due blaming of our selves, *My heart was gone*. 2. Other Christians be compassionate, and so continue, though we be negligent our selves, *Isaiah 57:17,18*.

*Use 3.* To teach us a sanctified use of desertions, according to all the reasons given of the doctrine. In this desertion of us, he wrestleth with us, as with *Jacob, Gen. 32*. In wrestling a man may be lifted up from the ground, and so we from all the grounds of our assurance. But let not us let God go till he bless us, *ver. 26*.

**Chap. 5. ver. 7.**

*7. The watchmen that went about the City found me, they smote me, they wounded me, the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.*

**W**E have heard of one event which followed the Spouses opening to Christ, she found him not. In this verse we have a second event, The watchmen's dealing with her. *The watchmen that went about the City found her*, and finding her, 1. *They smote her*. 2. *They wounded her*. 3. *They took away her veil from her*; wherein they partake with the watchmen upon the walls. These watchmen were not such as those mentioned, *Chap. 3:3*. for, 1. Of them she enquired for her beloved; not so of these, as having less skill or will to direct her, like those in *Isaiah 56:10,11*. 2. They wounded her not, nor afforded her any violence, but rather in silence condoled with her: But these smite her, wound her, take away her veil.

*Watchmen that go about the City*] Are such as look to good order and peace within the Church, as the Ministers and Elders.

*Watchmen upon the Walls*] At both the Ministers, *Isaiah 62:6*. and also civil Magistrates, which should, 1. Defend the Church from external violence: This concerneth Magistrates. 1. Give warning of danger approaching; This reacheth Ministers also.

*They smote me*] With, 1. Sharp invectives and slanders in their sermons, and writings, and the like, *Jer. 18:18*, 2. Seven censures, and decrees.

*Wounded me*] Even to the drawing of my blood, as the word holdeth forth, 1 *Kings 20:37*.

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*Took away my veil]* The veil is for a sign, 1. Of subjection, 1 *Cor.* 11:10. 2. Of protection, *Gen.* 20:16. 3. Of ornament, *Isaiah* 3:23. the same word. These things were fulfilled, when the Bishops of *Rome*, and other corrupt Bishopis and Monks inveighed against such as demolished image-worship, as *Leo Isaurus* and with excommunication with *Gregory* second, and denial of tribute in the West.

They smote *Constantinus* with the nickname of *Copronymus*. when the second Nicene Council established in Temples image-worship; when *Irene* banished thirty thousand Christians out of *Constantinople* for their witness-bearing against images. They took away her veil, 1. Of subjection, when they took away a necessary dependence upon the Word of Christ for direction, in doctrine, worship and government, bringing in their own inventions, and institutions. 2. Of protection (and succour in time of danger and distress) when the West would not defend nor protect the East against barbarous Nations; and withal by false worship, hid her open to God's wrath. 3. Of ornament, when they took away true holiness and devotion from her, and laid her naked to whorish superstition.

*Doct.* 1. When the Lord Jesus withdraweth himself from his Church, then they that should watch over them for good, watch over them for evil. They that should keep them from injury, do them the most injury, *Job* 9:13. *Isaiah* 9:15,16.

*Reas.* 1. From the sovereignty of Christ's power over his Church, *Matth.* 28:18. *Job* 34:29. and the dependance of all his creatures upon him; when God withdrew his face from *Job*, not only *Chaldeans*, and *Sabeans*, but his friends were against him, yea, his wife also. If the King's countenance shine upon a man, all his Court and servants bow to him, *Est.* 3:2. If the King frown, all are against him, *Est.* 7:8,9,10.

*Reas.* 2. From the faithfulness of God, not to suffer us to enjoy any creature-comforts, when we have sit loose from him, and given him occasion to withdraw from us, *Hos.* 2:6,7. which will the sooner cause us to return to him.

*Reas.* 3. From the malice of Satan, seeking all advantages to arm all against the Church, *Rev.* 12:13, to 17.

*Reas.* 4. From the manifold mistakes and jealousies, passions and lusts, that in God's own servants do fight against themselves and their brethren.

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*Use 1.* To take notice of the esteeme and care that God hath of his Church, that appointeth watchmen, and variety of sorts of them, to attend his Church. Watchmen, 1. In the Church, for the safeguard of their inner man, *Ezek. 3:17. Heb. 13:17.* 2. In the Common-wealth, for the safeguard of the outward man.

Their office is, 1. To espy and observe all evils from without, from within, and to seek to prevent it, to heal it, *Acts 20:31.* 2. To watch opportunities to procure all good, the one sort to the inner man, the other to the outward. *Psalm 122:9.* yea, Angels are betruſted with this office, *Dan. 4:13,17.* Not that God needeth ſuch inſtrumctis, or layeth down this care himſelf, *Psalm 121:4,5.* and *127:1.* but to help our faith by ſight of outward means, which appointment of watchmen by God, argueth, 1. That our ſouls and Churches are precious, 2. That many evils and enemies ſeek our hurt. 3. That our own watch over ourſelves is too ſhort, though it be commanded, *Mark 13:37.* It is then a dangerous error to reject watchmen as needleſſ in Church and Common-wealth.

*Use 2.* That watchmen had need to watch over themſelves, leſt they betray their truſt, as theſe here did See this ſadly fulfilled in our native country, formerly and latterly. Formerly by Biſhops and their Courts and malignant Miniſters and Magiſtrates; latterly by bitter and harſh invectives and cenſures.

*Use 3.* In all ſuch evils to ſee Chriſt withdrawing his preſence.

*Use 4.* To bleſſ the Lord if our watchmen here in Church, and Commonwealth deal otherwiſe with Churches and Chriſtian ſouls then theſe watchmen here.

#### Chap. 5. ver. 8.

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

**I**N theſe words is expreſſed, a third event which followed in the Spouſe upon her opening the door to Chriſt. For

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after, 1. Her not finding him. 2. The watch-men finding her and beating her, followeth. 3. Her love-sickness for Christ, and her charge to the daughters of *Jerusalem*, they found him to tell him so.

*Doct.* 1. The spouse of Christ when she findeth him not, neither in private duties, nor in public Ordinances, she falleth sick of love, and earnestly chargeth all the children of the Church, when they find Christ to tell him so. The spouse had opened her heart to Christ in private duties, when her hands dropped myrrh, and her fingers sweet smelling myrrh upon the handles of the lock, *ver.* 5. 6. Afterward amongst the watch-men, who were public Officers, she findeth not Christ, but strokes, and wounds, and discourteous usage, *ver.* 7. Now therefore she addresseth herself, to the daughters of *Jerusalem*, in this charge; and in her charge desireth them to comment to Christ her love-sickness.

*Jerusalem]* is the Church, alluding to the Church of the Old Testament: now the mother of all the faithfull, *Gal.* 4:26, Whereof every particular Church hath the common, 1. Name, each one a Church, 1 *Thes.* 1:1. 2. Nature, 2 *Cor.* 11:2. 3. Power, 1 *Cor.* 5:4,5,12. with *Chapt.* 14:23.

*Ye daughters]* are the members of the Church, called daughters in respect of their training up to marriage with Christ, as the whole Church is called a daughter, in that respect, *Isaiah* 37:22. Though sometime any City is called a daughter, in respect of her tenderness and delicacy, as the virgin daughter of *Babel*, *Isaiah* 47:1. So daughter of *Tyre*, *Psalms* 45:12.

*I charge you]* I adjure you, I cause you to swear, a vehement and weighty charge, as in the presence of God, and as they will answer it to God.

*If ye find my beloved]* Find his presence with you in private duties, or in private resorts together.

*Tell him]* Speak to him in your prayers, spread my case before him, and tell him that I am sick of love.

*I am sick of love]* This love-sickness for Christ, may be attended to in sundry particulars.

1. For the cause of it, it springeth, 1. From the absence and distance of Christ. 2. From doubt or difficulty of finding and obtinuing Christ,

2. For the formal Acts, 1. It putteth frith to wrastle with doubts and fears, and oft giveth too much place to them, but that is a sickness, *Psalms* 77. *ver.* 10. 2. It is a fainting and

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almost failing of the Spirit, *Psalm* 143. *ver.* 7. and 73:26.

3. For the effects, 1. It taketh off appetite from bodily food, *Psalm* 102:4. As in bodily love-sickness, 2 *Sam.* 13:4. 2. It taketh off the mind from worldly business.

4. For the signs, it bewrayeth itself, 1. In secret sighs, deep & frequent sighs. 2. In affecting and attending no speech but that which concerneth him.

*Reason* of this love-sickness, 1. From the unconceivable comfort, and happiness the spouse findeth in enjoying the pretence of Christ, *Psalm* 63:3. more then in the fellowship of wife or dear relations, *Luke* 14:26. Hence love-sickness in his absence and distance, *Psalm* 30:7. 2. From the ardency of conjugal love to Christ, *Cant.* 8:6,7. *Jonathan's* love to *David* passed the love of women, 2 *Sam.* 1:26. But this love to Christ passeth the love of *Jonathan*.

*Reason* of this charge to the daughters of *Jerusalem*, 1. From the possibility of some private Christians, to keep their peace with Christ, when the Church body lieth under offence to Christ, *Isaiah* 57:17,18. 2. From the power of private prayer; even for public persons or bodies, *Isaiah* 57:17,18. *Rom.* 15:30,31. 3. From the self-debasement of sincere love to enjoy the person beloved. Majesty and love are incompatible. The Church stoopeth to her daughters, to speak a good word for her to her beloved.

*Use* 1. To Discern the fruits of true love, even unfeigned conjugal love to Christ.

To wit, 1. To open the heart for receiving Christ, *ver.* 6. 2. To seek him in private holy duties, *ver.* 6. 3. Not to be beaten off from Christ, With any discouragements in Church or Commonwealth, *ver.* 7. True grace groweth with discouragements as flowers with winds. 4. To seek Christ in every Ordinance, Public, Private, one after another. 5. To grow sick of love in his absence and. distance when we cannot find him. 6. To stoop to beg prayers, and that earnestly, and that from our inferiors, for the finding of him; and that not in pangs of outward affliction, but in spiritual desertion.

*Use* 2. To teach us to prevent, the withdrawing of Christ from us; but if he be withdrawn, not to sleight it, but to be sadly affected with it, as the cause of love-sickness. And yet if love-sickness befall us, to carry it holily.

*Use* 3. To teach us private Christians, how we may find Christ and access to him, when a public Church cannot find him.

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*Use 4.* Such as do find Christ, should commend the estate of the Church to Christ, especially when in distress. In begging prayers, we should be serious and earnest, I charge you, &c.

*Use 5.* To teach us there is a power in the Church, even as distinct, from her Watch men (her Officers) to charge duties commanded in the Gospel.

**Chap. 5. ver. 9.**

*9. What is thy beloved more than another beloved  
O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved  
more than another beloved, that thou doest so  
charge us?*

**T**He charge which the Church gave (in the former *verse*) to the daughters of *Jerusalem*, to tell her beloved that she is sick of love, wrought this effect in them, to enquire what excellency she saw in her beloved above other lovers, that she should give them such a charge.

Where observe, 1. The Rite they give her; O thou fairest amongst women. 2. The serious demand they require of her, of the excellency of her beloved above other lovers; which is twice repeated, to express that seriousness herein. 3. The occasion of this, their serious demand, from her serious and weighty charge of them, to tell her beloved or her love-sickness.

*Doct.* 1. The Church, or spouse of Christ is the fairest amongst societies, and every soul espoused to Christ is the fairest amongst persons,

There is the daughter of *Babylon*, *Isaiah* 47:1. Of *Egypt*, *Jer.* 46:11. Of *Edom* *Lament.* 4:21. Of *Tyre*, *Psalm* 45:12. Of *Tarshish*, *Isaiah* 23:10. But of all these the daughter of *Zion*, or the daughter of *Jerusalem* is the fairest, *Psalm* 48:2. *Cant.* 1. *ver.* 8.

*Reason* 1. From the materials, they are or should be precious jewels, *Isaiah* 54:11,12. *Lament.* 4:2. Golden Candlesticks, *Rev.* 1:20.

*Reason* 2. From the firm content unto the most holy and righteous Laws, *Deut.* 4:8.

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*Reason 3.* from the scope and end of all their government, and all their administrations: which is only to put, 1. Honour upon God, *Psalms* 122:4. and 95:6,7. 2. Shame upon sin and sinners, 2 *Thess* 3:14. 3. Eterna glory upon the Saints, *Eph.* 5:27.

*Reas. 4.* From the Presence of Christ with it, and his Grace upon it, *Ezek.* 16:14. The presence of the greatest light in a Lanthorn giveth it the greatest lustre.

*Use 1.* To teach our Churches, what manner of societies we should be: and what manner of persons all our Church-members.

*Use 2.* For reproof of our fallings short,

*Use 3.* To teach us what matches are most comely and desirable.

*Doct. 1.* It is a blemish of the Churches beauty, yes, an evidence of her desertion, when her daughters (her members) do more readily discern and acknowledge the beauty and excellency of the Church, then of the Lord Jesus her beloved. It was a sign this Church was in a state of desertion, when her members see more excellency in the Church than in Christ; and so indeed it was in all the Antichristian apostasy, the holy mother-Church was in high estimation, but Christ: and his worth was little known amongst them, *Rev.* 13:3,4. The Scriptures were received as authentical from the authority of the Church, the traditions of the Church of equal authority with the Scriptures, the Pope had power to forgive sins, to make articles of faith, &c. So of late in *England* there was more inquiry made, what was the doctrine of the Church of *England*, then what was the Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles.

*Reas. 1.* From the spiritual whoredom found in a Church that traineth up her children, rather to know and acknowledge her than her husband. It was in the days of Antichristian apostasy, a character of a devout *Roman Catholic*, to be devoted to the Church but ignorant of Christ.

*Use 1.* To teach Churches more care to train up their members to know and acknowledge the Lord Jesus, then to rest in the discerning, and knowledge of Church-order and power.

*Doct. 3.* Love-sickness for an absent spouse, is best bestowed upon such an one as excelled all others. For that these daughters of *Jerusalem* do rightly discern, that sure there should be some transcendent excellency in this Church, Beloved above all

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other lovers, or else she had not sufficient ground, to be sick of love for him, or to charge them to tell him so. It is true, every woman is to look at her own beloved, as most eminent in her eyes, because her own, which God hath found out for her; and given to her: But yet if her choice have fallen upon one most eminent, there is the greater cause of a sad mourning for his absence and distance.

*Reas.* From the irreparable loss of such an one, as excelleth all other lovers.

*Use 1.* To moderate our mourning, and fainting for the loss of any creature-comforts: for as good as they may be obtained.

*Use 2.* To be sensible of the absence, and distance of the loss of Christ above all: for he is the chiefest of ten thousands. *Cant.* 5:20.

#### Chap. 5. Ver. 10.

10. *My beloved is white and ruddie, the chiefest among ten thousands.*

**I**N these words the spouse answereth to the demand of the daughters of *Jerusalem*, who had enquired of her, what her beloved was more then another, she answereth, by describing his Excellency, 1. In general, of his own person. 2. Positively, in his adjuncts, 1. White. 2. Ruddy. 2. Comparatively, the chiefest of ten thousands, 2. Particularly; in his Several parts and member, *ver.* 11, to 16.

*White and ruddy*] These two colours fitly mixed and tempered, make up perfection of beauty, so far as it stands in [[[?]]], a good complexion, *Lament.* 4:7.

*White*] Imphieth, purity of holiness (in Prophetical Scriptures) *Rev.* 19:8. and 7:9,14. and 3:18. So this setteth forth the innocency, and holiness of the life of Christ.

*Ruddy, or red*] Being the colour of blood, expresseth the bloody death of Christ, and the efficacy thereof to cleanse sin; typed out by the red Heifer, whose ashes were to make the purifying ware, *Numb.* 19:2. with *Heb.* 9:13,14.

*The chiefest of ten thousands*] A certain number put forth an uncertain, as 2 *Sam.* 18:3. Christ hath the preheminance above all men, all creatures, *Coloss.* 1:28. He is fairer then the chil-



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dren of men, *Psalm* 45:2. anointed above his fellows, *ver.* 7. [[לול]] maybe also translated vexillarius, as it were leading a Standard, or compassed with a Standard of ten thousand: which might in point of Prophetical History be applied to the Waldenses, and Albigenses, who were supplied by the Earl of *Tholonse*, and the King of *Aragon*, with an army of soldiers to fight against their persecutors *Inncent.* 3. and *Simon Montford*. But to attend the usual translation, and the spiritual use of this description of Christ both in that age; and all other, we may observe this Note.

*Doct.* 1. The holiness (or innocency) of Christ's life, and the lively efficacy of his Death, commendeth Christ to the heart, and affections of his spouse, above all creatures excellencies. Or the holy life, and bloody death of Christ commendeth him to the heart, &c. *John* 1:29. *Gal.* 6:14. *1 Cor.* 2. *ver.* 2.

His Holy Life, 1. It fitted Christ to be a spotless sacrifice, *Heb.* 7:26,27. *Matth.* 3:15. 2. It concurred to the making up, completing and perfecting of the grace of our justification. His Death taketh away all sin, *1 John* 1:7. and setteth us and *Adam* in an estate of innocency, but *Adam* could not have been justified by his innocent nature, but for that must fulfill the whole Law, *Deut.* 6:25. Which therefore Christ hath done. 3. It covereth and filleth up the defects and imperfections of our sanctification, *1 Cor.* 1:30. *Exod.* 20:37,38.

His bloody Death, 1. Redeemeth us from bondage, 1. Of sin, *Coloss.* 1:14. *Ephes.* 1:7. 2. Of the Law, Moral, *Gal.* 3:13. Ceremonial, *Eph.* 2:13,14. 3. Of Misery, *Zech.* 9:11.

2. Purchaseth for us, 1. Reconciliation with God, *Coloss.* 1:20, 21,22. 2. His Spirit, *Gal.* 3:13,14. 3. The seeing of the New Covenant, and all the promises of it, *Heb.* 9:16,17,18.

3. Procureth and worketh in us and for us; 1. Purgeth from all sin, *1 John* 1:7. *Heb.* 9:14. even original, *Rom.* 6:6. and sanctification even to persecution, *Heb.* 13:12. and *ver.* 20,21. 2. Incorporation into the fellowship of the Church, *Ephes.* 2:13, 14,15. 3. An open way into the Kingdom of glory, *Heb.* 10: 19,20.

[These blessings procured may be handled as fruits of the purchase]

*Use* 1. To men out of Christ, 1. To convince their folly, who give their heart and affections to things less lovely, but more beloved of them, *Psalm* 81:11. *Heb.* 2:3. 2. To persuade such to

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look after Christ. Motives, 1. From our misery without him. 2. From the great benefits, Purchased, Procured, by him (as is opened) Means, 1. Consideration of sense of sin and misery, 2. High esteem of his excellency.

*Use* 2. To men in Christ, 1. To discern their propriety and interest in him, by their highest esteem of him, and deepest affection to him. 2. To encourage the spouses of Christ in the choice which you have made. It is a comfort in marriage, to have made so good a choice, as none like: so here. 3. To instruct us to choose him above all our other bestowing of our affections and apprehensions. Christ is best, looked at in matches, so in friends. 4. To learn us how to value blessings, to wit, as they bring us to Christ; This maketh the friends of the Bridegroom and the Word precious, and beautiful, *Rom.* 10:15. Or as they are purchased, and procured to us by his blood. This would make Church-Fellowship more precious, for by it we are brought nigh to him, even in Church-Fellowship, *Ephes.* 2. *ver.* 13,19.

#### Chap. 5. Ver. 11.

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

**I**N this *verse*, and those which follow to the end of the *Chapter* the Church proceedeth to describe (her Beloved) particularly, to wit, his several Parts and members; as the, 1. Head, *v.* 11. 2. Eyes, *v.* 12. 3. Cheeks. 4. Lips, *v.* 13. 5. Hands. 6. Belly, *v.* 14. 7. Legs. 8. Countenance, *ver.* 15. 9. Mouth, *ver.* 16.

Whence all is summed up in declaring, 1. The complete perfection of whole Christ, he is altogether lovely. 2. His near Relation to her. This is my beloved, &c.

In this *verse* the head is described, 1. By the precious matter, gold. 2. By the adjuncts of it, 1. Of fineness or solidness, and that expressed in a simile, of Gold. Gold, the more refined, the more solid, his head is as the most fine gold. 2. His locks, set forth, 1. By their bushiness, or curling, his locks are bushy or curled. 2. By their blackness and that expressed, by the simile of a Raven, black as a Raven,

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*His head*] Some here apply it to the Father, who is Christ's Head, 1 *Cor.* 11:3. Others take it to hold forth, the government of the Church, which is indeed of gold, but not so fitly mean here. For if the government had been precious, neither would the watch-men have beaten the spouse, as *ver.* 7. Neither had the Church been under so long and fact desertion. Others (and they fitly) take it for Christ himself? as he is the Head of the Church, *Eph.* 5:23. and was acknowledged to be such by *Fredrick.* 2. and the *German* Divines, and many others in that age, whilst the Church was seeking Christ, out of the defection of Popery.

*As fine gold*] Or firm gold as [[פִּי]] implieth, of [[פִּיז]] to consolidate, and make firm; gold the more fine & pure it is, it is so much the more, 1. Firm, and solid. 2. Pliable, ductile; you may beat out an Angel of pure gold to cover a room. 3. Durable and unwaisting in the fire; yea, and by the fire made more Firm. Pliable, Pure. Gold attributed to Christ or to us, mystically holdeth forth holiness as *Rev.* 3:18. Whereas eye-salve implieth illumination, and the white garment justification: so Gold tried in the fire signifieth sincere sanctification, Christ as Head of the Church is most holy.

*His locks*] The hair of the head was used before for common Christians that hang upon Christ, *Cant.* 4:1. The common Professors of his Name.

*Locks*] are bushes of hair curled together, implying several Congregations, whereinto the people gathered themselves.

*Curled*] Implieth heat and strength, as indeed the people at that time did zealously and strongly cleave to one another, when they kept close to *Fredrick*, notwithstanding all the malice, and subtilty of sundry Popes, *Honorius* 3. *Gregory* 9. *Innocent* 4.

*Yet black*] Implieth some, 1. Darkness of ignorance in the Churches: contrary to the state of the primitive Christians, *Rev.* 1:14. Purple is a Royal colour: but black argueth calamity and captivity, *Psalms* 68:13. 2. Sadness of condition, through violent opposition of the Papal party.

*As a Raven*] An unclean Fowl, *Levit.* 11:15. and feeding upon carrion: which argueth the people of the Church fed upon much unwholesome food, taught unto them by the Schoolmen and Postillers.

*Doct.* 1. Christ as the Head of the Church is most holy, even when the common Professors of his Name, may be subject to much Corruptions, and Affliction. He that sat upon the

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Throne (*Isaiah* 6:1) was not the Father (for him no man hath seen, *John* 1:18.) but the Son: and he is styled most Holy, *Isaiah* 6:3. *Rev.* 15:3,4. King of Saints, only holy, *Luke* 1:35. *Mark* 1:24. *Heb.* 7:29,27.

*Nebuchadnezzar* was an head of gold to the civil State, *Dan.* 2:38. But Christ an head of gold to his Church.

Holiness in Christ is fitly resembled to Gold, 1. As being most solid, and firm, without any mixture of sinful impurity, in nature or life, *John* 14:30. 2. As being most pliable and condescending to the necessities of his people, *Matth.* 12:20. *Rom.* 15:3. 2 *Cor.* 8:9. *Heb.* 2:14,17. 3. As not being wasted by his suffering of fiery Trials, 1 *Pet.* 2:22,23.

Holiness consisteth in being and doling all, From God so Christ, *John* 5:19 and 14:31, For God, *John* 7:18. and 6:38.

For it is, 1. A separation from common and unclean use, 2. An application to God and his service.

Reason of his perfect Holiness, 1. From his personal union with the God-head, *Coloss.* 2:9. Now God cannot sin, *Tit.* 1:2. *Jam.* 1:13.

2. From the presence and power of the Holy Ghost in him above measure, *John* 3:34. If he had sinned, he had wanted a greater measure of the Spirit.

3. To make himself a fit sacrifice for us, *Heb.* 7:26,27. If he had sinned himself, he had suffered for himself.

4. That his perfect Holiness might cover the defects of ours, *Exod.* 28:36,37,38.

Neither doeth the dark, or black condition of the Professors of his Name, derogate from the purity and holiness of the Head.

*Reason* of that, 1. From the multitude of many called, who yet are not chosen, *Mat.* 20:16. Hairs and locks are not members of the body: though they may fall off, yet the body is complete.

2. From the innocence of the Lord of the harvest, when by the sleepness of the watch-men, the tares may grow and multiply, *Matth.* 13:25,27,28.

3. From the influence of Christ's Holiness into his sincere members in their own spirit, when yet the outward state of Churches, may be disorderly, *Ezek.* 11:16.

*Use* 1. To teach us, when purity and holiness is wanting in the common Professors of Christ's Name, yea, and in many members, yet look for it in the Head. As when life and fruit faileth in the branches; it resideth in the root, Yea when the pre-

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tended head the Popes, were for many ages most base metal, yet Christ was pure and holy. Where was the Church before *Luther*? In a golden Head: and the bushy Congregations of the Parishes, which Christ owned, is locks on his head, whilst two or three membes, were found amongst them, until the pure members, and their Pastors separated.

*Use 1.* To teach members to be like the Hcad, pure, and holy, 1 *Pet.* 1:15,16. and *Revel.* 1:20. Churches, golden candlesticks.

*Use 2.* To prevent the abuse of this Text, for the defence of long locks. Long hair was not found in Christ, as man in his natural body, but as God man in his mystical body, many Congregations are as so many locks of hair.

*Use 4.* To teach Kings and Princes rather themselves to become heads of gold holy and gracious, then to wear crowns of gold, else God (the Lord Christ) will remove the Crown from Monarchy to *Aristocracy*, from *Aristocracy* to *Democracy*; when the choice of the Roman Emperors was taken up by the soldiers, it never got out of their hands, till Christ took it into his own hands by *Constantine*.

*Use 5.* To comfort poor Christians, 1. In Christ's perfect holiness, in defect of their own. 2. In having holiness in him, they are rich in him, *Rev.* 2:9. *Jam.* 2:5. though in themselves sometimes black, and unclean, as Ravens. The like comfort to Churches.

**Chap. 5. Ver. 12.**

12. *His eyes are as Doves by the Rivers of Waters, washing in (or with) milk, sitting in fulness.*

**I**N the times of Antichristian apostasy (whilst the Church sought Christ, and could not find him in public assemblies openly) Christ is described, as he did reveal and manifest himself, in his sincere members, who walked contrary to the corruption of the times, in the former *verse*, contrary to the false head of the Church, the Pope (who was an head of iron breaking down, and crushing all before him) Christ is descri-

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scribed as an head of gold, making his people rich, not destroying them. Now as one Head or article of their apostacy, was *de Romano Pontifice*, so another was *de Sacra Scriptura*, in opposition to which Christ is described, in his discerning members, to run contrary to the received corruptions of the times.

*The eyes*] Are the members of Christ that have spiritual discerning. These eyes are said to be [as Doves] not as Doves eyes (though sometimes they are so described, as *Chap.* 1:15. and 4:1.) but Doves innocent, *Matth.* 10:16. And Doves as they are by the rivers of waters flocking thither to drink. And drink they do, put their beaks deep into the rivers of waters.

Up to the eyes. They, 1. Drink deep, and full draught, not a sip and away, as other birds do. 2. Look not about them whilest drinking.

*River of waters*] Are the holy Scriptures, and the streams of the Spirit of grace flowing therein which corrupt Pastors' soul with their feet, *Ezek.* 34:18. *Isaiah* 49:10. *Rev.* 22:1. of these the discerning Christians drink heartily and deeply: They who neglect them have no discerning in them, *Isaiah* 8:20.

*Walking in milk*] That is, cleansing themselves with the same Word (which is as milk, 1 *Pet.* 2:2) *Psalms* 119:9.

*Sitting in fulness*] That is, resting fully satisfied with these waters of the Sanctuary, not seeing any need of human inventions, or written traditions.

*Doct.* 1. Discerning and innocent Christians (even in times of apostasy) drink deep of the Scriptures, cleanse themselves in them, and do fully satisfy themselves with them. The eyes of Christ hold forth such members, as do see and discern. Their being as Doves, argueth their innocency, and simple-heartedness, *Matth.* 10:16. Intelligent and innocent Christians, drink deep, *Psalms* 119:11. wash themselves in it, *Psalms* 119:9. satisfy themselves with it, *Psalms* 36:8. and 65:4.

*Red/!* 1. From the authority of the Scriptures, they are given by divine inspiration, 2 *Tim.* 3:16. Hence attention to them, 1 *Thess.* 2:13. They are the voice of Christ, hence his sheep hear it, and attend earnestly to it, *John* 10:1.

*Reas.* 2. From the power and efficacy of the Scriptures. They reveal, and by revealing effectually apply all the cleansing means of Grace, as, 1. The blood of Christ, 1 *John* 1:7. 2. The Spirit of grace, *Ezek.* 36:25,27. and from these, 1. Faith, *Acts* 15:9. 2. Repentance, *Acts* 8:22.

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*Reas.* 3. From the perfection of the Word, *Psalm* 19:7. 1 *Tim.* 3:17. Hence we rest fully satisfied with it.

*Use* 1. To resume, 1. Papists who derive the authority of the Scriptures from the Church. They also look for other cleansers then this milk, as holy-water, Pilgrimages, Purgatory, the milk of the Virgin, &c. They deny the perfection of Scriptures without unwritten Traditions, 2. Antiscripturists.

*Use* 2. To reprove sipping of the Scriptures, a slighting taste of them, in perfunctory reading, or bearing, of them.

*Use* 3. For a trial of innocent and discerning Christians. They drink deep of the Scriptures. The Word sinketh into their judgements, not sipping only, as he, *Acts* 26:28. but as *Luke* 1:1. Conscience, Heart, *Prov.* 4:21. Affections, *Psalm* 119: 97,162. They cleanse themselves, as *Naaman* in *Jordan*. They are fully satisfied with them.

*Use* 4. To teach us to imitate these eyes of Christ, like Doves making such use of the Rivers of waters.

*Use* 5. For comfort to such as do so use the Scriptures. You are as the eyes of Christ, tender to him, *Zech.* 2:8. You see what you do, *Eccles.* 2:14. You grow up to innocency, and simple-heartedness. You sit down in fulness, satisfied with Scripture-Ordinances.

#### Chap. 5. Ver. 13.

13. *Thy cheeks are, at a bed, or row, or border of spice, Towers (or Turrets) of perfumes: his lips Lilies, &c.*

**T***He cheeks*] Hold forth the open face of Christ in the estate of his Churches, as *Can.* 1:10. So in those times of Apostasy, where there was any face of a true Church, it has a bed, no: a complete Garden, but as a bed in a Garden, a Row, a Border.

*Of Spices*] Not of flowers, sweet flowers are ill translated, in stead of Towers of perfumes.

*Spices rather than flowers*] As being, 1. Less pleasant to the sight, but more sweet and savoury to the smell: sooner smelt out, then openly visible. 2. Rare and precious.

*Towers of perfumes*] Strong in sweet favour, and as strong as

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Towers to defend, their sweet savour, as the Church was in the days or *Waldenses*, and *Albigenses*.

*Lips*] Their conference, and their Ministers to speak to them in Christ Name, such as they had.

*Lilies*] 1. For Redness. 2. For straightness.

*Dropping down*] Not pressed as Oil, out of the Olive-berries, or Wine out of the clusters, but freely distilling; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.

*Liquid Myrrh*] Not honey as *Cant.* 4:11. Which was fitter for nourishment, and growth; (but myrrh fit to preserve from putrefaction. The doctrine of those times reaching little further then to preservc from rottenness.

*Doct.* 1. The face of the Church in corrupt times, is more like a bed of spaces, then a garden of flowers, more sweet in favour than pleasant to the sight, and their doctrine more fit to preserve from rottenness, then to nourish unto growth in godliness. So it was in *Jezebel's* time, little visible appearance of Saints; *Elijah* knew of none, 1 *Kings* 29:10. Yet a border of 7000, here and there scattered and preserved from the rottenness of superstition in bowing to *Baal*, *Ver.* 18.

In the Church resembled here by the checks of Christ four things to be observed, 1. Order not completed, a Row, not a Garden. 2. Open conspicuity restrained: the Church rather smelt, then beheld. Openly, smelt, 1. By good Christians, to cleave to it. 2. By persecutors, to oppress it. 3. Sweetness. 4. Soundness. Preserved as by myrrh and soundness also, and uprightness is noted in the lilies.

*Reas.* From the smoke arising out of the bottomless pit, which darkened all heavenly light, *Rev.* 9:2. Hence no marvel if in the darkness order be not so well observed [in darkness no order, *Job* 10:22]

*Reas.* 2. From the rage of the Dragon, and the beast, *Revel.* 13:2. *Prov.* 28:12. Hence the woman (the Church) fled into the wilderness, *Rev.* 12:14, and 13:7.

*Reas.* 3. From the presence of Christ with his Church, even in *Babylon* old or new, *Dan.* 3:25. *Rev.* 11:1. [So in *Egypt*, *Exod.* 3:2.] His two witnesses in those times were as his two lips, *Rev.* 11:3,4.

*Reas.* 4. From the faithfulness of the promises of preserving a remnant of his Elect in Church-estate to the end, *Mat.* 16:18.

*Use* 1. To clear the doctrine of the visibility of the Church in the darkest times of Popery. In their Congregations, where



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the Lord had lips to deliver his Word to preserve his people from putrefaction, there wanted not some or other bed of spices, which the faithful smelt out, and the pursuivants (like the devils blood-hounds) smelt them out also. These Christ acknowledged them out also. These Christ acknowledged to be his cheeks. He was present with them: and the whole Congregation was a Church to him for their sakes. The live more easily may be said of the English Parishes, even under the Hierarchy, where godly Ministers were there was a row of good Christians. There Christ's lips might be heard.

*Use 2.* To teach us what manner of persons the people and Church of God ought to be in worst times (even where Satan's throne is) *Rev. 2:13*. Which will upbraid the rottenness and unsavouriness of men, in the midst of all encouragements to sweetness and soundness.

*Use 3.* For comfort to Churches in worst times and places.

#### Chap. 5. ver. 14.

14. *His hands are as gold-rings set with the Beryl: His belly is as bright Ivory overlaid with Sapphires.*

**I**N this *verse* the Church proceedeth to describe her beloved, (as he revealed himself in his members, in those times of her desertion) as before in his head, locks eyes cheeks, lips: So here in his Hands, Belly.

*His hands]* Are described by a simile from gold rings: and them set forth with a beryl.

*His belly]* Is set forth by its adjunct of polishing, and thereby made like to bright Ivory: and Ivory overlaid with Sapphires.

*His hands]* Hands are instruments of Action, and so may hold forth such holy instruments as the Lord stirred up (as many he did in many Countrys) about *Wicliff's* time, for the purging of doctrine, and the worship of God in the Church. And it may also well intend military men, amongst the Waldenses and Albigenses, who fought Christ's battles against the forces sent out against them, by the Pope of *Rome*. For soldiers are men of their hands, and most handy in action; hence, *Psalm 76:5*.

*Gold rings]* Hold forth, 1. The Liberty.  
2. The Honour of these instruments, *Luke 15*.

See *Rhodog. | lib.6. cap. 11*.

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*ver.* 22. The Church like the prodigal coming home again, was adorned with a golden ring, honourably adorned, *John Wicliff* with the protection of *John of Gaunt*, the King's son. The Waldenses with the Earl of *Tholouse*, and King of *Arragan*. See the honour of the gold ring also in *Gen.* 41:42. [*Jam.* 2:2.]

*Set with Beryl*] A precious stone of a Sea-green colour, and thence hath his name *Tarshish*, which first signifieth the Sea, and then a Sea-town, and then a precious stone of a Sea-green colour.

It was a stone in the high Priest's brest plate, *Exod.* 28:20. in the foundation of the New *Jerusalem*, *Revelations* 21:20. which being there expressly distinguished from the Chrysolite, so here not fitly termed the Chrysolite.

The wheels in *Ezek.* 1:16. and 10:9. Are said to resemble this Beryl. Where the wheels intending the revolutions of God's Providence in governing the World, and they resembling the Beryl (which resembleth the Sea) argueth these dispensations, and round turnings of those rings and wheels, though precious as gold, yet shall be tossed with many agitations, as the waves of the great Sea.

*His belly*] It is an hidden secret part of Christ in his Church, not obvious to every eye, but to the faithful members of it, it is mentioned again, *Cant.* 7:2. whereas baptism is set forth by the navel (which like a round goblet wanteth not liquor) so the Lord's Supper is resembled to the belly, full of the bread of life, like an heap of wheat on the Lord's Table, and compassed about with holy Communicants, and so set about with lilies. In the same sense it is taken here for the Lord's Supper, purged from the gross errors of transubstantiation, and from the mutilation of the cup, and from the opinion of a Propitiatory sacrifice, and from Reservation and Circumgestation. See the articles of *Wickliff* condemned in the Council of *Constance*. And so it is.

*As bright ivory*] Polished and purified.

*Overlaid with sapphires*] Sapphire a most precious stone, of pure skie-colour, *Exod.* 24:10. *Ezek.* 1:26. and so fitly expressing the heavenly purity of the Ordinances administered and taught by them; and the heavenly protection covering them.

*Doct.* 1. The instruments of Christ tending and turning towards purity of reformation in Doctrine and Sacraments, are as the hands of Guilt, precious and honourable; who

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though they be beset with a sea of troubles, yet are they covered, and overlaid with heavenly glory. Whether Ministers, or Military men, or Magistrates, that attend this work, thus are they in God's eyes, and in the sight of discerning Christians. How precious was *Asa* and *Jehoshaphat*, *Hezekiah* and *Josiah* in this work? what troubles did they all meet with, *Asa* from *Zerah the Ethiopian*, *Jehoshaphat* from the great Host (in 2 *Chron.* 20.) *Hezekiah* from *Sennacherib*, *Josiah* from a corrupt people; and how did the Lord crown them all with heavenly protection and glory?

*Nehemiah's* instance is evident throughout his book, so the *Maccabees* after him.

*Reas.* 1. Why are such Instruments the hands of Christ? 1. The work is his as Redeemer of his Church, and the shepherd of his people. 2. He commandeth his servants to go about it, and setteth them a work, stirreth them up to it. 3. The extraordinary success in such work, beyond the power of means, demonstrateth his hands is with them, as, 1 *Chron.* 28:20.

*Reas.* 2. Why such a sea of troubles, such strong opposition? 1. From the rage of the Serpent, when his head is bruised. Hence the great battle in heaven, *Rev.* 12:7. 2. From the blind zeal of ignorant and corrupt people, *Ezra* 4:1,4,5. *Neh.* 4:1.

*Reas.* 3. Why covered with heavenly glory? 1. Because the work is heavenly, even the divine work of the finger of God. Hence *Jehu* found glorious assistance, and encouragement whilst he wrought this work with God, 2 *Kings* 10:30. 2. Because Christ will rule in the midst of his enemies, *Psalms* 110:2. & 45:4,5.

*Use* 1. To behold this fulfilled even in our days also, in the Parliament, in the Army, so long as they attended this work. All these particulars were verified in them. 1. They were the hands of Christ, precious and honourable. 2. They have been beset with a sea of troubles. 3. They have found heavenly and divine protection and glory. The like in some proportion hath been verified in this country.

*Use* 2. To teach us to attend the work of Christ still, in our persons, families, Churches: and to expect the like difficulties, yet still good successes.

*Use* 3. To beware of hindering Christ's work in our selves, in our families, and in our Churches. Else our hands shall

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be Satan's hands, wicked and base. Hence their accusation against Church-work is called in the original Satanism, *Ezra* 4:6. We may find some (it may be) to assist us in such a way of opposition to Churches and Ordinances: But we shall not be covered with heavenly glory, but blackness of darkness, *Isaiah* 54:15,17. and 41:11. *Psalm* 129:5, to 8.

**Chap. 5. Ver. 15.**

*15. His legs (or thighs) are as Pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold.*

**I**N these words the Church describeth the legs of Christ by a simile taken from pillars of marble: And those pillars from the subject place, the sockets or bases, in which they are set, *set upon sockets of fine gold.*

*Legs]* Or thighs, express the lowest, and so the last members, wherein Christ did shew forth himself visibly, till greater multitudes of his members did discover themselves unto more open view.

These two legs (historically) were *John Huss* and *Jerome* of *Prague*, in whom Christ walked with constant noble firmness, and courage as pillars of marble, and that in a gracious bearing witness to his truth unto death, and martyrdom. Legs are members knit to the body, on whom the head and body standeth, walketh. These were pillars for their firmness, and constancy, *Rev.* 3:12. 1 *Kings* 7:15,21. Pillars of marble for their lustre and nobility. For of all stones fit for pillar-work, none so noble as marble stones. Precious stones are not fit for Pillars.

*Set upon socks]* As the legs be upon feet.

*Of fine gold]* That is, here pure-holiness, as *Rev.* 3:18.

*Solid gold]* Or holiness.

*Doct.* 1. It is an honour to Christ, when his members stand, walk in him steadfastly in exemplary holiness: Or, It is an honour to Christ, when Christ many be seen to stand and walk in his members steadfastly, in exemplary holiness. For this the Church speaketh of Christ, to let forth his beauty and transcendent honour. *Nebuchadnezzar's* Image ended in iron and clay (as all worldly glory doth) but this, image or re-

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presentation of Christ, as it beginneth in gold, so it endeth in gold, 1 *Thes.* 3:8. and *chap.* 1:5,6,7. with *Chap.* 2:19,20.

*Reason,* From the honour it is to Christ. 1. In his Father, *Job* 15:8,9,10. *Psalm* 92:14,15. It is a glory to his righteousness, *Gen.* 49:13,14. It is glory to his, 1. Power. 2. To his faithfulness. To depart or sit loose from God reflecteth dishonour upon him, either of unrighteousness, or insufficiency, *Jer.* 2:5,31. 2. In himself, 1 *Cor.* 13:3. even in him waited on, *Isaiah* 40:31. 3. In his Word and Ordinances, 1 *Thes.* 1:5,6. with *Chap.* 2:13,14. 4. In his grace and gifts of it, which groweth not feeble, but strong by age.

*Use* 1. To reprove the dishonour we put upon Christ, by carnal courses, *Jer.* 2:5. or by walking weakly, and feebly in ways of godliness. It is a childish vanity, or infirmity, be unsettled and feeble, *Eph.* 4:14.

*Use* 2. To exhort to strength and steadfastness in God's ways, 2 *Tim.* 2:1. *Eph.* 6:10.

Means of spiritual strength, 1. Self diffidence, 1 *Sam.* 2:9. and waiting or dependance upon Christ, *Isaiah* 40:31. stand not upon our own legs, but let him act you as legs to him, *Gal.* 2:19,20.

2. Search the Scriptures, hiding them in our hearts, 1 *John* 2:14. and feeding upon Christ in them, *John* 6:55,56. and in every Ordinance, which we do, when every Word maketh us see and feel, 1. Either our need and want of him. 2. His worth. 3. His way.

3. Purging out enfeebling corruption, 1 *Cor.* 7:1.

4. Exercise in godliness, *Job* 17:9. *Prov.* 10:29. *Psalm* 84:7. Let passengers here beware of fashions, and long hair; else you will take up their corrupt opinions, and disflute conviction.

*Use* 4. For comfort to steadfast Saints, yea are the legs of Christ as pillars, *Jacin* and *Boaz*, 1 *Kings* 7:21. *Rev.* 3:12. of marble durability and lustre, set upon sockets of fine gold.

#### Chap. 5. ver. 15.

15. *His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars.*

**T**He countenance is not here the face [[פנים]], but his aspect, his view, that which is to be scene of him [[הארץ]]:

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*Is as Lebanon*] For 1. Stability, as a mountain. 2. Eminency, as a mountain, 3. Multitude of believers professing his Name, as a wood or forest. 4. Fragrancy, as, *Cant.* 4:11.

*Excellent (or choice) as the Cedars*] For, 1. Tallness, or eminency, 2. Straitness or uprightness. 3. Soundness or incorruption. Such was the visible representation of Christ in his Church, after the constant martyrdom of these two, who a little before represented his legs (*John Huss*) and *Jerome of Prague*:) the professors of the truth of Christ did so multiply in *Bohemia*, and contended for the truth with such constancy, and courage before all Christendom (who represented themselves in the Council of *Basel*) that they obtained the liberty of the cup against all opposition, and would not be diverted by any solicitations or terrors.

*Doct.* 2. When the members of Christ stand and walk steadfastly, and holily in the truth, it increaseth the number and growth of Christians, upon the standing of those legs steadfastly in the truth, as pillars in holiness, and purity as gold, Christians multiplied in view like a wood, and grew up to the move eminency, liability, fragrancy, sincerity and integrity, *Acts* 9:31. So upon the constancy of *Stephen*, though the Church was dispersed, yet the Churches and Church-members grew in number and strength in *Samariah*, *Acts* 8, in *Antioch*, *Acts* 11. So upon the things that befell *Paul*, *Phil.* 1:12,13,14.

*Reas.* 1. From the necessary conference of the resurrection or Christ upon his death: As in Christ himself, so in his members. Such as have fellowship with Christ in his death (as all constant and holy witnesses to his death have) they shall also have fellowship with Christ in his resurrection: not only in their own persons, but in others of their kind. A stalk of corn cut down and sown, ariseth not only in more beauty, but greater numbers, *Rom.* 6:5. *Isaiah* 59:20,21.

*Reas.* 2. From the power of Christ, who by God's decree ruleth in the midst of his enemies, *Psalms* 110:1. Now he should be subdued and overruled, if he should be born down by the rage of his enemies.

*John* 9:4. *Prospered*] Either, 1. In his Person. 2. Design.

*Reas.* 3. From the zeal and indignation of God against such as root up his Church, though but in endeavour. *Sena-*

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*cherib* endeavoured to destroy *Jerusalem*, 2 *Kings* 19:25. Therefore the zeal of God gave them to take root again, *ver.* 30,31.

*Reas.* 4. From the gross and palpable injustice of persecutors openly bewraied in their dealings against the professors of the truth. In preceding against *Huss*, the Emperour falsified his faith, the Pope his. The Council of *Constance* imprisoned him before heard, and condemned him before convinced.

*Reas.* 5. From the power of the Word in its greatest improvement. The Gospel is the power of God to salvation, especially if Preached: and yet more if believed, and yet more if suffered for, *Phil.* 1:29.

*Use* 1. To observe this truth fulfilled before your eyes this day, The Hierarchy thought to have rooted out purity of God's worship, and the witnesses of it, in rooting out *Puritans* as they called us, and others of God's servants; but God helping us to continue constant in the profession of the truth, even to this unavoidable banishment, behold, how witnesses to the same cause have multiplied in both *Englands*, as thick as a wood, as the forest of *Lebanon*.

*Object.* But many heresies have multiplied also.

*Answ.* 1. That is accidentally, the malice of Satan, *Mat.* 13:25.

*Avsw.* 2. The heresies will wither away, 2 *Tim.* 3:9. *Mat.* 15:13. It is but a torrent, *Rev.* 12:15. *Moses* rod (though one) shall devour the serpents (though many) of the magicians, *Ex.* 7:12.

*Use* 2. For encouragement to constancy in the truth of Christ, in holy sincerity. It bringeth forth a famous blessed increase.

*Use* 3. For reproof of such as are not affected, nor wrought upon to acknowledge the truth, though confirmed by a cloud of faithful wit[ness]es, and by God's own blessing (as a witness) unto their testimony.

*Use* 4. To restrain the rage of persecutors of the truth, they shall not prevail by strong hand, or subtlty against Christ. He is more wise and strong, *Job* 9:4.

## Chap. 5. ver. 16.

16. *His mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.*

**I**N these words the Church describeth Christ, 1. By his mouth, and the sweetness of it: and that eminently, most sweet, sweetness, in the abstract, in the plural number, all sorts of sweetness. 2. By the loveliness of his whole person, and all his appurtenances, he is altogether lovely, desirable in the abstract. Desires in the plural number, all sorts of desires. 3. By her near and dear relation to him: This is my beloved my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

*Doct.* 1. To them that have interest in Christ fellowship with Christ, as their beloved, as their friend, to them his Word (openly and freely taught) is most sweet, and himself altogether lovely, or to them that enjoy Christ, &c.

*His mouth*] implieth a more open and free, dispensation of his word. The lips may express a Word more silently whispered, and yet that was sweet, *verse* 13. *Psalm* 19:7, to 10. To whom the Word is a converting Word, to them it is most sweet (more then honey:) most desirable (more then gold.) Sweetness, 1. Of grace, *Psalm* 45:2. 2. Of Peace, *Isaiah* 57:19. *Psalm* 85:8. 3. Of Joy, *Psalm* 19:8. and 51:8. 4. Of light or wisdom, (*Eccles.* 11:7) *Psalm* 19:7,8, 5. Of life, (life is sweet) *Deut.* 32:47.

*He is altogether lovely*, 1. In his person, *Matth.* 3:17. The favour shining upon him, reflecting upon us, is most desirable more than life, 2 *Cor.* 4:6. with *Psalm* 63:3. 2. In his Offices, as, 1. King, *Heb.* 7:2. 2. Priest, *Heb.* 7:24,25,26. His Sacrifice of most sweet-smelling savour, *Ephes.* 5:2. 3. Prophet, *Job* 36:22. *John* 7:46. 3. In his graces, and the Spirit that worketh them, *Cant.* 1:3. 4. In his Ordinances, *Isaiah* 25:6. 5. In his providences, *Psalm* 25:10. *Rom.* 8:28. even in his afflictive providences, *Heb.* 11:25,26. 6. In his members, so far as they are in Christ, and Christ in them, *Dan.* 10:11.

*Reason* 1. From the preheminance of Christ in all excellencies, *Col.* 1:19. It was meet that all Divine perfection should there first be received, where God is first and princi-



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pally existent. The Godhead is in Christ personally, *Col.* 2:9. And so all goodness and eminency thereof is in Christ primitively, and in the creatures derivatively, *John* 1:16.

*Use 1.* To show us a just cause of seeking Christ, when we want him, as the Church doth here For she giveth all this large and sweet description of Christ (generally, particularly) as a just ground of seeking him, and of her charging all the daughters of *Jerusalem* to help her in her seeking for him, *verse* 8,9,10, to 10. Best affections, and boldest expressions of them, are best bestowed upon the best object; enjoying him, maketh us like him, *1 Cor.* 3:18. We are beloved of God, like him, *Mat.* 3:17. Our words are sweet, *Cant.* 2:14. *Psalm* 141:6: Our spirit and ways will be lovely, *Cant.* 7:1.

*Use 2.* For trial whether we have Christ for our beloved, & for our friend. If so, then thus is Christ to us, his Word most sweet, his whole self every way, altogether lovely. If otherwise, we are either no Spouses of Christ, or entering upon a desertion. As *Sampson* felt no change, though his hair was cut.

*Use 3.* teach us how to receive Christ, whole Christ, [[כלו]], as a King to rule us, as well as a Priest to reconcile us, *Totum Christum & Totum Christi*, his person Offices, Graces, Ordinances, Providences, Members; and for that end, it is good to find sin most bitter, *Jer.* 2:19.

*Use 3.* To such as have Christ, to open our hearts and mouths wide, in the acknowledgement and praise of the goodness & excellency of Christ. *Motives* 1. It will justify our search after Christ, to all that ask a reason of our Christian course and profession in seeking after him; so here. 2. It will humble us and name us the more, that we should neglect to open to him, where he calleth and knocketh. 3. It enflameth, enlargeth our affections towards him, when we recount his excellencies: Love feedeth upon the meditation of the loveliness of a beloved. 4. It weaneth from sensual objects and lusts, the brightness of the Sun putteth out the kitchen fire, *Phil.* 3:7,8,9. 5. It provoketh others to seek after him, Text with chap 6:1.

*Use 5.* To show us a reason, why Christ deserteth us at any time: to wit, to make himself and his ordinances the more sweet and precious to us: The Church afore upon slight pretences put away Christ, did not open to him. Now after long desertion; his Word is most sweet, and himself is now altogether lovely.

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*Use 6.* For comfort to such as have chosen Christ for their spouse and friend, they have chosen the best like *Mary* the far better part.

**Chap. 6. Ver. 1.**

*Whither is thy beloved gone? O thou fairest among women, whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.*

**T**hese be the words of the Daughters of *Jerusalem*, who though in their former question, they bewrayed their ignorance of the worth of Christ, [chap. 5:9] yet now upon hearing the Churches affectionate discourse and description of Christ, they are affected themselves toward him, enquire after him, and offer their Company to her, to seek him with her. The words then hold forth, 1. The affection of the Daughters of *Jerusalem* towards Christ. 2. The fruit or their affection 1. An earnest enquiry after him, whither he might be gone or turned aside and ingeminated in a double question, whither is thy beloved gone? whither, &c. 2. An offer and profession of their readiness to seek him with her: that we may seek him with thee.

*Doct.* 1. The affectionate holding forth of Christ, his excellent worth and loveliness, doth beget in the hearers (even ignorant hearers) an earnest affection to him, and diligent enquiry after him. The Church here holdeth forth strong affection to Christ. 1. Her longing desire after him. 2. Her deep sorrow for want of him I am sick of love, &c. 3. Her admiration of his loveliness and excellency, the chiefest of 10,000. he is altogether lovely. 4. Her confidence of her interest in him, This is my beloved, this is my friend. With this affection she holdeth forth the excellent worth and loveliness. 1. Of his Person, the chiefest of 10,000. 2. Of his offices; as, Priest white and ruddy; King, head of gold; Prophet, mouth most sweet. 3. Of his graces, sweet-smelling Myrrh. 4. Of his ordinances; word, lips, mouth, most sweet; Sacraments, belly, bright Ivory, overlaid, &c. 5. Of his members, cheeks, as a bed of spices: bands as gold Rings: legs, as pillars of marble: countenance as *Lebanon*, &c. This holding forth of Christ, breedeth in the

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Daughters of *Jerusalem*. 1. Affection towards him, 2. Earnest enquiry after him, and that doubled for the vehemency. 3. Offer to accompany her, in seeking after him, we will seek him with thee, *John* 4:28,29,30. *Acts* 10:38, to 44. & 8:35, 36,37.

*Reas.* 1. From the attractive power of Christ lifted up, *John* 12:32. & 3:14,15. Hence his lifting up by the Word; as on a standard is attractive, *Isaiah* 11:12.

*Reas.* 2. From the proceeding of the Spirit, as in his subsistence from the eternal Word (which is the second person in Trinity) so in his efficacy from the Word of Christ, which is the Gospel, *Acts* 10:44. *Isaiah* 59:20,21.

*Reas.* 3. From the savour of his ointments in himself, and their attractive virtue, *Cant.* 1:3.

*Reas.* 4. From the seminal virtue of his graces in us, 1 *John* 3:9. not only begetting us to Christ formally, but others instrumentally, *Mat.* 13:31,32,33. 1 *Pet.* 3:1. That which, cometh from the heart, findeth a way to the heart.

*Use* 1. To teach us the way of powerful, and Soul-saving-Ministry. Let the, 1. Matter if it, or subject be Christ in all the former considerations. 1. Manner of it be simple, not affecting carnal eloquence, 1 *Cor.* 2:2,4. 3. Spirit by which it is dispensed, held forth, 1. Ardency. 1. Confidence, Text. 3. Reverence, 1 *Cor.* 2:2,3. The law must be dispensed in a way of Christ; So as therein, 1. To convince of the need, and worth of Christ, *Gal.* 3:24. 2. To express our thankfulness to Christ in holy obedience. 3. To walk by faith in Christ for Assistance, *John* 15:5 Acceptance. Christ is the end of the law, for Justification, *Rom.* 10:4. but the beginning of the law, for sanctification.

*Obj.* But had it not been needful, to have prepared these Daughters of *Jerusalem*, unto Christ by the law?

*Answ.* The ordinary Ministers under that Apostasy, did nothing else but press the law, & that with much power, *Rev.* 9:5.

*Use* 2. To reach us, men may be taken with good affections to Christ, and carried forth to enquire for him, and seek after him, before they do discern their own conjugal fellowship with him, whither is thy beloved gone? thine, not ours.

*Use* 3. To teach such is have good affections to Christ to express it (as these Daughters of *Jerusalem* here do) by enquiring again and again after him, and by seeking for him.

*Use* 4. To teach such as do seek Christ, to affect to seek him

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in the fellowship of the Church. That we may seek him with thee.

**Chap. 6. Ver. 2.**

*My beloved is gone down into his garden: to the beds of spices. To feed in the gardens, and gather lilies.*

**I**N these words, the Church maketh answer to the Daughters of *Jerusalem*, where her spouse was to be found, after his long desertion of her, during all the time of the Antichristian Apostasy. Where the state of the Church, wherein Christ was to be found, is described, 1. By the Amœnity of it, it was a garden. 2. By his Propriety in it, it was his garden. 3. By the inferiority or lower condition of it, to some former gardens, wherein Christ had walkcd, implied in his descent into it, he is gone down into his garden. *Wittenberg* was a meaner place then *Rome* or *Constantinople*, or *Alexandria*, or *Jerusalem* or *Antioch*, where Christ had formerly his pleasant gardens. Yea, in this the garden or Church at *Wittenberg* was inferior to the primitive Churches before *Constantine*, for they were gardens enclosed, *Cant.* 4:12. not so *Wittenberg*. 4. By the variety of sorts of sweet Christians in it, as beds of spices. 5. By the speedy multiplication of Churches from it in the gardens *Zurich*; *Strasburg*, *Basel*, *Geneva*, besides sundry others in *Hassia*, and *Prussia*. 6. By the end of Christ's going down thither, 1. To feed in the gardens. 2. To gather lilies.

*Doct.* 1. The spouse of Christ that hath long and earnestly sought him, and called upon others to seek him for her, maybe herself the first that findeth him, as here the spouse had long & earnestly sought Christ, *Chap.* 5. *Ver.* 6, to 16. and charged the daughters of *Jerusalem* to seek him for her, yet here findeth him, *Cant.* 3:1,2,3,4. *John* 20:1, to 16.

*Reas.* 2. From her deepest and saddest affections towards him, and greatest diligence in seeking after him, *Cant.* 6:8. and *ver.* 6, to 16. And Christ is wont to satisfy hungry sad-hearted seekers, *Isaiah* 61:1,2,3. *Prov.* 8:17.

*Reas.* 2. From the greater occasion she may have had to declare and speak of all excellency, *Cant.* 5:9, to 16. Now the very meditation and recounting of his excellencies in particular is act to revive the soul, *Isaiah* 45:22. As the wistly beholding of the brazen serpent did heal, *Numb.* 21:8,9.

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3. From the call she may have to give answer about Christ such as enquire after him of her in the way of an Ordinance, a public Ordinance, *Exodus* 10:24. When children are new bred, and brought forth, and cry, the mother never wanteth milk.

*Use* 1. To teach us this book is not a Story or Prophecy of one time or age, but of succeeding times. The spouse here in the former *Chap.* knew not where Christ was, nor where to seek him. Now she can certify others, what she would fain have enquire of them before.

*Use* 2. For dindionto the use of such means wherein Christ is wont to be found. Means, 1. Longing affections to him, sad afflictions of soul for want of him, sickness or love, diligent search after him. 2. Serious meditation of him, and particular recounting of his excellencies. 3. Conference about him in the way of Ordinance.

*Use* 3. For comfort to such poor souls, as have lyen long under spiritual desertions, you may at last find him with the first.

*Doct.* 2. When Christ hath deserted his Church in populous and great cities, he goeth down to converse in his Country-garden. Christ had now deserted *Rome*, and *Constantinople* &c. and now betaketh himself to *Wittenberg* in *Germany*.

*Reas.* 1. To demonstrate the sovereign power of God, *Ezek.* 17:14. *Luke* 1:52. and to magnify the power of the Spirit of grace in weak vessels, *Zech.* 4:6. *1 Cor.* 1:27,28.

*Reas.* 2. To abase carnal excellency, *1 Cor.* 1:29.

*Use* 1. To observe, and acknowledge the gracious goodness of Christ unto our selves, we enjoy that presence of Christ in the liberty of his Ordinances, which our native country with the effusion of the blood of many thousands cannot yet obtain. Other Christian States will never grow strong whilest they mingle themselves with the seed of men of the Roman State, *Dan.* 2. v. 43..

*Doct.* 3. Christ cometh into his Church, to feed in it, to multiply it, and to gather lilies in it.

To feed in it, 1. Himself with their spiritual sacrifices, *Psalm* 50:13,14,15. *Heb.* 13:16. *Mat.* 25:35,40. 2. His people with his Word, Sacraments and other Ordinances, *Isaiah* 55:1,2. *1 Pet.* 2:2. *John* 6:55. *Psalm* 64:4. *Ephes.* 4:16. *Coloss.* 2:19.

To multiply them] Christ came into one Garden, and presently it's said, he feedeth in Gardens *Isaiah* 60:22.

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To *gather lilies*] Lilies are Saints, *Hosea* 14:5. *Canticles* 2:16. and 4:5 and 6:3. and 7:2.

Lilies are eminent for their, 1. Straightness, refeinbling the uprightnes of the Saints. 2. Whiteness, exceeding therein Royal brightness and glory, *Matth.* 6:28,29. Resembling their purity. 3. fruitfulness, one root yielding sometime 500 flowers. [*Plin. Nat. History, l. 21. Cap. 5.*] 4. Speedy growth after dew; hence, *Hose.* 14:5.

To *gather*] Is not to crop and pluck them, to carry them away, but to gather them together, as *Gen.* 31:46. so *John* 11:52. Which was fulfilled when Christ gathered many of his Saints, from all neighbour Nations, *Wittenberg, Zurich, Strausburg, Genevah.*

*Reas.* 1. From the strong alluring and attractive savour of Christ his death, and the fruits thereof clearly and purely caught, *John* 12:32.

*Reas.* 2. From Christ's delight to glorify the house of his glory, *Isaiah* 6:7,8.

*Reas.* 3. From the ardent affection of God's people to seek the Presence of Christ in his Ordinances, wheresoever they hear of it, *Zech.* 8:20, to 23. *Matth.* 14:28. The cleanness and simplicity of the Doves of Christ, can rest no where but in *Noah's* ark, whilst a delude of superstition overfloweth the World, *gen.* 8:8,9. The Raven an unclean bird could rest and feed upon the floating carcasses, *ver.* 7. The Popish Apostasy is compared to that universal deluge. Hence the Angel that came to dry it up is said to be clothed with a cloud, and a Rainbow upon his head *Rev.* 10:1.

*Use* 1. To acknowledge this gracious presence and favour of Christ amongst us for many years; at least whilst the deluge abroad of Antichristian corruption in worship and Church-government overspread all, Christ fed amongst us, himself, his people. He multiplied one garden into many, one Church into above a score. He gathered many sincere souls to us, from all Quarters out of our native Country. If now people hasten as fast from us, let us consider first ourselves 1. Whether Christ still feed himself amongst us, and us with him? 2. Whether he multiply us? 3. Whether he gather upright ones to himself amongst us? If so, it is well, we may bless his Name for his goodness; if not, we had need to look to our uprightnes. Secondly, Consider them that go away. Are not many Ravens gone for creature-comforts there? If many Doves, see if the

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Lord gather not in as many in their room. Thirdly, If God's people go away for Christ, let them take this counsel, 1. See the Popish deluge more dried up, see the Olive branch in some Doves mouth, *Gen.* 8:11. 2. See the late flood cast out of the Dagon's mouth, drunk up more dry by earthly professors, *Rev.* 12:15,16.

*Use* 1. To teach us to feed upon Christ, & to be fed by him, and to grow up like lilies in uprightness and colour, and fruitfulness, as ever we desire to keep Christ still amongst us.

*Use* 3. To learn us to acknowledge the Reformed Churches in *Germany, France, Helvetia, England, &c.* for true Churches of Christ, for Christ acknowledgeth them to be his Gardens.

*Use* 4. To teach us what manner of persons should be gathered into Churches, Lilies. When the Churches sre too full, let them multiply more Churches, as in the Text. Church-doors are always open, *Isaiah* 60:11.

**Chap. 6. ver. 3.**

*3. I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine; he feedeth among the lilies.*

**I**N the former *verse* we hid the estate of the Church (where Christ was at length found) described by six arguments: (See *pag.* 177.) here in this *verse*, it is further described by a seventh argument from the renewed communion which she found with him in mutual acceptance, I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine, one effect whereof was his feeding among lilies: feeding, 1. Himself with them. 2. Them with himself.

*Doct.* 1. The spouse of Christ after his long desertion of her, may come again to enjoy her former mutual communion with him: yea, and to discern, and to acknowledge it, *Cant.* 3:1, to 4. There is a threefold desertion, 1. In duties, *Psalms* 80:4. *Lament.* 3:8,44. 2. In Ordinances. 1. Denying them, 1 *Sam.* 28:6,15. *Rev.* 16:3. *Psalms* 74:9. 2. Denying blessing upon them, *Deut.* 29:4. 3. In Providences, leaving, 1. To sin, 2 *Chron.* 32:31. *Isaiah* 63:17. 2. To calamity, *Isaiah* 60:10.

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*Reas.* 1. Of her renewed enjoying mutual communion, after desertion, 1. From he spiritual benefit of long desertions sanctified. For, 1. They humble the soul for former sleightenings of Christ, *Hos.* 5:15. 2. They quicken the soul to more diligent seeking of him, *Hos.* 5:15. 2. From the unchangeable continuance of Christ love even in desertion, *Jer.* 51:5. *Isaiah* 54:6,7,8. and 49:14,15. 3. From the centering and founding of this love, and all the goodness of his attributes to us in Christ, *Mat.* 3:17. *Isaiah* 43:22, to 25. his name is put in Christ, *Exod.* 23. *ver.* 1.

*Reas.* 2. Of her discerning and acknowledgment of it, 1. From the doctrine of justification freely and purely taught; as it was in those days by the Ministers of that age, *Luther, Melanthon, Calvin, Bullinger, Martyr, Bucer, &c.* 2. From the holy Constancy of the Saints, in walking steadfastly in the profession of the faith of the Gospel, an evident argument of the sense of Christ's love to them, *Dan* 3:16,17,18,25. 2. From the gracious protection of Christ over his Church (above all expectation) in those times of reformation, even to the amazement of Popish enemies, an evidence of Christ with them and for them, *Psalms* 124:1,2,3,4. 4. From Christ's gracious feeding of lilies, sincere and holy Christians, with himself, and himself with them, as in the former *verse*.

*Use* 1. For a cordial unto fainting spirits after long and deep desertions. Former mutual fellowship may be recovered.

Fore-running signs of it, 1. Humiliation, putting the mouth in the dull, *Lament.* 3:29, to 32. 2. Diligent and fervent search after Christ, Text with the former *chapter*. 3. Patient waiting for him, *Psalms* 9:18. *Lament.* 3:26. *Micah* 7:7,9.

*Quest.* What it patience and the other preparations be wanting

*Answ.* Yet the case is not desperate, where former true communion hath been, *Isaiah* 57:17,18. *Jer.* 2:2,3,32. with *Chap.* 3:1, &c.

*Use* 2. For Observation of our own estates, how we stand before the Lord.

It is a sign of desertion, 1. If he feed us not in Ordinances, nor we feed him in duties, *Isaiah* 42:22,23,24. 2. If sinful passion or lust break in, and get dominion, carrying us captive, *Isaiah* 64:6. 3. If the Lord go not forth with our enterprizes, *Psalms* 60:10.



## Chap. 6. Ver. 4.

4. *Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.*

**I**N the former Verses (*verses 2,3.*) the estate of the reformed Churches (where Christ was found) was described by seven several arguments: in this fourth *verse*, the Church is described (even by the mouth of Christ himself) by two arguments more: to wit, by her, 1. Beauty, and that, set forth by a comparison from two Royal Cities, to wit, 1. As *Tirzah*, the Royal City of the ten Tribes, 1 *Kings* 14:17 and 15:33. 2. As *Jerusalem*, the Royal City of *Judah* and *Benjamin*, compact together, *Psalms* 122:3. 2. Terror to enemies, and that set forth by a companion from an army with banners, *ver.* 4.

*Tirzah* was a Royal City, so beautiful and delightful, as the very name importeth, of, [[רצה]] *complacuit*. But it by under obloquy of rebellion, and sedition amongst it men, for revolting from the house of *David*, 1 *Kings* 12:19. Whereas indeed it was of the Lord, because of the idolatries of *Solomon*, *ver.* 24. Yea, their departure would have been acknowledged of God as just and holy, had they still continued in Religious worship, and fellowship thereof with the Jews in the Temple at *Jerusalem*, 1 *Kings* 11:38. Now the Reformed Churches in *Germany* imitated *Tirzah* in their revolt from the idolatries of *Rome*: but separated not from the sincere worship of God, and therefore they are acknowledged in the next words, to be (as indeed they were)

*Comely as Jerusalem*] that is. 1. A lawful seat of God's worship, so free from schism. 2. Peaceably seated by civil Magistrates. 3. Compact together (*Psalms* 122:3) three Cities into one, *Salem*, *Millo*, *Zion*. So *Calvinists*, *Lutherans*, mixt of both as the English *Calvinists* in doctrine *Lutherans* in Superintendency, Ceremonies, that is, in discipline and rites of worship: yet all compact in one Harmony of confessions.

But yet as *Jerusalem*, not as the Moon or Sun, *verse* 10. (heavenly lights:) but as having some terrene mixture after the pattern of old *Jerusalem*, 1. Admitting all members. 2. Allow-  
ing appeals from Synagogues.

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*Terrible as an army with banners*] When the Protestant Princes and free States grew formidable to the Emperor [though at first beaten) *England* and the *Low-countries* to the *Spaniard* in 88. The Church in *Scotland* grew dreadful also to their Popish Kings and Queens.

The Church was thus, 1. Beautiful as *Tirzah* in *Henry* the eighth's days. 2. Comely as *Jerusalem*, in *Edward* the sixth's days. 3. Terrible as an army with banners in Q. *Elizabeth's* days.

Thus the Duke of *Saxony*, and the Land-grave of *Hassia* were proscribed as rebels to the Emperour *Charles 5.* in *Henry* the eighth's days & the faithful burned, as Heretics, & Schismatics, as Refractory subjects: yet their case & state was beautiful & comely in Christ's eyes, who at length made them arise from under that cloud of obloquie & persecution, & made them to appear comely as *Jerusalem*, in the times of King *Edward*, and Q. *Elizabeth*, and in her time terrible as an army with banners.

*Doct.* 1. The Church (or Spouse,) of Christ recovering put of defection, groweth up from beauty to beauty, yea, even to dreadful strength. So the Church of *Israel* coming out of *Egypt*, at first seemed like *Pharaoh's* runnagate servants, *Exod.* 4:5. Afterwards seemed even unto *Balaam*, a well-ordered society, *Num.* 24:5. At last dreadful to all the inhabitants of the land, *Josh.* 2:9. So the Church of *Judah* coming out of *Babel* was at first reproached with imputations of sedition, and rebellion, *Ezra* 4:15,16. Afterwards it was encouraged and countenanced, *Ezra* 6:1, to 12. At last it gave battle to the Kings of *Asia* with victorious success, under the *Macabees*. *Paul* at first was counted a pestilent fellow, *Acts* 24:5. a raiser of sedition; but afterwards cleared in a solemn assembly *Acts* 16:31. So it was with the reformed Churches, coming out of spiritual *Egypt*, and *Babel*: They were at first, 1. Blackened and darkened with many clouds of infamy, and obloquies, as rebellion against *Cæsar*, schism from the Catholic Church, heresy, &c. 2. Darkened with many mists, and remnants of ignorance and error. 3. Disgraced with many divisions and contentions amongst themselves, about the Sacraments, Predestination, &c. Afterwards, 1. Being better known, they were acknowledged Churches of God, Christian societies. 2. They grew to discern and overgrow many infirmities and defects. 3. They grew up to an holy harmony with-

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in themselves, in their public confessions. At last, 1. They grew more strong in the truth and grace of Christ, [2 *Tim*\* 2:1] 2. They found the countenance and encouragement and protection of Christian Magistracy. 3. They grew strong in their own defence against their persecutors and oppressors.

*Reas.* 1. From the necessity of the Churches conformity to Christ in sufferings and glory, *Mat.* 2:2,3. *Luke* 24:26. *Rom.* 8:29.

*Reas.* 2. From the honour of grace to be perfected in weakness, 2 *Cor.* 12:9. And when he beginneth he will perfect, *Phil.* 1:6. Yea, it is an honour to grace to be stronger after rising up out of defection, as the Sun out of a cloud. So it was with *Peter*.

*Reas.* 3. From our benefit to be trained up, and exercised in a Christian warfare, *Deut.* 7. *ver.* 22. *David* must first be reputed a Rebel, 1 *Sam.* 22:8. then well reputed and honoured, 1 *Sam.* 29:8. then crowded a King of *Judah*, then of all *Israel*.

*Use* 1. Not to wonder at all the reproaches cast upon our Churches, and others in this way of reformation.

*Use* 2. For comfort to Churches under all the misconstructions and hard dealings of men. They are beautiful to Christ, even when they are as *Tirzah*. They shall grow up like to *Jerusalem*, find royal countenance and encouragement. Compactness will grow. Military strength hath been and shall be supplied.

*Use* 3. To teach us there are degrees of spiritual grace and glory even in reformed Churches. Rest not in first beginnings.

*Use* 4. To behold and imitate the indulgence of Christ, who acknowledged such Churches to be his love, and fair, when like *Jerusalem*; They, 1, Admit all the members of the Commonwealth to be members of the Church. 2. Admit appeals from the lower Synagogues to the Court at *Jerusalem*. The Court at *Jerusalem* casteth out of all Synagogues, *John* 9:22,

## Chap. 6. ver. 5.

5. Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.

**I**N this verse and the two next following the Church reformed is described by a tenth argument, the beauty of some special members or parts, or appurtenances of the body; four especially, 1. Eyes. 2. Hair. 3. Teeth. 4. Temples, *v.* 5,6,7.

*The eyes*] are described by their alluring amiableness, and that so strong as, 1. To overcome him. 2. To move him to speak to her, to turn her eyes from him.

*Doct.* 1. There is sometime such an amiable lock in the eyes of the Spouse of Christ (Church or soul) as overcometh him, to do more for her than he seemeth willing to do. Or overcometh him so much, as to bid her look off from him. For he acknowledgeth her eyes here do overcame him, to do more for her than he seemeth willing to do: or else he would not move her nor speak to her, to turn away her eyes from him. For it is her duty to look after him, and upon him continually, *Zech.* 12:10. *Isaiah* 45:22. & 17:7. and 22:8,11. *Psalms* 25:15.

The eyes of the Church are sometimes put for the eyes, 1. Of the external face of the Church: and so they are taken for the Ministers of the Church, which look to the Church, and look out visions of truth and peace to it, *1 Cor.* 12:17. 2. Of the inner man of the Church: and such eyes are faith and saving knowledge of Christ, whereby we look, 1. To Christ for righteousness and all saving blessings, *Isaiah* 45:22. 1. For Christ beyond all creature-comforts, crosses, *Heb.* 12:2. *Exod.* 31:10,14. *Num.* 14:11,12,20. *Gen.* 32:26.

*Reas.* 1. Of the amiableness, 1. Of Ministers: when they are vigilant and faithful to God and to his people: seeking, 1. The advancement of Christ's Kingdom and grace. 2. The purity and salvation of the people; such were the chief Ministers of the Churches, *Luther, Calvin, Farel, Bullinger, Martyr, Bucer, Latimer, Hooper, &c.* All excelled in the doctrine of justification, *Calvin* in purifying Churches

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from scandal. 2. Of faith in Christ, the Christians of those times looking, 1. Only at Christ for righteousness, which is ravishing to Christ, *Cant.* 4:9. 2. Over all prisons and Martyrdoms, for the Names sake of Christ. This looking at Christ alone, endeareth us to him, as giving to him the pre-eminence of all sufficiency to us, in his Priestly office, justifying us alone: kingly office, ruling us alone: propheticall office, teaching us alone.

*Reas.* 2. Or this overcoming Christ to do for them more then he seemed willing to do; and therefore speaking to her to turn her eyes from him, 1. When the Church is unfit and unprepared to receive so great mercies, in regard of sundry enormities still remaining & found amongst them, *Exod.* 32:10, 24. *Num.* 14:11,12,20. So the malignancy & corruption of sundry persons still remaining in the Churches of *France* and *Germany*, would have hindered Christ's bounty to them, but for their Ministers, and the soundness of God's people in the faith; So God denied *Moses* his prayer, to go over into the land of *Canaan.* *Deut.* 3:26. 2. When the Lord would provoke us to be the more earnest and constant in prayer, which is an immediate fruit of faith, *Gen.* 32:26. *Mat.* 15:22, to 18. Then such words are words of probation, but this not so much here intended. 3. When therein Christ foretelleth, what the Church will do, as indeed the *German* Church turned from him in the Sacrament, and in predestination. The *French* Church in some parts of Church-discipline, admitting all members, establishing one Presbytery, in many Congregations annual ruling Elders. So such words are words of prediction, not of injunction.

*Use* 3. To instruct and exhort Ministers unto vigilancy and faithfulness to advance, 1. The Kingdom of Christ, both, 1. In the Doctrine of free-grace. 2. In the establishment of Church Government according to his will. 2. In wrastling with God for the people as *Moses* did.

*Use* 2. To instruct and exhort Christ's Churches and people, to be strong in the faith. It overcomeh Christ to do more for us than our selves could think for; look to him for all, look for him in all.

*Use* 3. To learn us to understand, some cause of our looking away from Christ; the Lord leaveth us to it, lest he should seem to over-love us, more then we are fit to bear: and lest so he should hasten his counsels before his time appointed.

## Chap. 6. ver. 5,6,7.

5. *Thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.*

6. *Thy teeth are as s flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them.*

7. *As a piece of a pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks.*

**I**N these verses (the latter end of the fifth, with sixth and seventh) the estate of the Church is described by her hair, teeth, temples. What is meant by these is declared above, In *Chap. 4:1,2,3.* where the estate of the Church in Christ's time (whilst himself lived upon the earth) is described in the same parts, and the same terms.

*Doct. 1.* The estate of reformed Churches, arising out of Antichristian Apostasy, was much what like the estate of the Church in Christ's own time, first in their common Professors, and in their Ministers, and at last in their Government.

*The hair]* Set forth (in *Chap. 4:1.*) the common sort of Professors, which hung upon Christ (the head) as hair, *Luke 19:48.* and yet subject to fall off, many of them, *John 6:66.*

*As a flock of Goats looking down from mount Gilead]* lying open to public view, and observation: and exposed to much peril, partly by the hostile wars of *Charles the 5.* in *Germany:* partly from persecution in Ecclesiastical and civil Courts, as in *England:* partly from massacres also, as in *France.*

*Thy teeth, &c. ver. 6]* See opened, *Chap. 4:2.* Only this difference between those teeth and these. Those were said to be even cut, not one of them brusking out higher then another: but these had some amongst them, not even shorn, but higher than their Fellows, as the Superintendents in *Germany,* but especially the Bishops in *England,* who yet were many of them good men, and painful in their ministry, and patient in their sufferings, some of them to death, in *Q. Mary's* days. In respect of which unevenness, in these Teeth, I said, the estate of the Church in these times of Reformation, were much what like,

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but not altogether like in many respects, as the same description of Hair, Teeth, Temples, express in the same words, but not like in this, as also the twins are omitted, *Cant.* 4:5.

*Thy Temples like a piece of Pomegranate within thy locks]*  
*ver.* 7. See opened, *Chap.* 4. *ver.* 3.

This part was last of all restored to the Reformed Churches, is (through the mercy of Christ) to our own here, and, to such others, as walk in our way where the Government lieth, though not in the locks, yet within them: not in the people, but within their presence, and cognizance, and consent.

*Reas.* 1. From the likeness of Christ to himself in all times, *Heb.* 13:8. As Christ was to his Church arising out of Phari-saical blindness, so out of Popish Antichristian dark-ness.

*Reas.* 2. From the mutual influence between doctrine and discipline. As discipline being corrupted, corrupted the do-ctrine, and worship of God; so the doctrine being restored, re-stored the discipline.

*Reas.* From the gradual resurrection of Churches, as the light breaking forth, *Prov.* 4:18. The goings forth of Christ are pre-pared, as the morning, *Hose.* 6:3. that is, giving increase of light till high noon.

*Use* 1. To justify the Reformation of Protestant Churches against Popish Calumny. It hath been a restitution of them in many things, to primitive purity; much what like to the Chri-stian Church in Christ's own time.

*Use* 2. To teach our common Professors, who bare escaped many perils in our Native Country, to be the more thankful to Christ here; and the more compassionate to our brethren there, *Jer.* 51:50.

*Use* 3. To teach Ministers to affect, 1. Equality, which was wanting to these, not to them, *Chap.* 4:2. 2. Purity, as coming up from the washing, 3. Fruitfulness in begetting souls to Christ.

*Use* 4. To provoke us to the greater thankfulness, that these Pomegranate Temples of discipline, have been restored to us, which our Fathers could not attain.

*Use* 5. To teach us to continue this practice of administering discipline not in retired Consistories, in the absence of the peo-ple, but within the midst of them; as the Temples here were as a piece of a Pomegranate within the locks, *ver.* 7.

## Chap. 6. ver. 8,9.

8. *There are threescore queens and fourscore concubines, and virgins without member.*

9. *My Dove, my undefiled is but one: she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her: The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens, and the concubines, and they praised her.*

**I**N these words the Holy Ghost describeth the estate of Reformed Churches, by two arguments more (twelve in all) to wit, 1. By a distribution. 2. By a comparison, setting them forth, as unequals one to another.

The distribution is into four parts, 1. Queens. 2. Concubines. 3. Virgins or Damsels. 4. A Dove.

By comparison one with another, they are unequal, 1. In Number, Queens threescore, Concubines fourscore, Damsels without number. The Dove she is but one. 2. In Purity, she is undefiled: the rest not so pure. 3. In dearness to her mother; she is the only one of her mother, The choice one of her that bare her. 4. In Honour, 1. The daughters blessed her, having seen her. 4. The queens and concubines praised her, *ver.* 9.

Queens differ from concubines in two respects chiefly though both partake in the husband's bed.

1. Queens are taken into fellowship with their Royal husbands by solemn and free covenant, mutual stipulation, *Gen.* 24:58, 1 *Sam.* 25:40,41. Not so the concubines, as *Bilhah*, *Zilpah*. A man taketh such to him rather by right of dominion, then by fellowship of covenant. So *Abraham* took *Hagar*, and went in to her.

2. Queens (as other chief wives) had the keys of the family in their own hand: They had the government of the family under and with their husbands. Hence *Hagar* (though called *Abraham's* wife, *Gen.* 16:3) Yet is said to be in *Sarah's* hand (*v.* 6.) who also corrected her (*ibidem*, yea, the Angel calleth *Hagar*, *Sarah's* maid, *ver.* 8. and bids her to submit her self under her hand, *ver.* 9. Concubines before though secondary



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wives: ye were but as servants to the chief wives; albeit they were admitted to the husband's bed.

3. The wives brought Dowries to their husbands, 1 *Kings* 9:16. Not so the concubines.

4. The chief wives children carryed away the inheritance: not so the children of the concubines, *Gen.* 25:5,6. But both these differences are accidental, and do not always hold, some wives bring no portions. Nor have we any to bring to Christ, but nakedness, filthiness, beggery, *Ezek.* 16:5,6,8. And sometimes the children of concubines are made Co-heirs with the children of the wives: as *Dan* and *Naphthali*, *Gad* and *Asher* (the sons of *Bilhah*, and *Zilpah*) had inheritances equal amongst their brethren.

Queens therefore are here meant, such Reformed Churches, as, 1. Enter into fellowship with Christ by mutual Covenant, *Ezek.* 16:8, 2. Enjoy the power of Church-government in their own hands within themselves.

Both which priviledges (through rich mercy) the Churches in this Country do enjoy; and many others in *England*, and in other Countries.

*Concubines*] Are such Churches, as are taken into Church-state, by power of the state, not by free covenant. Such as have no power to admit their members, to choose their Officers, to censure their Offenders. And yet these may be fruitful to Christ, in bringing forth souls unto him. Many such throughout *Europe*.

*Damsels*] Or Virgins, not for purity, but for ctTwardneirc of marriage and marriage fellowship, or bed-fellowship with Christ at all. Such are those Congregations as want teaching Ministers (2 *Chron.* 15:3.) or have Ministers teaching corrupt doctrine, not tending to conversion, or edification. Or where the people live in darkness of ignorance, and prophane-ness.

*Threescore Queens, fourscore Concubines*] A certain number put for an uncertain, as *Cant.* 3:7. of Churches, the less pure, the greater number.

Without number the Damsels, 1. There being the grearest number of them. 1. *Nullius Numeri*, of no account with Christ.

*But my Dove*] This Dove was peerless amongst the Queens, excelling in, 1. Innocency, and Simplicity. 2. Charity. 3. Ardency of affection to her mate.

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Such are these Churches, who being Queens, 1. Exercise no Rapacity or tyranny over Sister-churches. 2. Go not a who-ring after Popish superstitions, and inventions. 3. Are full of heavenly affectons to Christ, leaving all for him, cleaving on-ly to him.

And so are undefiled, 1. Of Superstition. 2. Of the World, *Jam. 1:27.*

*Is one]* Such pure Church as are, 1. Few to many others, as one to threescore or fourscore. 2. At brotherly love, and unity one with another, one in spirit, though scattered in many places, in both *Englands* and other Countries.

*The only one of her mother, the choice one of her that bare her]* In the Hebrew phrase, the whole is the mother, the parts are the daughters. The true Catholic Church of Christ, *Jerusalem* which is above (for her original) is the mother of all Reformed Churches, *Gal. 4:26.* And those particular Churches that are most pure, chaste and innocent, and ardent in affection to Christ, they are the most esteemed and the best beloved of the mother Catholic Churches coming nearest to her in chastity, innocency, purity. Though true it is, by mother here may be meant some ancient Church, out of which a purer Church then her self did spring forth as sundry particular congregational Churches out of *England.*

*The daughters saw her and blessed her:]* The daughters may be taken, 1. Either for the members of those pure Churches. 2. Or for the members of the other Churches, the purer members of Queens, or Concubine churches. 3. Or such pure Churches, as might spring out of the pattern of these Doves, and undefiled Churches.

*They Bless her]* As acknowledging 1. Divine good things in her, such wherein she hath fellowship with Christ, wherein lieth all blessedness. 2. Themselves blessed in her, and in the light of her example.

*The Queens and Concubines praise her]* Not so highly extol-ling her, as her daughters: yet acknowledging good things in her, which is praise.

*Use 1.* To approve the great use of Church Covenant with Christ: as without which Churches are rather Concubines than Queens.

*Use 2.* To justify the power of the keys in each Church, as without which Churches are Concubines rather than Queens.

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*Use 3.* To discern of the different state of Churches, some as Queens, some as Concubines, others as Damsels, others as Doves.

*Use 4.* To teach us here, 1. Weanedness from the World, 2. Ardency and chastity of our affections to Christ. Since we lost these (our first love) we lost that good esteem, which we sometime enjoyed from neighbour-Churches.

*Use 5.* To observe a like difference in Christian souls as in Churches here. Some give up themselves (by grace) unto Christ, they are Queens, and these can rule (by grace) their own lusts and passions Others are Concubines do well from the good counsel and guidance of others, 2 *Chron.* 24:2. and 26:5. Others as Coy Damsels will not be given to Christ; yet others are chaste and pure, and affection are to Christ entirely.

*Use 6.* To comfort the most pure Churches, and souls: they shall find greatest acceptance and approbation in the eyes of Christ, and of his Churches and people.

#### Chap. 5. Ver. 10.

10. *Who it she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an army with banners?*

**T**He residue of this book from this *verse* to the end contains a Prophetical description of the estate of the Church, after this age wherein we live to the end of the World, which will make the exposition to be the more difficult, and to require the more help from Christ by prayer. In these *verses* is described the calling and arising of some New Church, by six Arguments. 1. By the inquisition after her, who she should be, together with some admiration at it: who is this that looketh forth, &c? 2. By the degrees of her beauty and grace. 1. Fresh as the Morning. 2. Fair as the moon. 3. Clear (or bright) as the Sun. 4. Terrible as an Army with Banners, *verse* 10. 3. By Christ's visitation of her, with the Object End of it *v.* 11. where the, 1. Church it self (the object of his visitation) is compared to a Garden of Nuts. 2. End of Christ in visiting it, is, 1. To see the fruits of the valley. 2. To see whether, 1. The vine

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flourished. 2. The Pomegranates budded. 4. By the unexpected helps which the Church found for her return, *verse* 12. 5. By her Name, the *Shulamite*: Return, return, oh *Shulamite*, 6. By the earnestness of the call given her implying also, The Speed; the Certainty of it. The call being four times ingeminated. Return, Return, Return, Return. And this earnest call amplified, 1. By the end of it, That we may look upon thee, 2. By the Representation of her, when she is looked upon, like the company of two Armies, or as *Melchizedek*, *ver.* 13.

*Ver.* 10.] *Who is this that looketh forth?*] These words imply a diligent, 1. Inquisition. 2. Admiration, after this new Church arising: as before, *Cant.* 3:6. and after, *Cant.* 8:5. So here, who this Church should be, is expressed by Name, *ver.* 13. where she is called the *Shulamite*, derived of *Shalem* the ancient name of *Jerusalem*, the mother-city of the Jews, *Psalms* 76:2. where *Melchizedek* sometimes reigned, *Heb.* 7:2. Now her conversion shall be sudden, and admirable, and raise great matter of inquisition, both to her self and others, *Isaiah* 66:8. and 49:21. and 60:8.

*Fresh as the morning*] That is, 1. Fresh as men arising out of sleep, by a new resurrection, *Rom.* 11:15. *Ezek.* 37:1, to 10. 2. Implying the place, whence they arise, from the East, *Rev.* 16:12. 3. Arguing speed, as *Isaiah* 58:8. The same phrase is so expounded.

As the morning, fair as the Sun, implying, 1. Heavenly beauty and brightness, exceeding all earthly comparisons, to which the Reformed Churches were resembled, *Cant.* 6:4.

2. Gradual increase of beauty, and glory, *Isaiah* 30:26. see for both these, *Isaiah* 24:23. and 60:19,20. The Moon is fair by beauty communicated to her from the Sun.

In the Sun's brightness is, 1. Light. 2. Heat. 3. Clearness from spots, as the Apostolic church, *Cant.* 4:7. And warming all the World, in a glorious manner.

They shall be, 1. Clothed with Christ's Righteousness, to the pardon of sin, *Isaiah* 33:24. and 60:21. 2. Furnished inwardly with abundant, 1. Light of Heavenly knowledge, *Isaiah* 11:9. 2. Purity of holiness, *Zech.* 14:10,11. 5. Strong consolations, to the refreshing of themselves and others, *Isaiah* 66:10,11.

*Terrible as an Army with Banners*] Read *Rev.* 19:14, to 21. *Ezek.* Chapters 38, 39. throughout. The armies of the Jews shall be terrible at first to the *Turks*, Pope, who being driven from

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Rome by the ten Christian Kings, shall join with the Turk for succour. Afterwards to the Tartars, and Northern Nations who shall be that Gog and Magog, overthrown by them, *Rev.* 20:8,9.

*Verse 11]* *I went down into the Garden of Nuts]* The Jewish Synagogues so called in regard of that veil of hardness, and blindness drawn over their hearts, as it were an hard shell (Nut-shell) over the kernel, *Rom.* 11. *ver.* 25. *1 Cor.* 3: 14,15. *To see the fruits of the valley]* Valleys lying in the shade between high mountains, bring forth fruit late, so the Jews are long before they come on to bring forth fruit to Christ. Indeed they sat in the valley and shadow of death, as of old, *Matth.* 4:16.

To see whether the vine flourisheth, the Pomegranate budded. The Jews that for their hardness of heart were like a Garden of Nuts, yet when their conversion shall be wrought, they will be as Vines and Pomegranates bringing forth sweet and wholesome fruit to the refreshing of God and man.

Where, 1. The Vine is the Church, *Isaiah* 5:1. and 27:2. *Jer.* 2:21. 2. The Pomegranates, are elders as above, *Cant.* 4:3. and 6:7.

*Doct.* 1. It is a glorious estate of a spouse of Christ (whether Church or Soul) worthy of inquiry and observation, when she is like to heavenly bodies in light, and groweth up from one measure of light unto another, *Rev.* 12:1. *Rev.* 1:20. It is there the honour of Ministers.

It implieth, 1. Light of Justification, the Sun of Righteousness clothing us, *Rev.* 12. *ver.* 1. 2. Light of Heavenly knowledge, *Matth.* 4. *ver.* 19. 3. Light of Sanctification, *1 John* 1. *ver.* 7. 4. Light of Consolation, *Psalms* 97. *ver.* 11. *Psalms* 92:12,13,14. Such best improve, their Sabbaths, *Rev.* 2:19.

*Reas.* 1. It maketh us most like unto the Father. *1 John* 1:6. and to the Son, *John* 8:12. and 9:5. *Hos.* 6. *ver.* 3. *Luke* 2. *ver.* 52.

*Reas.* 2. Growth is most, 1. Glorious to God, *Psalms* 92:12, to 15, *John* 15:8. Exemplary to men, *1 Thes.* 1:7. 3. Comfortable to our selves, for present and for future, *2 Pet.* 1:5, to 21.

*Use* 1. To teach Churches and Christian souls to inquire after, and to observe such Heavenly patterns, *Phil.* 1. *ver.* 45. It is the excellency of Heavenly lights, 1. They are not fed with

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earthly food, as Candles, and Lamps, and Torches be. 2. They are not put out of their course by storms, tempests, they are above them. 3. They are generally serviceable to a World of People.

*Use 2.* To exhort us to grow in all heavenly light, that indeed of justification cannot be grown in (for it is perfect:) but in the sense of it we may grow.

But all the rest are of a growing nature, 1 *Thess.* 4:1. 2 *Pet.* 3:17,18. [Means and motives see in the Notes on 2 *Pet.* 3:17,18.]

*Use 3.* To teach us, it is not impurity to Heavenly bodies to make use of Earthly weapons against Earthly enemies, *Luke* 3. *ver.* 14. he that bids the Soldiers to be content with their wages, alloweth them to do that work of warfare, for which they receive wages.

**Chap. 6. ver. 11,12.**

11. *I went down into the Garden of Nuts to see the fruits of the Valley, and to see whether the Vine flourished, and the Pomegranates budded.*

12. *Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the Chariots of Amminadab.*

**V**

*Verse 11.* See expounded in *verse 10. pag.* 181.

*Ere ever I was aware*] Hebrew, I knew not, before I knew, as if they prevented my expectation.

*My soul set me*] Hebrew, that is, placed me, that is, I placed or set my self, and that willingly: as my soul seeketh, *Eccles.* 7:28. that is, earnestly sought.

*Upon the Chariots of my willing people*] That is, as my soul would have it, or could desire it, set myself upon the chariots of my willing people, who offered to convey me to *Jerusalem* to the fellowship of the Church, or of the Lord in his Church, with all alacrity and readiness. See it Propheesied ok *Isaiah* 66:10. and 49:22. and 60:9,10.

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The words of the Text seem to be the words, of the Church of the Jews, who found this ready assistance from the Gentiles to help forward her return. O if it be applied to Christ it must be meant of him in his Members or Ministers. Else to Christ himself nothing falleth out to him unawares.

*Doct.* 1. When Christ cometh to visit us with his gracious Call, though we were as a Garden of Nuts, before his coming, yer he looketh to make us as vines and Pomegranates in his coming.

*As Nuts]* For hardness, such shall Christ find the Jews, *Rom.* 11:25. 2 *Cor.* 3:14,15. ever a stiff necked people, *Exod.* 33:3. *Deut.* 9:24. and 31:27. *Acts* 7:51.

Their hardness showed it self, 1. In resisting Ordinances, and the Spirit in them, *Acts* 7:51. They would bear no yokes, *Jer.* 31:18.

2. In the stubborn resolution, to follow their own will and way, *Jer.* 44:17,18. and 2:25. and 22:21.

*As Vines And Pomegranates.* 1. For tenderness and softness. Grapes are soft, and easily pressed. The Pomegranates are more soft, the very rind without is thin and tender, till it be dry.

2. For reviving and quickening, cheering and refreshing the heart, *Psalms* 104:15.

3. For cordial, and medicinal wholesomeness, which is the virtue of the Pomegranate.

Both these are true Emblems, 1. The Vine of a Church. 2. The Pomegranates of Elders.

*Reas.* 1. From Christ his change of the heart, from stony to fleshy, by his Spirit of Grace, *Ezek.* 36:26,27.

His Spirit (contrary to Hardness:) 1. Trembleth at the Word, *Isaiah* 66:2. So easily yields (like wax) to the impression of the Word. 2. Is meek and lowly, *Matth.* 11:29. and so easily stoopeth to self-denial, *Luke* 9:23.

*Use* 1. From the true frame of a spouse of Christ, his Church, It is often resembled to a vine, *John* 15:1. *Isaiah* 5:1. and 27:1. And the Elders to Pomegranates, as above.

*Use* 1. To show us, what all societies of men be before their conversion. As these Synagogues of the Jews now be (till Christ came to visit them) a Garden of Nuts, *Tit.* 3:3. *Psalms* 58:3,4,5.

*Use* 2. To show an evidence of Christ's gracious visitation of us.

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He maketh us, 1. Tender, rough made smooth, *Luke* 3:5. A child may lead them, *Isaiah* 12:6. 2. Comfortable, *Isaiah* 65:14. 3. Wholesome, *Prov.* 11:30.

*Use* 3. To teach Churches, what Christ will observe when he cometh to visit us; to wit, 1. Whether we be Vines. 2. Whether we want not Pomegranates, Elders. 3. Whether both these bud and flourish.

*Doct.* 2. When Christ visits his people with an effectual Call, he supplyeth them with necessary helps and furtherances thereunto beyond their expectation, *ver.* 12. See the opening of this Text in *verse* 11.

*Reas.* 1. From the irresistibleness of God's will, *Isaiah* 46. *ver.* 10.

*Reas.* 2. From the efficacy of God's grace.

*Use* 1. To Allure us of the coming on of the Jews, and of the enlargement of Christ's Kingdom.

*Use* 2. For comfort to such as are called effectually, and meet with many difficulties and impediments: God will outwrestle all.

### Chap. 6. ver. 13.

13. *Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee, what will ye see in the Shulamite? as it were the company of two Armies.*

**C**oherence and Analysis see in *verse* 10. *pag.* 179. and 181.

*Shulamite*] Is the Church of *Jerusalem*, anciently called *Salem*, as above.

Return four times ingeminated implieth, 1. The Certainty. 2. The Speed of it as, *Gen.* 41:32.

*That we may behold thee*] Argueth the desire of Christian Churches, and good souls, to see the glorious work of God's grace.

*What will ye see in the Shulamite?*] A restraint of expecting much outward lust and splendor, at least in comparison of what is most to be observed in them.



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*As it were the company of Mahanaim.*] Which the Translators turn appellatively as it were the company of two armies; but that armies are expressed before, *verse* 10. nor needful now to be repeated. Nor can we give a reason from other Prophets, why two armies. But take it properly, and the Holy Ghost may fitly allude to a double comparison, is comparing the Jews, 1. To an Host of Angels, which met *Jacob* at *Mahanaim*, Gen. 32:2. As indeed the feeble amongst them shall be at that day valiant as Angels of God *Zech.* 12:8.

2. To the company at *Mahanaim*, where the Hosts of *Israel* and *Judah* met together to bring *David* back to *Jerusalem*, after they had seen their folly, in casting of *David* for *Absolom*. For even so shall *Judah* and *Israel* see their folly, for casting off Christ so unworthy, so long together. See 2 *Sam.* 19:41,42.

To both these Hosts of *Mahanaim* the allusion may fitly be made, nor is it an unwonted thing in Scripture to allude to several things in one companion, as *Rev.* 17:9,10.

*Doct.* 1. The conversion (or return) of the Jews is very certain, and in due time will be very speedy, much desired & expected by others, & carried on with much strength and forwardness amongst themselves. The certainty I shall speak to last, as being most doubted by some, and it will be speedy in due time; see *Isaiah* 60:21,22. The time will be upon the drying up of *Euphrates*, *Rev.* 16:12. of which see the Notes on that place.

That it will be much desired and expected of the Godly Gentiles.

Appareth both, 1. From their joy to see it, *Rev.* 19:7. 2. From their blessing by it, *Rom.* 11:15.

That it will be with much strength and forwardness in themselves.

Appareth both, 1. By their Courage, like Angels, *Zech.* 12:8. 2. By their emulation to prevent one another, 2 *Sam.* 19:41,42. 3. By their great mourning, *Zech.* 12:10.

That it is very certain, See *Rom.* 11:25.

*Object.* 1. It is understood not of the natural *Israel*, but of the spiritual, the believing Gentiles, coming in their room, and inheriting their Church Fellowship, and Name.

*Answ.* He speaketh of that *Israel*, 1. Upon whom hardness was then come, to make way for the Gentiles, who yet afterwards should be saved.

2. Whose Rejection was the riches of the Gentiles, *Rom.* 11:15,12.

*Object.* 2. He may speak of the conversion of some few of them not of the Nation.

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*Ans.* 1. This conversion is called a mystery *verse* 25. but the conversion of a few of them is no mystery. As before time, the conversion of the Gentiles, was a mystery to the Jews (*Ephes.* 3: 3,5,6.) So now the conversion of the Jews shall be a mystery to the Gentiles. It was never a mystery to the Jews the conversion of a few Gentiles.

*Ans.* 2. The conversion of a few would never repress the arrogancy of the Church of *Rome*, but this will, *verse* 25.

*Ans.* 2. A few might, be converted before the fulness of the Gentiles were come in (as *Immanuel Tremelius*, & some others;) but these come in till after, *Rom.* 11:25,26. *2 Cor.* 3: 14,15,16. *Revel.* 11:1,2,3. Where the New *Jerusalem* is not Heaven, but *Jerusalem* on earth.

For, 1. It cometh down from Heaven, and dwelleth as God's Tabernacle on Earth.

2. It is measured by the measure of a man, *verse* 17. which the Heavenly *Jerusalem* cannot.

3. The kings of the Earth and the Gentiles, shall bring their glory to it, *verse* 24,26. But all earthly glory to Heaven.

4. The leaves growing on the Tree of life growing in this City, shall serve for the healing of the Nations, *Rev.* 22:2. But after the last judgement, the Church triumphant in Heaven, shall leave no Nation behind them to stand in need of healing. *Ezek.* 37:15,16, &c. which lest it might seem incredible, he showeth the Lord will do it the same way as he will work the Resurrection from the Dead, from *verse* 1, to 15.

*Reas.* 1. From theholiness of the first-fruits of that Nation, *Rom.* 11:16. which coincident with the fidelity of the Covenant of Grace, *Gen.* 17:7.

*Reas.* 3. From their Natural communion with Christ, to wit, by ancient Covenant, *Rom.* 11. *ver.* 24. Natural affection (in this sense), is rare in Gentile Churches, *Phil.* 2. *ver.* 20.

*Reas.* 3. From the unchangeableness of God's Electing and Calling grace, *Rom* 11:28,29.

*Reas.* 4. To set forth the manifold wisdom of God (*Eph.* 3: 10.) that as the Gentiles received the Gospel by the hardness of the Jews: so the Jews might obtain mercy, by God's mercy to the Gentiles, *Rom.* 11:30,31. though not without judgement to *Rome*.

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*Reas.* 5. To repress the arrogancy of Gentile Churches, *Rom.* 11:20.

*Use* 1. To strengthen our faith in this truth of their certain conversion, we are slow of heart to believe it: else what need such strong and manifold arguments to assure it? And yet it is of much weight, else God would not use so many means to confirm it.

Time hath been when they have been dry, and all Christendom bedewed with Heavenly light and grace. They shall have a time of bedewing, when Gentiles shall borrow from them. *Leah* first stepped into *Jacob's* bed, and was fruitful than *Rachel* the first espoused wife. But the Jews at last will be as more fair, so more fruitfull in *Joseph's* and *Benjamin's*.

*Use* 2. To stir us up to pray for them, as they have done, for us, *Psalm* 67:1. throughout. And for that end requisite it is, to pray for the ruin of *Rome*, and for the drying up of *Euphrates* for the conversion of those ten Christian Kings, which, shall be instruments thereof.

#### Chap.7. ver. 1.

I. *HOW beautiful art thy feet with shoes, O Prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like Jewels, the work of the hand of a cunning workman.*

**W**E have heard of the conversion of the *Shulamite*, in the last *verses* of the former *Chap.* Now followeth the description of the condition of the same Church converted: admirably beautiful in all the parts of it. *How beautiful*] The Question implieth admirable beauty.

This admirable beauty is described in her ten parts, beginning with the lowest, and ascending to the head, even to the hair of the head. The parts be, 1. Feet. 2. Joints of thighs, *verse* 1. 3. Navel. 4. Belly, *ver.* 3. 5. Breasts, *ver.* 3. 6. Neck. 7. Eyes. 8. Nose, *ver.* 4. 9. Head. 10. Hair, *ver.* 5.

*Are thy feet with shos*] There is in her feet shod with shoes, a three fold beauty: it implyeth, 1. Her return out of capti-

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vity. As on the Contrary bare feet are a sign of going into Captivity, *Isaiah* 20:2,3,4. 2 *Sam.* 15:30. 2. Her challenging and recovery of her lost inheritance, as contrariwise putting off the shoes was a sign of the putting off the right of an inheritance in Israel, *Deut.* 25:9,10. *Ruth* 4:7,8. Her walking in that peace of conscienc which the Gospel prepareth, *Ephes.* 6:15. Whereas on the contrary, he that walketh bare-foot, 1. Either gathereth a thick brawniness upon the soles of his feet. 2. Or through tenderness ever and anon hurteth and pricketh his feet with sharp stones, or scruples, or thorns. As indeed a soul not shod with true peace either waxeth, 1. Brawny, and senseless. 2. Scrupulous, and anxious.

All these things are beautiful and glorious, as on the contrary it is a great debasement, and deformity either, 1. To go into captivity, *Isaiah* 47:2. 2. To sell and forgo a man's inheritance, *Deut.* 25:9,10. 3. To walk either, 1. Senselessly, 2. Scrupulously.

And if it be beautiful and glorious to return out of bodily captivity, and to recover an earthly inheriting, and to walk peaceably and securely, how much more is it (together with these outward blessings).

1. To return out of Spiritual captivity. 2. To recover an heavenly inheritance. 3. To walk in the inward peace of the Gospel?

*Both which shall be the beauty and glory of the Jews at their conversion, O Princess daughter.]* or, daughter of the Prince.

The Church of the Jews converted is so called, 1. As being the daughter of God, the Prince of Princes *Exod.* 4:22. 2. And of God as a free Prince, bestowing this Grace freely and bountifully upon the murderers and rejecters of his dear and only begotten Son, *Ezek.* 36:32,33. 2. As being her self after her conversion of much glory and authority, even as the Kings of the Earth, *Rev.* 16:12. Yea, fit to be a mother of Princes, *Psalms* 45:16.

*Doct.* 1. It is an admirable beautious and glorious sight, a well shod convert. Beautious, how beautiful? Glorious as a Princes daughter, *Luke* 15:10. *Gal.* 1:23,24. *Acts* 15:3.

*Reason* 1. From the contrary debasement and deformity of an unshod soul, or people: as, 1. Lying in captivity, or going into it, *Isaiah* 20:4. 2. Selling away their inheritance for naught, *Isaiah* 52:2,3. 3. As walking either, 1. Senselessly, *Isaiah* 42:18,19,20, *Job* 8:6. 2. Scrupulously, through legal terrors and doubts, and unquietness of conscience, *Deut.* 28:65.

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*Reas.* 2. From the comeliness and glory of, 1. Liberty, *John* 8:6. 2. Recovery of inheritance formerly lost, 2 *Sam.* 19:22. It was as a new Coronation. 3. Holy boldness of Spirit, *Pro.* 28. 1. Noble birth and breeding, yea Princely, yea Divine, 2 *Pet.* 1:4.

*Use* 1. To observe the wonderful deformity of a carnal unconverted estate, in all the particulars, contrary to this admirable beauty of the estate and course of a true convert.

*Use* 2. To exhort to conversion, It is the joy or Angels, it is the beauty of the Soul, and the Nobility, yea, a Divinity of it, 2 *Pet.* 1:4. It is the admiration of Christ in himself and his Saints, *Luke* 7:9.

*Use* 3. To teach converts, nor to go unshod, *Ephes.* 6. *ver.* 15.


*Use* 4. To foretell, the conversion of the Jews, will begin with the lower sort, first the feet, and so arise to the Hair.

#### Chap. 7. Ver. 1.

1. *The joints of thy thighs are jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning work-man.*

**T**He second part of the Beauty of this new converted Church of the Jews, is the joints of her thighs: which are set forth, 1. By a simile of Jewels precious. 2. By the excellency of the efficient cause, the work of the hands of a cunning work-man.

*The joints of thy thighs*] The word signifieth *vertebræ*, the wheel-bones of thy thighs, which are apt and ready for turning of the body, so these wheel-bones of the Churches thighs, express her ready frame of spirit to turn to God, when she was effectually called to return. In respect of which readiness and aptness, & forwardness to yield to God's call, the wheel-bones of her thighs are compared to Jewels, which are both, 1. Precious. 1. Fit to be wrought upon by the work-man's tool.

[[]], ] Signifieth true and faithful, of like sense with Amen.

A true workman: that is, 1. No Bungler, but cunning and skilful in his Art. 2. No loiterer, no deceitful workman, but faithful.

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This workman is God himself, who worketh all our works in us and for us, *Isaiah* 26:12. and especially this great work of their conversion, *Isaiah* 60:21.

*Doct.* 2. The conversion of a soul or people unto God, especially of the Jews, is a precious work of the wise and faithful hand of God.

The work is precious, 1. As springing from Electing Grace, Everlasting Love, *Jer.* 31:3. from precious thoughts, *Jer.* 29:11. 2. As procured and purchased by a precious Ransom given for us 1 *Pet.* 1:18,19,20,21. 3. As wrought by his Word, 1 *Pet.* 1:23. *Rom.* 10:17. *Jam.* 1:18. Spirit, *John* 3:5,6. 2. The Spirit. 4. As making us precious, *Isaiah* 43:4. Yea, as Jewels, *Malachi* 3:17. Jewels, 1. For value, *Isaiah* 43:4. I will give Nations for thee. 2. For virtue, 1. Restraining will. 2. Doing good quickening senses and understanding, comforting the heart, &c.

Conversion is the work of a wise and cunning Work-man, 1. As drawing a soul most unwilling, *John* 6:44. and yet causing it to come willingly, *Jer.* 3:22. *Cant.* 1:4. 2. As getting between us & our selves: so taking us off not only from creature-comforts, *Psalms* 73:25. but also from ourselves, *Luke* 9:23. *Ezek.* 6:9. 3. As making us wise, *Psalms* 19:7. Who are naturally simple and foolish, *Job* 11:12.

It is also the work of a faithful Work-man, 1. As performing promises to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17:7. with *Rom.* 11:16. As also to lost souls, *Luke* 19:10. 2. As working a real solid work in us, no superficial, *Rev.* 3:18. Solid and precious, as gold. 3. As making us truly faithful, *Coloss.* 1:2. Who are naturally deceitful above measure, *Jer.* 17:9.

This work in the conversion of the Jews (especially) is so much the more, 1. Precious as being the more gracious: both, 1. In Forgiving greater ingratitude, 2. In advancing to greater glory of grace and holiness, 2. Cunning and wise, 1. As melting most adamant hearts, *Zech.* 7:12. *Eccles.* 3:9. 2. As changing old Leopards, and Ethiopians, *Jer.* 13:23. 3. Faithful, 1. As overcoming greater infidelity. 2. As making them more abundantly faithful.

*Use* 1. To teach us to whom to ascribe the Praise and Glory of our conversion, not to the power of Nature, or free-will (as Pelagians and Papists do:) but to the precious Grace, and Wisdom, & Faithfulness of the Lord's hand, *Joh.* 1:13. *Jam.* 1:18.

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1 *Pet.* 1:3. Unless our thigh-bones were set in joint, by this cunning and faithful hand, we should never turn to Christ, though we were called upon to return withal frequent and urgent ingeminations, as these, *Chap.* 6:13.

*Use* 2. To learn us to admire the beauty of God's workmanship in the conversion of any soul or people.

*Use* 3. To convince Carnal souls of their contrary deformity like as if the wheele-bones of their thighs were both out of joint. Not one step do they take, without halting downright.

*Use* 4. To teach converted souls and Churches, to beware of defacing the beauty of God's workmanship: either by halting in our Religion, 1 *Kings* 18:21. Or by halting in performance of our promises by false and unfaithful dealings whether in our labour or commerce.

**Chap. 7. ver. 2.**

*2. Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy belly is like an heap of wheat, set about with lilies.*

**T**He Navel, and Belly are both of them hidden parts, not conspicuous nor obvious (or accessible) to men without, but only to the Husband Children of the Church.

And therefore set forth the two mysteries, or Sacraments of the Church; to wit, 1. Baptism. 2. The Lord's Supper.

The Navel serving for the nourishment of the Infant in the womb, before it be born, doth fitly resemble Baptism, which serveth for the nourishment of the Infants of the Church, even before they be born, and brought forth by spiritual Nativity. If children were born, the breasts were for them (*verse* 3.) but now Navel.

This Navel wanteth not liquor, but holdeth and containeth in itself, and supplieth to the baptized a two-fold liquor, 1. Of the blood of Christ, which washeth us from sin, to our justification, 1 *John* 1:7. 1. Of the Spirit of Christ, which washeth and cleanseth us from sin to our sanctification, *Isaiah* 44:3,4.

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*The Belly*] The other mystery or Sacrament is an heap of wheat for store of excellent and sweet and fine nourishment to grown Christians. *Set about with lilies*] That is, with upright Christians, clothed by Christ with a more Royal garment then *Solomon* in all his glory, *Matth.* 6:28,29. And they see such faithful upright pure Christians, who should be admitted to sit about this Table (or heap of wheat) and to partake in this Sacrament. The Lord's Table should not be set about with Weeds, and Nettles, with Brambles, and Thorns, with prophane and scandalous sinners, but with Lilies, upright, and faithful, and worthy Communicants.

*Doct.* 1. The Church of the New Testament wanteth not a Navel for the nourishment of Infants in their womb: and that Navel wanteth not liquor. *Matth.* 28:19 Disciples are to be baptiz'd [so Christ] Infants of believers are Disciples, *Acts* 15:10.

*Object.* 1. Baptized ones must be taught, *Acts* 28:20. But Infants cannot be taught

*Ans.* Their Parents must be taught to teach them, *1 Tim.* 3:15. *Judg.* 13:12,13,14.

*Object.* 2. Disciples are meant believers, *Mark* 16:16. The places are parallel.

*Ans.* Words in the places are not parallel, but the one Evangelists relateth some things which the other omitteth. The preaching of the Gospel is to offer grace, and the Covenant of grace to believers and their seed, *Gal.* 3:8,16,17. *Mark* addeth two motives (*Chap.* 16 *v.* 16) 1. From the benefit of faith receiving the Gospel, and baptism to himself and his seed, 2. From the danger of unbelief; both which *Matthew* omitteth, every believer is not a Disciple in Church account, till he be admitted, (as it were) a Scholar into Christ's School, *Coloss.* 2:11,12. Whether is every Disciple a believer (to be saved) unless a sincere Disciple in Christ we are as complete as the Jews with their Rudiments (*ver.* 8.) for as they had inward circumcision, so have we the putting off of the body or the sins of the flesh: as they had outward Circumcision, so have we Baptism. If our children were not baptized, we are not so complete as the Jews, 1. Either in the means of the seal to their children. 2. In the means of strength to our own faith for them.

*Reas.* 1. Infants of Church-members are the seeds of the faithful, and contained in the womb of the Church, for they are holy, *1 Cor.* 7:14. *Acts* 2:39. Therefore they had need to



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Apparently does not exist

<sup>1</sup>94

Apparently does not exist

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be nourished; no means of nourishment have they so fit as Baptism.

*Object.* The seed of the faithful is the seed of their faith, not of their flesh.

*Ans.* Yes, of their flesh, by their faith, (1 Cor. 7:14) and the Apostle, Rom. 11:24. Acknowledged them Natural branches.

*Object.* That holiness (in 1 Cor. 7:14) is only a sanctified use to the Parent, not any holiness of the Persons of the children in themselves.

*Ans.* Yes, for though *Sanctified* applied to the unbelieving yoke-fellow, be meant to the believers use, yet the unbeliever is never called holy, as their children be. Afflictions, yea, falls into sin, may be sanctified to a believer: but they are never called holy.

*Reas.* 2. The Church of the Old Testament had a Navel (even Circumcision) for the Nourishment of their Infants, in the womb of the Church. The grace of the New Testament, is not straitened, neither in a Navel to the mother (for she is here described with it:), nor injuring water on their seed, *Isaiah* 44. ver. 3. They that deny the Covenant of *Abraham*, to be the inheritance of Christian believers, and their seed, they leave no more grace to the children of believers, than of Pagans.

*Reas.* 3. Where God giveth a promise or Covenant of Grace, he giveth a seal to confirm it. God giveth a promise of Grace to believers and their feed, *Acts* 2:39. Therefore he giveth some seal to confirm it. But he giveth none, if not Baptism.

*Use* 1. To Parents professing faith in Christ, not to withhold either themselves from the Church, or their children from baptism. If a mother should cut off the Navel-string whereby the child is nourished in her womb, were it not a want of Natural affection, what tender-hearted mother could endure to do it? *Zipporah* called *Moses* a bloody husband because of the circumcision, *Exod.* 4:25,26. But surely much more she a bloody mother to withhold her child from it, yea, a bloody wife to her husband, whom the Lord had killed, if his child had not been circumcised, ver. 24. The child loseth his inheritance with the people of God, *Gen.* 17:14. What though children cannot hear nor understand the Word? If they could the breasts of the Church were sore of them. But, now the Navel serveth, when they can neither chew meat, nor so much as suck milk.

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*Use 1.* To strengthen the faith of Parents, that God will not suffer your children to want liquor of life, when you renew your, Covenant, and your children are fed by this Navel of the Church, which wanteth not liquor.

*Use 3.* To teach us to make use of our baptism, all the days of our life, it never wanteth liquor.

It is an answer to all temptations whether against 1. Our effectual calling, in that thou art already admitted into God's family, in profession by baptism. Therefore delay not conversion.

2. Justification: in that thou art washed already in the blood of Christ which taketh away all sin, 1 *John* 1:7.

3. Sanctification: in that thou art washed already by the Spirit of grace in profession by baptism, wilt thou then like a Swine wallow in the mire again? It is an engagement to unity with the Church, 1 *Cor.* 12:13. It is a Comfort, 1. Against affliction, 1 *Pet.* 3:11. 1. Against death, as a seal of our resurrection, 1 *Cor.* 15:29.

**Chap. 7. ver. 2.**

*2. Thy belly is as an heap of Wheat, set about with Lilies.*

**M**eaning, See. *pag.* 194 in opening the former part of this *verse.*  
*Wheat*] is the best grain for man's nourishment, that giroweth. It yeldeth a pure, sweet, fat, strong nourishment. Hence it is called, The fat of the kidneys of the Wheat, *Deut.* 32:14. See also *Psalms* 81:16.

*Heap of Wheat*] Imphieth store, or abundance of excellent nourishment.

*Set about with Lilies*] lilies are eminent, 1. For their straightness. 2. For their pure, and bright clothing whether white or *Matth.* 6:29. 2. For God's care of them for gorgeous clothing when they toil not, nor spin, but only labour to grow upward towards heaven, *Matth.* 6:28,29,30.

Lilies therefore fitly resemble Saints of God, who are the only fit communicants at the Lord's Supper as above, *page*181.

*Doct.* 1. The Lord's Supper yeldeth abundance of the Spiritual nourishing to the Saints of God's partaking of it.

The Lord's Supper is the Belly of the Church, the

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other secret mystery, obvious and accessible to none but to husband and children in this Supper, the Bread and Wine hold forth, the body and blood of Christ, which is meat and drink indeed, *John 6:55*.

So that in this Supper we have, 1. Communion with Christ, *1 Cor. 10:16*. 2. The Communication of the sure mercies of the Covenant of grace, assured or sealed to us; hence, *Matth. 26:28*. The blood of the New Testament; The blessings promised therein be, 1. Remission of sins, *Matth. 26:28*. 2. Fellowship of the same Spirit with Christ and his Church, *1 Cor. 12:13*. 3. Growth and nourishment in, 1. Strength. 2. Quickning of grace; for Bread is for strength, as Wine for cheering the heart, *Psalms 104:15. John 6:55,56*. Yea, growth unto perfection, *Heb. 13:20,21*. through the blood, &c. 4. Preservation from all evil, even outward as well as inward, *Exod. 12:22,23*. and provision of all good things, *Rom. 8:32. Psalm 84. ver. 11*.

*Reas.* 1. Of such plenty of good Nourishment in it, 1. From the fulness of Christ in himself to his people, *Coloss. 1:19. John 1:16*. His Union with the Son of God maketh his blood the blood of God, *Acts 20:28*. And so his Body, the Body of God, and therefore of Divine, and abundant, yea, infinite efficacy. 2. From the manner of the conveyance of Christ in this Sacrament, which is by eating and drinking; by which, that which is received, tasted and fed upon, is most united to the Receiver. We may see other men's things, and sight maketh then not our own: so we may hear, and smell, and touch, and yet they are not our own: But what we taste and feed upon, is most intimately our own. The Woman found benefit by touching Christ, in the hem of his garment, *Matth. 9:20,21*. How much more by feeding upon whole Christ?

*Reas.* 2. Why to Lilies? to Saints? 1. From their hunger and thirst after Christ. They only have a Spiritual appetite, and are sensible of their need of Christ, *Luke 1:53. Matth. 5. ver. 6*.

*Use* 1. To teach us what manner of persons should present themselves to the Lord's Table, and there to be admitted: Not Nettles and Thistles, Briars, and Thorns, but Lilies. Nor any unclean, *Numb. 9:6*. Yea, children baptized in the Church, may not partake of this Table, unless they become Lilies.

*Use* 2. For comfort to such in their coming to this Table, Here is an heap of hidden, but sweet nourishment.

## Chap. 7. Ver. 3.

3. *Thy two breasts are like two young Roes that are twins.*

**T**He next member (or part) of this Church as the two Breasts, which are here resembled to two young Roes or as the original hath it, two young Fawns, suitable one to another like twins, and as the original readeth it, Twins of the Roe.

*Breasts*] Are the parts and vessels that give milk to the babes of the Church, which resemble the Ministers of this Church of the Jews.

It implieth, 1. That this new converted Church will at first stand in need rather of milk, then of strong meat, *Heb. 5:13*. 2. That they will not be single, but two and two go together: as Pastor and Teacher in a settled Church, so as two Evangelists in a Church gathering, *Luke 10:1*.

As young Roes, 1. For pleasantness and delightful love which they will bear to the Church, and the Church to them, as, *Prov. 5:19*. familiar with the Church, not lording it over them, 2. For their agility, in ready skipping, running and leaping to and fro, for the Churches help, and succour. As Roes are noted for their agility, *Cant. 2:8,9*.

*Twins*] 1. For brotherly Equality, not affecting pre-eminence, one over another. 2. For springing, and coming forth into the World together.

*Doct.* 1. The purest Churches will not want their Ministers, *Acts 14:23*. This new Church of the Jews shall be full of knowledge, *Isaiah 11:9*. Yet even these shall not want Beasts, no not to the end *Cant. 7:7,8*, and *8:8,10*.

*Reas.* 1. From Christ's Institution, *Matth. 28:19,10*. *Ephes. 4:8,11,12,13*. 1 *Tim. 6:13,14,15*.

*Reas.* 2. From the ordinary means of overflowing knowledge. The Temple, that is the presence of Christ in public Ordinances; *Ezek. 47:5*.

*Reas.* 3. From the Churches necessity, ever needing, either, 1. Milk, *Heb. 5:12*. or 2. Strong meat.

The best are imperfect in this life, 1 *Cor. 13:10*. *Rom. 7:14, 15,16*.

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*Use* 1. To refuse the expectation of such times, of clear light, as shall need no Ministers.

*Object.* Jer. 31:34.

*Answ.* 1. The meaning is, they shall not teach one another principle; know the Lord, and so rest: But they shall grow up in knowledge in the New Testament, far above the Old. The greatest work of their Ministry, shall not be for conversion (as now it is); for they shall be all Godly, *Isaiah* 60:21. & 33. 24. but for building up. But they shall still call upon, and teach one another, *Isaiah* 2:3.

*Answ.* 2. It is spoken comparatively, that I will have mercy and not sacrifice: that is, not so much sacrifice as mercy, so here not so much outward teaching, as inward.

*Object.* 1 *John* 2:27.

*Answ.* The words explain themselves, ye need not that any should teach you (to wit) more clearly and certainly then as the same, anointment teacheth.

*Doct.* 2. It is comely for a Church, when new-borne Christians are not without Teachers of Principles. Milk is for babes: and breasts for milk, and milk the Apostle expoundeth to be principles, and them taught familiarly, *Heb.* 5:11. with *chap.* 6:1,2. 1 *Pet.* 2:2.

*Reas.* 1. From the fit propoition of milke for babes, 1 *Pet.* 2:2.

*Use* 1. To teach people not to despise familiar catechizing, the teaching of principles in a plain manner. Principles are as foundations, *Heb.* 6:1,2. Neglect of principles, is to build without a foundation.

*Use* 2. To teach Ministers still to reserve a portion of milk for babes.

*Doct.* 2. It is a beauty to a Church, when their Ministers want not society, and equality one with another, nor pleasantness and readiness to the feeding of the people; 1 *Thess.* 2:7,8.

*Reas.* 1. Of the beauty of society, from the help two yield. 1. Of assistance one to another, *Eccle.* 4:9, to 12. 2. Of validity to one anothers Testimony, *John* 8:17.

*Reas.* 2. Of the beauty of Equality. From their brotherly communion, *Matth.* 23:8.

*Reas.* 3. Of the beauty of pleasantness, and readiness to feed the people. From the acceptableness of it, 1. To Christ, 1 *Pet.* 5:2,4. 1 *Cor.* 9:17. 2. To the people.

*Use* 1. To teach Ministers how to walk one to another, and both to the people.

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Use 2. To teach Churches, to look at it, as a deformity, to have but one Minister. A Church with one Minister, is as a wife with one breast. Completeness of Ordinances is the more needful, because Christ communicateth some part of his fulness in all, *Exod.* 40:33,34.

**Chap. 7. Ver. 4.**

*Thy neck is as a Tower of Ivory: thine eyes like the Pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath-rabbim.*

**T**He next members of this *Shulamitish* Church, (by the beauty whereof this Church, is described) is the neck, I it resembled to a Tower of Ivory; the eyes, and they resembled to the Pools in *Heshbon*, by the gate of *Bath-Rabbim*.

*The neck*] is that Part, whereby the head and body is joynd together which in the faithful soul, and invisible Church, is faith, *Eph.* 3:17. In the visible Church, it is the confession of faith, *Matth.* 16:16,17,18. This faith and the confession of it, in this *Shulamitish* Church, will be as a Tower for strength, as that by which we overcome, 1. The world, 1 *Joh.* 5:4,5. 2. The flesh, 2 *Pet.* 1:4. 3. Satan, *Eph.* 6:16. 1 *Pet.* 5:8,9. 4. Yea, God himself, *Gen.* 32:28. *Jam.* 5:16. *Matth.* 15:28.

*Of Ivory*] which is, 1. Solid and firm. 2. Bright and burnished. 5. Precious and Royal, *Psal.* 45:8. 1 *Kings* 10:18. Such shall be their faith, 1. Firm and steadfast, 1 *Pet.* 5:9. 2. Bright and glorious, *Heb.* 11:2,3. 3. Precious, 1 *Pet.* 1:7. and 2 *Pet.* 1:1 As receiving; 1. Precious Christ, 1 *Pet.* 1:7. 2. Precious promises, 2 *Pet.* 1:4.

*Thine eyes*] eyes as they serve for sight, so for expressing and pouring out sorrow for tears, which is chiefly intended here, eyes being resembled here to the Pools in *Heshbon*, by the gate of *Bathrabbim*; *Heshbon* was the chief city of *Sihon*, *Numb.* 21:16. Where were Pools plentiful in water, like those streams spoken of, *Numb.* 21:14,15. The word is translated simply Pools, *Nehem.* 2:14. Nor are fish-pools near populous gates. To these fish pools her eyes are compared for the plenty of tears which the Jews at their return shall pour forth in unfeigned Repent. 1. Partly for their crucifying of Christ, *Zech.* 12:10.



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2. Partly for the abundant grace, and undeserved loving kindness of God towards than, *Jer.* 31:8,9. and 50:4.

*Doct.* 1. It is the beauty of the spouse of Christ (whether Church or soul) when her faith is strong, and precious: and the more she seeth Christ, the more she mourneth over him: Or when her faith is strong and precious, and her repentance melting and plentiful, *Rom.* 4:19,20,21. *1 Pet.* 1:7. *2 Pet.* 1:1. [See the reasons of the beauty and strength of faith, in notes on *Cant.* 4:4.] strength is the beauty of youth, *Prov.* 20:29. So a strong faith of a young Church, faith is strong by the strength of its object. *Prov.* 18:10. *Zech.* 12:10. *Luke* 7:38.

*Reason* of the beauty of repentance, 1. From the cause, as springing, 1. From the greater and deeper sense of our injury done to Christ, *Zech.* 12:10. 2. From the greater sense of his love to us. *Jer.* 31:8,9. and 50:1,3. From the deeper sense of our unworthiness. 2. From the effects of kindly repentance (which are all of them amiable) *2 Cor.* 7:11. 1. Carefulness to avoid all occasions of sin, to walk more circumspectly. 2. Clearing of our selves from the fellowship of sin. 3. Indignation against sin in our selves and others. 4. Fear of our own weakness. 5. Vehement desire after the power of grace in Guilt. 6. Zeal. 7. Revenge in just censures upon delinquents, yea, and in self-judging.

*Use* 1. Of the beauty of faith, see in *Cant.* 4:4. pag. 92, &c.

*Use* 2. Of the beauty of repentance. 1 Against such as deny the use of repentance in well grown Christians as if it were legal, not befitting Evangelical Christians. It will be into quest even in the best times we look for, when the Jews are called, and their faith strong and precious. 1. To exercise our heart to repentance.

*Mot.* 1 The want of it argueth an whorish heart and forehead (which is the greatest deformity of a spouse) *Jer.* 3:3. But it self is preservation of the heart, in humility and tenderness.

*Mot.* 2. It fitteth the heart to receive all spiritual blessings, *Isaiah* 61:3.

*Mot.* 3. It preventeth evils to come, *1 Chron.* 34:27,28. *Ezek.* 9:4.

*Mean.* 1. Christ beheld, as, 1. Injured daily by us and by others. i.O/ercomming.curevill with goodness.

*Mean* 2. Avoiding sin, which hardeneth, *Heb.* 3:13.

## Chap. 7. Ver. 4,5.

4. *Thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, which looketh towards Damascus.*

5. *Thine head upon thee is like Carmel.*

**T**His very companion of the Nose to a Tower argueth *Solomon*, in this Book doth not describe the beauty of any woman, any of his Wives or Concubines; for it were monstrous and ugly, for any woman to have a Nose like a Tower; he speaketh therefore here (as in all the book, of some Church or other, so here) of the *Shulamite*, the Church of *Jerusalem*, after her conversion.

*As the Tower of Lebanon which looketh towards Damascus.]* There was an house of the forest of *Lebanon* in *Jerusalem* built by *Solomon*, so called for resemblance sake to the forest of *Lebanon*, *1 Kings* 7:2. In which he put his golden shields or Targets, *1 Kings* 10:17. whence *Shishak* taking them, is said to take them out of *Jerusalem*, *1 Kings* 14:25,26. Of this house used as for pleasure, so for an Armoury *Isaiah* speaketh, *Isaiah* 22:8. If this house of the forest of *Lebanon*, had been in *Lebanon* near to *Damascus*, as here, it had not been in the possession of *Rehoboam*, when *Shishak* took away the shields thence: nor in the possession of *Hezekiah*, afterwards in *Isaiah's* time, but in the possession of the Kings of *Israel*. But there was beside this house of the forest of *Lebanon*, a Tower in the forest of *Lebanon*, as appeareth by this place: which is said to look towards *Damascus*. to distinguish it from the other, which was in *Jerusalem* *Lebanon* itself was a mountain in the utmost confines of *Israel*, Northward looking rowards *Damascus*, the chiefest City in *Syria*. This seemeth also to have been built by *Salomon*, *1 Kings* 9:19. Now *Lebanon* being an Hill and Forest, full of all manner of sweet and fragrant trees, and shrubs, and spices, the Tower built in *Lebanon* must needs be compassed about with sweet smelling odours to the great refreshing and delight of such as should dwell in that Tower, and pass by it. Hence the Nose of this pure Church is compared to this Tower of *Lebanon*, because they that dwell in this Church, or shall have occasion to come that way, shall be wonderfully

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refreshed with the sweet odour, 1. Of the Ministry (which is the favour of life unto life, (2 *Cor.* 2:15,16.) 2. Of the savoury conference of good Christians, and of their godly and fruitful conversation, *Ephes.* 4:29. *Coloss.* 4:6. *Phil.* 2:8. *Heb.* 13:16.

Ver. 5. *Thine head upon thee is like Carmel]* *Carmel* is an high hill also not far from *Lebanon*, but famous for fruitfulness in feeding cattle: and therefore is reckoned with *Lebanon*, *Shirion* and *Bashan*, eminent for fertility, *Isaiah* 33:9. and 35. ver. 2. 2 *Chron.* 16:10.

The Head of this Church seemeth not only to be meant Christ Jesus, in himself (who is the Spouse, and Bridegroom, & beloved throughout this Song:) but also, as he is considered, & described by his Vicegerents on earth, and so it is in part fitly meant, the civil Magistrate who is the Head of the Church in respect of their civil State, 1 *Sam.* 15:17. *Isaiah* 9:14,15. The meaning is in respect of them that their civil Magistrates shall yield store of sound and sweet nourishment to the Church, *Isaiah* 49:23.

*Doct.* 1. It is a beauty to the Church of Christ, when their favour is fragrant, and their Magistracy fruitful. Fragrant, that is, sweet and savoury. It was a part of Christ's own beauty, the sweetness of the favour of his good Ointments, *Cant.* 1:3. It was the trouble and calamity of *Jacob* and his house that his sons had dealt unfaithfully and cruelly with the *Sichemites*, *Gen.* 34:30. which made his house stink.

The favour of the Church is fragrant and sweet, 1. When Religion maketh every one better in his place and relation, then they were before, 1 *Pet.* 2:12. and 3:1,2. *Tit.* 2:9,10. 1 *Tim.* 6:1,2 *Philem.* 11. 2. When Religion lifteth up men above the power of mortality, or civility, *Luke* 6:32,33.

On the contrary, it is very unsavoury, 1. When after profession of espousage to Christ, in Church-estate, we are worse then before, 1 *Chron.* 36:14. *Deut.* 32:15. *Ezech.* 16:15. *Jude* 4. When Church-members grow worse then infidels, 1 *Tim.* 5:8. *Ezech.* 16:48,52.

The Magistracy is fruitful when men live under it, 1. In Godliness, 1 *Tim.* 2:2. *Cant.* 2:3. 2. In Righteousness, 1 *Tim.* 2:2. 1 *Kings* 4:25. *Psalms* 72:3. 3. In peace, 1 *Tim.* 2:2. 1 *Kings* 4:25. *Psalms* 72:3.

This is done, 1. By giving and maintaining free passage to each Ordinance of God, 1 *Chron.* 13:3. 2 *Chron.* 17:7,8,9.

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*Isaiah* 49:23. Nursing fathers, 2. By enacting, and executing just and righteous Laws, 2 *Sam.* 8:15. 3. By yielding exemplary subjection to Christ, and the wholesome Laws of the State, *Isaiah* 49:23. They shall lick, &c. 4. By removing Nurseries of impiety and wickedness, 1 *Kings* 23:5, to 15. 1 *Kings* 15:12,13.

*Reason* of the beauty of these in a spouse, 1. This fragrancy of Christian profession and conversation and the fruitfulness of Government is the renounce and honour of a people, which is their beauty, *Ezek.* 16:13,14. *Prov.* 14:34. 2. These are fruits of faith, which giveth a good report, *Heb.* 11:2. A good report maketh the bones fat, *Prov.* 15:30.

*Use* 1. To reprove the deformity put upon a people, by base and loathesome lust, by crazed conversation of servants, by unfaithful breach of promises, by unrighteous oppressions and deceits.

*Use* 2. To teach Magistrates to be as *Carmel*, fruitful in all the former kinds and ways.

*Use* 3. To teach Church-members of every rank and relation to beautify and adorn your profession.

#### Chap. 7. ver. 5.

5. *Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and that hair of thine head like purple, the King is held in the galleries.*

**H**owsoever the Civil Magistrate may in some sense be said to be the Head of the Church: yet the Lord Jesus is the only Sovereign and Spiritual Head of the Church. It is true, two Heads of the same kinds upon any person, maketh it a monster; but in divers kinds, it is no inconvenience. A woman hath a natural head upon her shoulders: her husband also is her Head, but an æconomical head (*Esther* 1:22.) And such an head he is to her, even in Church-assemblies, 1 *Cor.* 11:3. and therefore even in (Church-assemblies, she is to wear a sign of her husband's power upon her head. As Christ is a sovereign, or Spiritual Head of the Church, so he hath no partners nor vicegerents, either in the invisible or visible Church. He only can and doth convey to his body (the Church) spiri-

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tual, 1. Life. 2. Motion. 3. Government. Neither Pope, nor Prince can impose new doctrines, or forms of worship, or of government. But the Magistrate under Christ may be, and if a Civil Head, 1 *Sam.* 15:17. *Isaiah* 9:14,15,16. His Headship or Civil Power is dispensed according to the estate of the Church.

If the Church, 1. Be rightly ordered, his power is only, 1 Ratification, or confirmation, *Ezra* 7:23. and so encouragement, 1 *Chron.* 30:22. 2. Protection, *Ezra* 6:11,12. Moreover, he may call, as need shall be, 1 A public fast, 2 *Chron.* 20:3. 2. To the Churches for a Synod.

2. Evil ordered, his power reacheth 1. To reformation (by calling upon the Church to do it) 1 *Chron.* 15:13, 2 *Chron.* 29:5 to 11. 2. civil correction and censure (in case of obstinate rejection of reformation) *Ezra* 7:16,17.

The ground of which is the danger that redoundeth to the civil State, by, 1. Their neglect of the Church (even wrath against the King and his sons, *Ezra* 7:23.) 2. The Churches' corruption and apostasy. The Turks swallowed up both the Churches of the East, and the civil State from their worship of idols, and Images tolerated, *Rev.* 9:15, to 20.

Having spoken therefore of the civil Head of the Church the last day, by reason of the presence of the civil Magistrate; let us now speak of Christ's own headship in his own person. Neither let any object against the former exposition of the civil Head, That it was formerly expounded, the neck to be faith, which joineth head; and body together, therefore the Magistrate can be no Head of the Church. For the Neck is not only faith, whereby Christ is joined to the invisible Church, but (as hath been said) the profession of faith, whereby Christ is joined to the visible Church. And by the same profession of faith, we acknowledge ourselves subject to the civil Magistrate, every soul of us severally, and all jointly, *Rom.* 13:1,5.

\* But to proceed to Christ's Head-ship as he is here described to be like unto *Carmel*: and *Carmel* was a very fruitful Hill and yielded plenty of food, for the feeding and fattening of Sheep and Cattle, 1 *Chron.* 20:10. *Isaiah* 35:2. Which argueth that in the converted Church of the Jews the Lord Jesus will be to his people, as fat pastures: his people shall be fat and flourishing

*The hair of thine head like purple*] So far as the head may be meant of Christ as dispensing his Power by the civil Magi-

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strate, it holdeth forth their Officers, that attend on them, and hang on them.

★ *To prevent offence and mistake express it thus. Christ is the only sovereign and spirituall Head of the Church. And he dispenseth himself to the Church two ways either in spiritual administrations to the inner man of the Church, and so the Magistrate is no Head at all to the Church; or in civil administrations to the outward man of the Church, and so the Magistrate under Christ hath some power, as in the former page. Christ is chief Head of all power, though chiefly of his Church by his Word and Spirit, Eph. 1:11,12.*

*And they shall be as purple]* That is of a Noble & Princely dye, not Catchpoles, nor Horsleaches, not Extortioners, nor Sycophants, but righteous, and peaceable (the colour and resemblance of Princes) *Isaiah 60:17*. But as the Head is meant Christ in the Church, so it holdeth forth the common Christians that profess the Name of Christ, they shall be clothed with some noble and glorious power, 1. Not only in ruling themselves, and families with Princely courage, *Zech. 12:8*. The feeble shall be as *David*, 2. But in fellowship of power in ordering the Church, *Revel. 20:4*.

*The King is held in the Galleries]* The word translated Galleries is as well translated Channels, or Gutters of water, where they water sheep, so it is translated, *Gen. 30:38. Exod. 2:16*. Take the word in that sense, and so the King is meant Christ, And he is said to be held in the Water-channels; where the Sheep come to drink, because he being held forth in the Ordinances. The Sheep of Christ seeing him there, conceive such a resemblance of him, as that they grow like him, and so come to be of a purple, a Noble and Royal Spirit: as *Jacob's* Sheep beholding the rods in the Gutters, conceived with young of the same colour, *Gen. 30:38,39*. But because the word may be translated Galleries, as it is, *Cant. 1. ver. 17*. in the margin, it may argue both, 1. That Christ is ever present in his Ordinances, which run along about the Church, as the Galleries did about the Temple. 2. That their Kings, and great men shall be held in and (as the word signifieth) bound also by the Ordinances, as other private Christians, *Psalms 149:8,9*. Hence Kings are said in these times to lick the dust of the Churches feet, *Isaiah 49:23*.

*Doct. 2.* In the Jewish Churches all sorts of Christians, even the common sort shall hold forth an honourable and Princely

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resemblance. The Hair of the head is wont to hold forth the common sort of Christians, that hang upon Christ, as the hair upon the head, *Cant.* 4:1. and 6:5. And yet these shall be as purple, which is the habit of great men, *Esther* 8:15. *Luke* 16:19. [As it's said of *gideon's* kinsmen, *Judges* 8:18] *Zech.* 11:8. *Cant.* 7:1. *Rev.* 16:12. This lieth not in softly apparel, and glorious fashions, but in Spiritual. 1. Magnanimity, and magnificence, above, base Fears, *Neh.* 6:11. Base Lusts. 2 *Tim.* 2:21,22. *Gen.* 39:9. *Ephes.* 5:3,4. Dishonest gain, *Ezek.* 22:13. *Isaiah* 33:15. Unprofitable idleness, *Job* 30:7,8. Base compliance with Idolaters and prophane persons; *Isaiah* 57:9. 2. Righteousness and faithfulness in our Offices, *Isaiah* 60:17. 3. Princely power, in judging offences without prejudice or partiality, *Rev.* 20:4. and in ordering our families, *Zech.* 12:1.

*Reas.* 1. From the fat and fruitful presence of Christ with his people (in those days) in his Ordinances, Text, *Isaiah* 25:6. *Psalms* 92:13,14. Christ shall, 1. Dye them deep in his Blood, *Isaiah* 33:24. 2. Clothe them with a double portion of a Princely Spirit, *Psalms* 45:16. And both these, by lying before them in their Water-courses, Text. Himself will be held forth in all the administrations of every Ordinance, 2 *Cor.* 3: ver. 18.

*Reas.* 2. From the example of their good Kings, they shall meekly submit to every Ordinance. (Text,) which is one part of the meaning, *Ezek.* 46:10. *Isaiah* 49:23. Lick the dust off thy feet.

*Use* 1. See whence to expect all fruitfulness, from Christ fed upon. Magistrates, Ministets all sorts of Christians must draw forth all fruit from him, *Hos.* 14:8. *John* 14:4,5.

*Use* 2. To teach Officers waiting on Magistrates to honour their Masters (as if they followed them in Purple Robes) by righteousness and peace, *Isaiah* 60:17.

*Use* 3. To teach all sorts of Christians to hold forth the like Royal resemblance, as in time God's people will do: eschewing all base earthly ways, and adorning our Christian profession.

*Use* 4. To teach as to hold forth Christ in all our administrations. It is the way to make Christ's fruitfulness spring forth, and to make our hearers honourable.

*Use* 5. To teach the highest Magistrates, even Kings, to be willing to submit to Christ in all his holy Ordinances; The King is here bound in the Galleries, as Christ is held in the Water-channels.

## Chap. 7. ver. 6.

6. *How fair, and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!*

**T**His *verse* is the conclusion of the description of the Church of *Jerusalem* (the *Shulamite*.) The former *verses* have set forth her course, as she shall be in her first rising or gathering, in all the particular members of it, from the feet to the head. But this *verse* describeth in a short sum the admirable beauty and pleasantness of the whole Church, when they are all met together for the performance of God's public worship.

The whole Church therefore met together, is described, 1. By her beauty or fairness, *How fair art thou?* 2. By her pleasantness, *How pleasant art thou?* 3. By the admirable excellency of both, expressed in the interrogation, *Oh how fair, and how pleasant art thou?* 4. By the subject matter in which this beauty and pleasantness doth most of all appear, to wit in delights or in delights and solaces.

How fair (or beautiful.) The fairness and beauty of the Church, implieth suitably to what is found in the beauty of the body, 1. A complete integrity of all the members of this Church. For where any member of the body is wanting or rotten, here is deformity; beauty is blemished. This Church therefore shall neither want sound members, nor pure Ordinances. 2. A fit proportion of all the members of the Church one to another: each one set in his place, no swellings in one against another, no convulsions in one from another (contrary to what was feared in the *Corinthians*, 2 *Cor.* 12:20.) And all the Ordinances fitly dispensed to the estate of the members. 3. A good colour in the outward face of things. All things shall be carried decently and in order.

*How fair?*] implyeth beauty to be admired in all these respects; how fair, that is, so fair as that a man cannot express how fair.

How pleasant? pleasant, that is, 1. Well pleasing to Christ her spouse. 2. Cheerful and pleasureful in her own spirit. 3. Comfortable to others.



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*How pleasant*] Imphieth pleasantness to be admired as beauty before.

For *delights or in delights*] It is an allusion to the marriage-bed, which is the delights of the Bridegroom, and Bride. This marriage, bed is the public worship of God in the Congregation of the Church as *Cant.* 3:1.

The public Worship of God is the bed of loves: where, 1. Christ embraceth the souls of his people, and casteth into their hearts the immortal seed of his Word, and Spirit, *Gal.* 4:19. 2. The Church conceiveth and bringeth forth fruits to Christ.

She there is, 1. United to him, and groweth in union. 2. Wont to receive all those graces which make her fruitfull to Christ in a Christian course.

*Doct.* 1. Where the members of the Church are sincere converts, the Officers nurses to God's children, & the Ordinances purely and powerfully administred, there the Church-assemblies are admirably fair, and enjoy marvellous comfortable fellowship with Christ in his public worship. This Church here is described by her sincere conversion, (*ver.* 1.) Sound faith, (*ver.* 4.) melting repentance (*ibidem*) the Officers are breasts yielding milk to God's babes (*ver.* 3.) the Ordinances, that of baptism as a full Navel, that of the Lord's Supper as an heap of Wheat set about with Lillies. All these concurring together, O how fair, O how pleasant in public worship! *Psalms* 84:1 and 27:4. *Numb.* 24:5.

*Reas.* 1. From the gracious presence of Christ with them, *Numb.* 23:21. *Exod.* 4:33,34.

*Reas.* 2. From the lifting up the light of his countenance amongst them, and upon them, *Psalms* 63. *ver.* 2,3. *2 Cor.* *ver.* 6.

*Reas.* 3. From the pouring out of his Spirit upon them, and all the gifts of his grace needful for them, *Gal.* 3:2,5. *Acts* 2:1,2. and 10:44. Hence our souls filled with fatness and sweetness, *Psalms* 36:8. and 65:4. *Isaiah* 25:6.

*Reas.* 4. From the sweetness and fatness which the souls of God's people relish and partake of, even [[of]] their own duties breathed in by the Spirit, *Psalms* 63:2, to 5.

*Use* 1. To search which of these is wanting in our Church-assemblies; if they be not fair and pleasant to us, then as the Apostle told the Church of *Corinth*, 1. Either the Ordinances are reprobate. 2. Or the Ministers are reprobate, 3. Or the

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people are reprobate, 2 *Cor.* 13:4,5,6. Or if we be not reprobates, yet we neglect the growth of faith (which should be as a Tower, *Cant.* 7:4.) or the exercise of repentance, which should be as the Pools in *Heshbon*, *Cant.* 7:4. Or at least we neglect mutual watchfulness, and for the sin of some withhold the pretence of God from all, *Josh.* 7:11,12.

*Use* 2. To teach all that fear *God* and love Christ, to cleave to such assemblies, and to frequent them daily, *Heb.* 10:25,26, &c. *Psal.* 42:1,2,3,4. and 84:12. *Prov.* 8:34.

*Object.* 1. But if your assemblies were fed by Christ, where are your new Tongues, gifts of the Holy Ghost, and miracles?

*Answ.* As if the Holy Ghost in his saving gifts were less precious than in his common gifts, which are chiefly for infidels, 1 *Cor.* 14:22. Besides, all miracles meet together in one sincere convert, the blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the lame walk, the leper is cleansed, the dead is raised to life.

*Object.* 2. But Ordinances are but till the revelation of the Spirit.

*Answ.* Yes, till we be all perfect, *Ephes.* 4:8,11,12,13. Yea, the Angels reap increase of knowledge by Church ordinances, *Ephes.* 3:8,9,10.

*Use* 3. To comfort the Church in Christ's amiable and affectionate acknowledgement of her, and meeting with her in such solomns assemblies. Christ giveth not the like testimony of any assemblies, nor doth he afford such delight in them, *Psalm* 87:2.

*Use* 4. To teach the Churches not to cast any deformity upon themselves in their public assemblies, by dead-heartedness, carnal contentions, &c.

## Chap. 7. Ver. 7,8,9,10.

7. *This thy stature is like no a Palm-tree, and thy breasts two clusters of Grapes.*

8. *I said I will go unto the palm-trees, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the Vine, and the smell of thy Nose like Apples.*

9. *And the roof of thy month like the best Wine, for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep, to speak.*

10. *I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me.*

**T**Hese *verses* describe the former Church of the Jews (the *Shulmite*) not at before she showed herself in her first gathering: but as she shall be when she is grown up to her full Stature. This thy stature, &c. *ver. 7.*

Where her, 1. Whole stature is resembled to a Palm-tree. 2. Breasts in that stature are resembled to clusters of Grapes, *ver. 7.* 3. Nose, the smell of it is resembled to Apples, *ver. 9.* 4. The roof of her mouth like the best wine: and that Wine set forth by a twofold effect. 1. It moveth itself aright, to her beloved. 2. It causeth the lips of men asleep to speak, *ver. 9.* 5. Relation to Christ it is clearly discerned by his union with her, and affection to her, *ver. 10.*

*Doct.* 1. The spouse of Christ well-grown is for her stature like to a Palm-tree: for her breasts like clusters of Grapes: for the smell of her Nose like Apples: for the Roof of her mouth like the best wine: for her relation to Christ, confident of her union with him, and his desire towards her. The statute of a young maid is not much attended or taken notice of till she be come to her wax (or full growth.) This description therefore is of this (*Shulamitish*) Church come to her growth, or height, and so the same word is translated Height, 1 *Kings* 6: *ver. 20.*

*Like a Palm:] (Psalm 92:12) 1. For straightness; Yea,*

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though weight hang upon it. 2. For perpetual greenness, and sweet fruitfulness bearing Dates, whereof they make both meat, wine, medicine, as that tree, *Jer. 17. ver. 8.* 3. For thriving under weight pressing down; whence it is given for a sign of victory, both the Crown and the branch of it, *Rev. 7:9.* 4. For easiness of access to climbing, as having many knops abom it for steps [*Plin. l 13.4*]

Such shall this Church of the Jews be, eminent for straightness and uprightnes, *Isaiah 60:21.* Flourishing in perpetual greenness, and fruitfulness, though Christ's presence with them, as a Tree of Life, *Rev. 22:2.* and the waters of the Sanctuary running along by them *Ezek. 47:7.* Thriving and growing up by the opposition of the Turks, and after of Gog and Magog, *Ezek. 39:13.* easy for access, hence Christ is said in the Text, to go up to this Palm-tree, and to take hold of the Boughs thereof, *ver. 8.* because what his members do, by the motion of his Spirit, it is he that doth it in them, *Isaiah 26:12.* Now many godly Christians shall resort far and near to *Jerusalem*, and take hold of the fellowship of that Church, *Zech. 8:10,* to 23. *Isaiah 60:8,11.*

*Thy breasts like clusters of Grapes]* Breasts are the Ministers that suckle the children of the Church, throughout this song.

Like Clusters, 1. As being many of them, *v 7.* not two alone, as at first gathering, *ver. 3.* Yea, many after the access and resort of many strangers to them now also shall thy breasts be as clusters of Grapes (enough to supply all comers, *ver. 8*)

2. As yielding strong nourishment even for strong and ancient Christians: not only milk for babes, but plenty of wine, which is a liquor of more spirit and strength.

3. As needing some pressure to yield forth their liquor, that is, some invitement, but easy. A good Minister though full of good matter, would see his calling to press him to preach, before he preach: but yet ready to express himself, when pressed, though but gently pressed.

*The smell of thy Nose like Apple]* As before the access of the Gentiles to this Church, her Nose was like the Tower of *Lebanon*, *ver. 1.* in regard of the sweet savour of the conversation of her members: so now after the great concourse of many Nations, and People, her Savour and Odour will not be corrupted, but still retain their sweetness and purity. Yea, the

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sweet smell thereof shall be as Apples, fit to refresh a soul that languisheth for the love of Christ, as *Cant.* 2:5.

*The Roof of the mouth*] Is an instrument boh, 1. Of Speech, *Prov.* 8:7. 2. Of taking meats, *Job* 12:11. and 34:3.

Her speech, 1. Whether in prayer to God. 2. Or in conference one with another.

*Is like the best Wine*] Full of spirit and life, and cherishing a drooping heart.

*That goeth rightly to my beloved*] To go or sparkle right upward is a property of the most generous, and spiritfull, and best Wine, *Prov.* 23:31. Which argueth their speech whether, 1. In Prayer. 2. In Conference, shall be full or spiritual life and refreshing, and tending straight to Christ. And such shall be their spiritual Taste, as to relish no conference so well, as that which is spiritual, and breatheth forth Christ directly,

*Causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.*] This expresseth the life and power of gracious conference, & discourse, to make drowsy and sleepy Christians not only to attend, but to set in with it, and put forth some good words for company.

*I am my beloveds*] Which implyeth, 1. His union with her and consequently her union with him. 2. Her confidence of it. 3. Her open acknowledgement and profession of it.

*And his desire it towards me*] Chiefly his conjugal desire. He affecteth communion with herein our natural fallen estate, it was laid as a curse upon the woman that her desire should be to her husband, *Gen.* 3:16. Now on the contrary the heavenly husbands desire is to his wife, as *Cant.* 2:14.

*Use* 1. For a trial of our spiritual growth to a ripe stature, whether we be so grown as this spouse or no. If we be constant in sweet fruitfulness: if patient in Burdens, and grow never a whit less sincere and upright: if the righteous flock to us, if our Ministers yield strong Spiritual Nourishment to strong men In Christ: if our conversation be savoury and cordial: if our conference spiritual and comfortable: if our confidence in Christ be grounded and stedfast; then behold, ye are come to a well grown stature. It otherwise, we are short of our due growth. Time was when it was thus with New English Churches: but now we cannot bear wrongs, but grow contentious in suites, now few come to us: those that do come, they corrupt us; our conference is not so much like the best Wine sparkling towards Christ, but rather about the best wine where it is. No marvel then, if our confidence be less on Christ, and his desire less to

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*Use 1.* To teach Ministers, 1. To dispense Wine, strong liquor, as well as Milk: let both strong men, and Babes have their portion. 2. To be ready to preach upon a good calling, as Grapes to yield wine upon a pressure, but yet not to need much pressure.

*Use 3.* To teach all the spouses of Christ, whether Churches, or souls, to grow up to this just stature in all the former particulars.

*Use 4.* For comfort to such as grow up to this just stature, they shall honour Christ, all their speeches and whole conversation, shall tend directly to refresh him and his people. And he will enlarge your confidence towards him, and his own desire towards you, in your sense of it.

**Chap. 7. Ver. 11,12,13.**

11. *Come my beloved, let us go forth into the field: let us lodge in the Villages:*

12. *Set us go up early to the Vineyards, let us see if the Vine flourish, whether the tender Grape appear, and the Pomegranates bud forth, there will I give thee my loves.*

13. *The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gate are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.*

**W**

E have seen rebeconversion of the *Shulamite*, the Church of *Jerusalem*, and the estate of those pure Churches, both, 1. In their first gathering, *ver. 1.* to 6. 2. In their full growth, by the access of the Gentiles, *ver.*

7,8,9,10.

In these *verses* is described the call or conversion of the Churches of *Judah* in the Country Towns, and Villages, *ver. 11,12,13.* This call is expressed by way of a familiar and loving invitation, which the Church of *Jerusalem* giveth to Christ, to go abroad with her into the fields, and to lodge in the Villages, *ver. 11.* and beginning of 12.

Which invitation is amplified, 1. By the end, to see, 1. If the Vine flourish. 2. Whether the tender Grapes appear. 3. Whether the Pomegranates bud forth, *ver. 12.* 2. By the Churches offer

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of her best service of love to that work: there will I give thee my loves, *ver.* 12. Which may be called an Instrumental Call to the work. 3. By the effects or event. 1. The Mandrakes give a sweet smell. 2. At our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits: set forth by the Churches reservation of them to Christ, *ver.* 13.

*Come my beloved, let us go forth into the fields*] A loving invitation which the spouse giveth to Christ, taken (by allusion) from the manner of Citizens, that are willing to take the open air in their Country-houses. But here the field and Villages express the Country-Churches.

This invitation is a loving expression of an earned prayer.

*Let me lodge in the Villages*] Expresseth a desire of continuance a good time amongst them, even with sweet repose and refreshing.

*Let us go up early*] Argueth speedy address to set forward this Church-work in the Villages.

*To the Vineyards*] To the Churches, as, *Isaiah* 5:1. For Churches shall be multiplied in *Judah*, a well as In *Jerusalem*, *Isaiah* 62:4,5. *Zech.* 12:7.

*To see if the Vine flourish*] Whether the Churches make a good profession.

*Whether the tender grapes appear*] What beginnings of hopeful fruitfulness in the Church-members.

*And the Pomegranates put forth*] Whether they be furnished with ruling Elders, as, *Chap.* 4:3 and 6:7, *Exod.* 28:34. *There will I give thee my loves*] A modest expression of nearest conjugal comunion. The best love to Christ is the breeding and feeding of his young Lambs, and Sheep, his Sons and Daughters, *John* 21:15,16,17.

*The Mandrakes give a sweet smell*] Mandrakes a field Herb [fit as is said in those hot Countries] to prepare to fruitfulness, *Gen.* 3:14,15. This may fitly resemble hopeful Christians giving good favour of their profession, and conversation, but yet growing wild in the field, not planted in the garden of the whole Church.

*At our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits*] Brought out of the Country-Churches to *Jerusalem*. Alluding to the like Carriage and conveyance in great Cities from Country-towns. And expressing the earnest care of their Magistrates (who sit in their gates, *Prov.* 31:23) to use all due encouragements to such holy work, *Isaiah* 49:13.

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*Which I have laid up for thee*] Expressing the Churches sincere affection to refer and improve all her gifts and works so the glory and service of Christ.

*Doct. 1.* It is an amiable and acceptable service of love to Christ, for Churches in Cities and great Towns, to set forward Church-work in Country-villages. As in private converts to seek the conversion of others, *John* 1:40, to 46. So in public Churches to propagate others, *Acts* 8:14 & 13:22, 25.

*Reason 1.* It is the most conjugal duty of a Church, Text, *ver. 12.* There will I give thee my loves. It is the most conjugal duty of a wife to be fruitful to her husband in breeding and bringing forth children to him. So in the Church to Christ, *Psalms* 10:3. When the fruit of the womb of the Church is more than the dew of the morning.

*Reason 2.* It is a matter of most delightful amenity, and pleasantness, and maketh the season like a continual (both) Spring, Harvest. Spring when the vine flourisheth, the tender Grapes appear, the Pomegranates bud Harvest the Mandrakes give a sweet smell, which is in Wheat-Harvest. In our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits. It is as the mutual refreshings of Citizens in going to recreate themselves in their Country-houses.

*Reason 3.* Is the best improvement of all the gifts and parts of the chiefest Church members, even of them that fit in the gates *ver. 13.* *Isaiah* 49:23.

*Use 1.* To teach Churches (especially in greater Towns) to attend this work. Means, 1. Fervent prayer to Christ, Text. These words of invitation of Christ to this work, are lively and earnest supplications to him for that end, *Psal.* 67:1,2. a Inquiring after their estates, and offering to minister any needful supply, *Cant.* 8:8. Most opposite to this is worldliness: whence mutual envy, *Jam.* 4:4,5. Hence the Towns squeeze the country's commodities, and wiredraw them to the lowest price, And the Country keepeth in their commodities till they will go off at the highest Rates. Hence many also desert Country-Churches for earthly commodities in the greater Towns: even with impeachment to their Churches.

*Use 3.* To teach Churches to abound in fruitfulness, like the good householder that aboundeth in provisions, new and old, *Matth.* 13:52.

*Use 3.* To reach us the way of sincere fruitfulness, to lay up all our fruits for Christ. Contrary to them in *Hos.* 10:1; *Zech.* 7:5,6.



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## Chap. 8, Ver. 1,2,3,4.

1. *O That thou wert, as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee, yet I should not be despised.*

2. *I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house: who would instruct me: and I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice 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 ye stir not up, nor awake my love until he please.*

**W**E have heard from the tenth *verse* of *Chap.* 6 to the end of the seventh *Chapter*, of the call of the *Shulamite*, of her beauty, both in her first calling (*Chap.* 7. 1, to 6.) and in her grown stature (*ver.* 7. to 10.) Of her enlargement by the access of the Churches in the Country Villages, *ver.* 11,12,13. In the beginning of this *Chap.* (from *ver.* 1, to 4. the Church poureth out, and setteth forth her tender affection to Christ, and her free profession of him, *ver.* 1,2. as also his gracious support and embracing of her, (*ver.* 3.) and her charge to her daughters, to settle in this estate without affectation of innovation) *ver.* 4.

Her tender affection to him, and free profession of him, is set forth, 1. In an affectionate wish of his coming amongst them, as he did in the days of his flesh. 2. In five acts which she would perform to him, in case such a thing might have been: All suited contrary to the strange and malignant carriage towards him of their forefathers in the days of his flesh.

1. The wish is, *Oh*, (saith she) *if thou wert as my brother thit sucked the breasts of my mother!*] Christ was made our brother by taking our Nature upon him, in his incarnation, *Heb.* 2:11 He sucked her breasts, when he attended on the Ministry of *John* and other Jewish Teachers.

1. The five acts she would do towards him were, 1. Open ac-

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knowledge of him in the streets, if I should find thee in the streets, I would kiss thee & not (for fear) come to him by night, *Nicodemus* did, *John* 3:2. qnd 19:38. 2. Freedom from disdain of reproach; I should not be despised, v. 1. Contrary to the despite & rebuke put upon the Disciples, *Matth.* 21:15. & *Luke* 19:39.

3. Bringing him into the Temple, I would bring thee into my mothers house, *ver.* 2. Contrary to their former excommunication of him, *John* 9:22.

4. Entertainment of his doctrine, Thou shouldest instruct me, [for [[תלמדי]] is as well translated in the second person, as the third: and the opposition is more aptly expressed in the second person] contrary to their rejection of his doctrine, *John* 10:20.

5. Offer of kind entertainment to him, I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my Pomegranate, *ver.* 2. Contrary to the bitter potion they gave him, *Matth.* 17:34.

*Spiced Wine*] It is spiritual rejoicing in him: for Wine maketh glad the heart, *Psal.* 104:15. Spiced Wine is cheerfulness in holy duties, *Isaiah* 64:5.

*Of the juice of my Pomegranate*] Imphieth the wholesome Government of the Church by the Ruling Elders, whom the Pomegranates did hold forth above, *Chap.* 4:3, and 6:7.

*Doct.* 1. The malignity of our ancestors, and Country-men against Christ, should make us more affectionate and forward in our open profession of him and fruitfulness to him. 2 *Chro.* 29:5,10,11. and *Chap.* 30:7,8.

*Reas.* 1. From the wrath of God upon our ancestors & Country-men for their evil entertainment of Christ and his Gospel, which should warn us from walking in their steps, *Zach.* 1:5,6.

*Reas.* 2. From the grace of Christ ready to receive the repentance and reformation of the children of rebellious Parents, *Ezek.* 8:14, to 17.

*Reas.* 3. From the opportunities and encouragements which we may have to make forward and fruitful profession of Christ, above what our ancestors had. The ancestors of these Jews lived in such corrupt-times, when the stream of authority, and government in Church and Commonwealth were bent and armed against Christ, *Psalms* 2:1,2,3. with *Acts* 4:25,26, 27. But now both Magistrates and Ministers yielded all encouragements to this people to embrace and cleave to Christ, *Text, ver.* 3.

*His left hand is under my head*] The left hand is that which

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giveth riches and honour, *Prov.* 3:16. and so fitly holdeth forth civil Magistracy, which giveth all due provision and protection to the Church, *Isaiah* 49:13.

*His right hand shall embrace me]* The right hand giveth length of days (even eternity) *Prov.* 3:16. and so fitly holdeth forth the other hand of God, the Ministry, whereby Christ embraceth our souls, in the tender mercies of his everlasting love.

*Use 1.* To prevent a miscollection which some might make hence of Christ's Personal appearance in bodily Presence, and living here at *Jerusalem* when the Jews are called; for as *John* interpreted Christ's words of himself Jesus did not say that Disciple shall not die: but if I will that he tarry till I come, &c. *John* 21:23. So here the Church doth not say that Christ will come to live amongst them in his own person in bodily presence; but if he should come, how affectionately she would carry her self towards him. The Scripture acknowledgeth but a second coming of Christ in person, *Heb.* 9:28. But if he should appear in bodily presence, at the conversion of the Jews, and at the last judgement tooyhere mould be a third coming of his. The Churches supposition here doth not argue, he will come, for if he will come she need nor say, [[יְהוָה]], who shall give that he might be as a brother, &c?

*Object.* But God will fulfil the desires of his people,

*Answ.* Yea, their positive desires according to his will, but not all their supportive and conditional desires. It is enough that he fulfilled them in a powerful and plentiful coming of his Spirit amongst them.

*Use 2.* To teach us the time is coming when Churches, and good souls shall be affectionately, and openly, and freely carried on to the profession of Christ without all discouragment, and opposition,

*Use 3.* To teach Magistrates and Ministers, how to walk towards the Churches of Christ and his people. The Magistrates as Christ's left hand upholding their head. The Ministers as Christ's right hand embracing her.

*Use 4.* To teach us all these duties the Church here professeth; Open acknowledgement of Christ. No body here to disdain or reproach us for it. Bringing him into our Churches. Entertainment of his doctrine. Entertaining himself with cheerful affections, and duties; whether we be Officers or members of Churches; we have the same reasons for all these duties, for

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our National Rulers in Church and Commonwealth, where anciently we lived, showed forth all contrary malignity. The common people also rejected Christ, (as the Jews did) and many so as at this day, Away with him, crucify him, crucify him.

Besides, here we have the like encouragements, to embrace Christ, both from Magistracy, they uphold our head; Ministry, Christ embraceth us by them. We should therefore here behold the gracious embraces of Christ towards us with both hands in our Magistracy and Ministry.

*Use 5.* To charge all the members of our Churches (all the daughters of *Jerusalem*) to beware of unsettling our present tranquillity. This is the scope of ver. 4. The word is, Why should you stir up, &c? Why should you awake my love, &c? As if the Jews when they are converted shall have no cause to affect a change, or to be weary of present happiness, no more have we. See the like charge opened above, *Chap. 2:7.* and *Chap. 3:5.* Only here shall be in the Churches of the Jews, no Roes, or Hinds; no fearful Christians, ready to start away from them, upon any noise of fear, and disturbance, as in former times.

#### Chap. 8. Ver. 5.

*5. (Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, 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.*

W

E have seen the description of the Church of the Jews both in *Jerusalem*, Gh. 6:10 to c.7:10. & afterwards of their Church gathered in the Country-Towns, and Villages, *Chap. 7:11.* to *Chap. 8:4.* Now the Holy Ghost proceedeth to describe another Church after both the former. This New Church it described, 1. By the new and unexpected Rise of it, raising some inquiry after it, and admiration of it: who is this that cometh up, &c. By the place of her rising, out of the wilderness. 3. By her gesture and carriage towards Christ, leaning on her beloved. 4. By the causes, 1. Principal, Christ. 2. Instrumental, the Church of the Jews. 3. Adjuvant, Christian Magistracy. 5. By the means and opportunity of her raising, under

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an Apple-tree, under which, 1. Christ raised her, I raised thee up under an Apple-tree. 2. Her mother brought her forth and bare her.

*Who is this that cometh up out of the Wilderness?*] We had the like enquiry before of the Church, which was gathered and raised by the Ministry of *John Baptist* in the Wilderness of *Judea*, Cant. Cant. 3:6. It were a needless Tautology, if we should here speak of the same Church again: or or the Catholic Church in general. The new inquiry here argueth an Historical context of this whole Song, and now pointeth at the rise of a new Church after all the former.

Who is this?] Implyeth, 1. Inquisition after this new Church.

2. Observation of her.

*Out of the Wilderness*] Where and what this wilderness shall be, may be gathered from some other Prophetical Scriptures, when a glorious Church shall be erected among the Jews (signified by *Ezekiel's* goodly Temple, *Chap.* 47.) The waters of the Sanctuary, to wit, the Holy Ghost, and his Spiritual gifts, *John* 7:38,39. Flowing in his Ordinances, shall go forth thence Eastward, and go down into the desert (or wilderness) and from thence spread themselves far and nigh, *Ezek.* 47:1,2, to 8,9. This desert or wilderness Eastward from *Judea* is the wilderness of *Arabia*. Whence it is that this Church arising out of the wilderness is said to come leaning upon her beloved in an Arabian word [[מתרפקת]]. As in like sort when the Holy Ghost above spake of the Babylonian captivity or winter he useth a Babylonian or Chaldean word [[חססח]], *Cant.* 2:11. Now from this desert, these waters of the Sanctuary shall still flow further Eastward to *Assyria* and afterward Southward towards *Egypt*; whence we read of those Nations added to the Church; and consociated to the Churches of *Israel*, *Isaiah* 19: 23, 24, 25.

Leaning upon her beloved, expresseth, 1. Her confidence on Christ, leaning and resting on him. 2. Her familiar Acquaintance and amiable acquiescence in him.

*I raised thee up under an Apple-tree*] Christ acknowledgeth his own handy work, in causing this Church to be raised there; for it is his hand that raiseth Churches and gathereth them out of the World, yet by the use of means.

The means were, 1. The opportunity and help of some godly Christian Magistrate. For so an Apple-tree was meant above, *Cant.* 2:3. An Apple tree is not so high and eminent as the Ce-

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dars of *Lebanon*, nor so strong as the Oaks of *Bashan*: but yet his shadow is good, and his fruit savoury and cordial, *Cant.* 2:3, 5. 2. The travel and earnest endeavours of the Churches of the Jews, dealing effectually with this Magistrate to admit of some godly Preachers amongst them, by whose spiritual and powerful Ministry this Church was brought forth. For godly Minuters, and by them Churches, travel in birth, bring forth Churches to God, *Gal.* 4:9. And the Church of the Jews sending them forth is said as a woman with child to bring forth and bear this Church under this Apple-tree or Magistrate, Text.

*Doct.* 1. It is worthy serious inquiry and observation, a Church in a wilderness leaning herself upon Christ, and raised up by him through the travel of another Church under the shadow and help of a Christian Magistracy.

*Reas.* 1. From the glorious power & grace of Christ manifested and magnified in such a work. It is a gracious power to call any to be a people that were not a people, *Rom.* 9:25,26. But how much greater to make a wilderness, a Garden of God *Isaiah* 41:18,19,20. A wilderness to blossom like a Rose, *Isaiah* 35:1,2.

*Reas.* 2. From the great estrangement of the Arabians from God & his Church in former times, *Ps.* 120:5. [*Kedarens* were Arabians, *Isaiah* 21:13, to 17.] *Jeremiah* 3:2. *Nehemiah* 2:19. and 4:7,8. *Paul* spent toward three years amongst them in his first times of Ministry, *Gal.* 1:17. but we read of little success there.

*Reas.* 3. From the lothness of inferior Magistrates to adventure innovations and reformations in Religion without direction from sovereign authority.

*Use* 1. To teach us us to observe the like gracious & powerful work of Christ in raising up these Churches, in this wilderness, and here to give us to lean upon him for, 1. Provision. 2. Protection. 3. Salvation. And all this under such Magistrates, as are not of highest and strongest estate; Apple-trees indeed, but not Oaks nor Cedars. *Use* 2. To teach us here to lean upon Christ: which *Rabshakeh* reviled in *Hezekiah*. To lean, 1. not only with a child-like confidence, as a child upon a father. 2. But with a spouse-like familiar acquaintance, acquainting him with all our ways, and doing all with him and for him. A spouse keepeth house with her husband, and for him: so should we keep our Shops, and Ships, & Courts, & Churches, all with him, and for him. *Use* 3. To acknowledge this work to be of Christ, I raised thee up. 4. To teach Christian Magistrates, though not of highest rank to adventure with Christian courage, upon the like work

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of helping forward Church-work. *Use 5.* To reach Churches to use all their interest in Christian Magistrates, to labour the propagation of Churches under their jurisdiction. There thy mother brought thee forth. *Use 6.* For Comfort, if Christ raised us up, Satan and all his Instruments cannot pull us down.

**Chap. 8, Ver. 6,7.**

*6. Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death jealousy is as cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals 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.*

**T**His new Church coming out of the wilderness we heard described in the former *verse*, 1. By her new unexpected rise, raising up some inquisition after her, and admiration of her: who is this that cometh up? 2. By the place of her rising, our of the wilderness. 3. By her familiar free carriage towards him: leaning upon her beloved. 4. By the causes of his raising up—  
 1. Principal, Christ, I raised thee up. 2. Instrumental, 1. The Church of the Jews, thy mother brought thee forth, &c. 2. The Christian Magistrate, though of inferiour height, yet sweet and fruitful, an Apple-tree. 5. By her zealous and fervent love, expressed both, 1. In her earnest prayer and desire, set me as a seal, 1. Upon thy heart. 2. Upon thy arm. 2. In the reasons of her desire, which are all taken from the entireness of true love, that is, 1. From the strength of it: for love is strong: set forth by a simile of death. 2. From the hardness of it: Zeal is hard (or cruel) as the grave. 3. From the ardency of it, as coals of fire, as flames of God, *ver. 6.* 4. From the prevalency of it, and unconquerable constancy against and above, 1. All afflictions: much water cannot, &c. 2. All wordly baits and profits, all the substance, &c. *ver. 7.*

*A Seal]* Is either, 1. The Instrument of sealing (or printing) an Image or Character. 2. The Character or Image imprinted. In this latter sense it is taken here, as who should say, Let me be deeply engraven upon thine Heart, Arm. Alluding to the en-

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graving of the Names of the twelve tribes of *Israel* open precious stones, 1. In the breast-plate, *Exod.* 28:29. 2. On the arm, or shoukder of the high Priest, when he went into the Holy of holies, *Exod.* 28:11,12. Now because the high Priest was thus to bear their Names, when he went into the Holy of holies, 1. To present the blood of the sacrifice before the Lord, *Levit.* 16:14, to 17. 2. To burn incense of a sweet perfume to cover the mercy-seat, *Lev.* 16:12,13. Therefore the desire of the spouse here, is, That the Lord Jesus would present to the Father, 1. His death for her. 2. His continual incense for her. Also because, 1. The heart is the seat of the will and affection. 2. The arm and shoulders of strength, 1. To Support us. 2. To defend us. Therefore the desire of the spouse is hear, that she might still have a near place, 1. In his deep affection. 2. In his powerful Protection, Provision.

*Doct.* 1. It is the earnest desire of the spouse of Christ, (whether Church or Soul) to be deeply possessed of his love, and power, and both of them to be employed to her succour and comfort. This desire affecteth, 1. To be graciously (that is) Affectionately. 2. Strongly commended to the Father in the intercession of Christ. 2. That Christ would manifest his Deep Love, Strong Power to us, partly, 1. By declaring the same in us, and for us, deep love or tender mercy, *Psalms* 79:8. and 90:14. Strong power, *Psalms* 74:11 and 98:1. *Isaiah* 52:10. 2. By engraving in us, 1. Deep love in our hearts towards him. 2. Power of his Spirit in all our holy duties, 2 *Tim.* 1:7. Now because the Tttefa doth not limit the love here spoken of to Christ's love, or his spouses, I will extend it to both hence take

*Reason* of doctrine from them both, 1. From the power of Christ's love to us; For, 1. It is strong as death. 1. He suffered death for us, *John* 15:13. *Rom.* 5:8. He overcame death for us, and therefore his love was as strong as death, yea, stronger, *Hos.* 13:24. 2. The zeal, or jealousy of it, is hard as the grave. 1. It swalloweth all opposition in all persons, *Isaiah* 37:33. *Numbers* 16:32. 2. It burieth all offences, *Psalms* 103:3. 3. It is ardent, the coals hereof are coals of fire; a flame of God, most vehement; as Harps of God, *Rev.* 15:2. are most pleasant cedars of God, *Psalms* 8:10. most eminent: so flames of God are most vehement. Most vehement, 1. As debasing herself from the Height of all Glory to the Depth of all misery for our sake, *Phil.* 2:6,7,8. 2 *Cor.* 8:9. 2. As overcoming our hatred with the fervency of his love, *Coloss.* 1:21. 3. As burning up with devouring judge-



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ments, enemies, *Numb.* 16:35. 4. It is most prevalent, 1. Over all that might quench it, deep waters, 1. Of our corruptions *Psal.* 65:3. *Micah* 7:19. 2. Of Crosses, *Heb.* 12:2,3. Overall profers or preferment and ease, *Matth.* 4:9,10. *Matth.* 16:22, 23.

*reas.* 2. From the power of our love to Christ by his grace, 1. It also is strong as death, for his Name's sake. *Rev.* 12:12. 2. It's rigid as the grave, 1. Swallowing all difficulties *Acts* 21:13. *Dan.* 3:17,18. 2. Burying all offences, 1 *Pet.* 4:8. 3. Ardent; as burning up all green lusts .4. Prevalent against, 1. Warriors of Afflictions, *Psal.* 44:17. 2. Creature-comforts *Matth.* 19. *ver.* 27.

*Use* 1. To teach us what measure of Love to desire of Christ, such as may present us daily in his intercessions and presence before his Father (as opened above) with Deep affection, Strong power. The very earnest desire of such a love of Christ to usward, is a good evidence, that Christ hath set himself as a seal on our hearts, and arms.

*Use* 2. For unspeakable comfort, to the spouses of Christ, that Christ should so love us, as so to present us to the Father, so to overcome death for us, so to bury our offences, so to burn up our lusts, so to prevail against our changes of swelling inundations, and floods of Passion.

*Use* 3. To teach us how to love Christ, to set him as a seal on our Hearts, Arm: To die for him: To swallow up all opposition against Christ, and to admit no composition to forgo him: To burn up all green lusts from him; To overcome all Afflictions for his Name's sake, *Acts* 21:13. Creature comforts, *Luke* 14:26.

*Use* 4. To teach us how to love one another, 1 *Hohn* 4:11. & 3:16. especially this as a pattern, as to brethren and sisters, so chiefly to spouses and yolk-fellows.

#### Chap. 8. Ver. 8, 9, 10.

8. *We have a little sister, and she has no breasts: What shall we do for our sister, on 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 door, we will enclose her with eboards of cedar.*

IO . *I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one who found favour.*

**W**E have heard of the estate of the Jewish Churches both of them gathered *Jerusalem*, from *Chap. 6:10.* to *Chap. 7:10.* As also of them gathered in the Country-Villages, *Chap. 7:1* to *Chap. 8:4.* Afterwards we have had another Church, rising out of the wilderness (a Church in Arabia, and so *Hast. ward to Assyria*) described, *ver. 15,6,7.* Now we have a conference and consultation of these Elder Churches (in *Jerusalem* the Villages of *Judea* and in *Arabia*) about a little younger Sister-Church rising up after them in these *verses 8,9,10.*

In describing whereof we have set forth, 1. The conference and communication of these elder sisters about the estate of this younger sister; wherein they do acknowledge, 1. Her as a sister, 2. Her Minority, a little sister. 3. Her defect of breasts, she hath no breasts. 2. Their consultation what to do for her against the time of speech for her, what shall we do for our sister, &c? *ver. 8.* 3. Their resolution what to do, *ver. 9.* according as they find her furnished with a wall, or a Door. 4. The satisfaction given them by their younger sister, setting forth, 1. Her comfortable estate, 1. As a Wall. 2. As full-breasted. 2. The cause of both, the savour of Christ, *ver. 10.*

*Use 8. We have little sister]* These be the words of the Churches of *Jerusalem* and *Judea* together with that of *Arabia* and so upward to *Africa*, touching another Church springing up after them, which seemeth to be the Churches in *Egypt*, mentioned, *Isaiah 19:18.* Not the whole Nation peopled with Churches, but five Cities, and therefore little increase of churches in *Egypt*, in comparison of what great store of Churches were found in *Egypt* in the primitive times, when *Alexandria* was made *Pariachal.*

*And she has no breasts]* No Ministers to give them the sincere milk of the Word: nor other means of succour, & consolation in their oppressions and distresses, at their first arising, *Isaiah 19:20.*

*In the day that she shall be spoken for:]* At such a time when Christ shall send his Ambassadors to publish glad tidings of his love to her.

*If she be a Wall]* That is, if she be furnished with a Christian Magistracy. The Christian Magistrate is as a Wall, 1. High to keep out invasions of enemies & other evils; 2. Close to keep the people within bounds from breaking out into dis-

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orders. 3. Firm, whereon to erect any good course, for the public good of present and future ages. 4. Of partition, to divide between right and wrong, to give every man his civil right.

*We will build upon her a silver palace]* We will make her government both, Honourable, Wealthy.

*Ver. 9. If she be a Door]* That is, if she be furnished with a faithful Ministry, which as a Door openeth the way to Christ, that the people may go in and out, and find pasture. They open, 1. Our wants to God in prayer. 2. God's Word to us in preaching. They open and shut the doors of the Kingdom of Heaven (that is, of the Church) in the, 1. Admission of Members. 2. Censure of Offenders.

*We will enclose her with boards of Cedar]* Cedar is a Timber-Tree both, 1. Sweet, 2. Durable, it rotteth not, nor breeds worms; whence it is sometime coupled with immortality: whence also the *Simulachra* (the images,) of the Heathen gods were made of this wood, that they might seem eternal. [*Plin. l. 13.c.5*] These Sister-Churches then do promise, that if their little Sister Church of *Egypt*, have any fit persons for the Ministry, they will provide for their sweet, & peaceable accommodation, that they may not be disturbed in their work or calling.

*Ver. 10. I am a Wall]* This little sister of *Egypt* resolveth her Sister-Churches, she wanteth neither of those blessings, which they were careful to supply her with. *I am a Wall]* And so want not protection of Christian Magistrates.

*My breasts are as Towers]* So I want not Ministers, nor want they store of milk, which she acknowledged to spring from the favour of Christ. Then was I as one that found favour in his eyes.

*Doct. 1. Neighbour-Churches should carry a sisterly relation and affection to one another, and a mutual care of one anothers good, or Neighbour-Churches; as they have a sisterly relation, so they should carry a sisterly affection, and mutual communion one with another. Sisters they be, 1. As spouses to Christ. 2. As all begotten by the same father, of the same immortal seed of his Word and Spirit, Jam. 1:18. A sisterly relation, 1. As all of them equal, free from subjection to one another. For 1. What each Church binds and loosech, is done in Heaven, Matth. 18:18. 2. One Church is not chargeable with anothers offences, as in the seven Churches of Asia, Rev. 2. and chap 3. 2. All of them furnished with supreme Church power within*

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themselves. For, 1. Heaven is only above them, *Matth.* 18:18.  
2. All of them Princes daughters, *Cant.* 7:1.

*Object.* *Cant.* 8:5. Thy mother, &c.

*Answ.* A Mother, for Conversion, Propagation. But she her self here calleth sister.

*Use* 1. Against usurpation of one Church over another, whether in the, 1. Papacy. 2. Hierarchy. 3. Presbytery.

*Use* 2. To teach Churches to beware of Cainish sleighting this duty, *Gen.* 4:9. But on the contrary to walk in all brotherly communion and affection one to another.

*Use* 1. To instruct Churches willingly to accept brotherly offices one from another, as of counsel, admonition, &c. Where consultation is requisite counsel should be attended.

*Doct.* 2. Magistrates should be as Walls, and Ministers as Doors to the Churches of Christ. See it opened, how, and wherein, in opening the words above, *pag.* 149. *Cant.* 5:7.

*Reas.* From the commission of the Keys to them, *Matth.* 16:19. *John* 20:23.

*Use* 1. To refute Anabaptistical Cavillers. Higher powers in, *Rom.* 13:1. is not meant Christ, no more then that, 1 *Pet.* 2:13, 14, 15.

*Use* 2. To teach Magistrates their duty.

*Use* 3. To teach us Ministers to attend to this duty.

*Doct.* 3. It is a Christian care of Churches, to strengthen the hands both of their Magistrates and Ministers: We will build upon the Wall a silver palace; we will enclose her doors with boards of Cedar, 1 *Cor.* 16:10.

*Doct.* 1. They may possess them with conscience of duty to higher powers.

*Use* To attend to this duty.

*Doct.* 1. It is a gracious favour of Christ to his Churches, when they neither want Christian Magistrates, nor fruitful Ministers: Then was I as one that found peace for favour in his sight.

*Reas.* These are the two hands or arms of Christ whereby he embraceth his spouse, *Cant.* 2:6. [See the Notes upon it.]

*Use* 1. To reprove their conceit, who affect higher attainments even to be above Magistracy, Ministry.

*Use* 2. To teach us to behold the favour of Christ in our present condition.

## Chap. 8. Ver. 11,12.

11. *Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-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.*

**W**E have seen the description of the state of the Eastern Churches, after the calling of the Jewish Church, both in *Jerusalem*, in the Villages of *Judea*, in the wilderness of *Arabia* to *Assyria*, and lastly in *Egypt*. Now in these words to the end he setteth forth the common state of the whole Church by five arguments. 1. By Christ's gracious continual presence with her, and watchfulness over her, *ver. 11,12*. 2. By the place of her habitation, she dwelleth in the Gardens, *ver. 13*. 3. By the respect the neighbour-Churches and people bear her, 1. As companions, 2. As attendants hearkening to her voice, *ver. 13*. 4. By Christ's call for her voice to him, cause me to hear it, *ver. 13*. 5. By her prayer for Christ speedy coming to judgement, *ver. 14*.

For the first, The gracious presence of Christ with her, and watchful protection over her, is set forth, by a comparison of unequals or things unlike, to wit, between the carriage of *Solomon* to his Vineyard, and of our *Solomon*, our Christ to his Vineyard or Church. The dissimilitude lyeth in four things. 1. *Solomon* had a Vineyard remote from him in *Baal-hamon*: Christ hath his before him under his eye. 2. *Solomon* let out his Vineyard unto keepers; Christ keepeth his in his own hand.

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3. *Solomon's* keepers paid him not in kind, but in money, in a thousand silverlings; Christ takes all the increase of his Vineyard to himself. 4. In the wages of the keepers: the keepers of *Solomon's* Vines paying to *Solomon* a thousand silverlings, they had all the increase of the fruits to themselves; But Christ alloweth a fifth part to the keepers or dressers: To them that keep the fruit two hundred reserving to himself the chief fruit. The Vineyard of Christ is his Church, *Isaiah* 5:7. and 27:1. *Solomon's* Vineyard was a natural vineyard, a close or yard of natural Vines.

*In Baal-hamon*] Which was some fruitful place of Vines, *Baal* and *Hamon* both importing excellency of increases thousand silverlings was the usual price of a Vineyard, *Isaiah* 7:23.

*Doct.* 1. It is no bad husbandry in Princes to let out their husbandry to Farmers at a reasonable rate. A reasonable rate I conceive it here held forth, when the chief profit redoundeth to the owner, and a due recompence is reserved to the Farmer.

*Solomon* let out his Vineyard here to Farmers, who payed to him a thousand silverlings, and he reserved to him either a fifth part (two hundred of a thousand) or what ever they could make above the rent.

*Reas.* of letting it out, 1. From the need which Princes may have of all sorts of provisions, which will be the better and the freer from the people's burdens, when it is supplied out of their own store, *Eccles.* 5:9. 1 *Chron.* 27:27. as more fully from *ver.* 25, to 31. *Prov.* 27:23, to 27.

*Reas.* 2. From the greater and weightier employment which God calleth Princes and other men of public callings unto, *Psal.* 78:70, 71, 72. which taketh them off from husbandry. And therefore the'y must put forth their husbandry into other men's hands, who may with more skill and less distractions to themselves and others attend it.

*Reason* of such a rate, reserving a a fifth part to the Farmers, 1. From the owners double portion, as Lord of the soil, as his inheritance; and from a three-fold portion more due to him, 1. For seed and public charges. 2. For buildings, fencings and vessels. 3. For instruments of husbandry and beasts.

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*Reas.* 2. For a just recompence due to the labourers for their wages, *Gen.* 29:15.

*Use* 1. For warrant and encouragement to men of public or eminent callings, not to neglect husbandry, 2 *Chron.* 26:20; *Prov.* 17:23, to 17.

*Use* 1. To direct owners and Farmers to attend a reasonable proportion and rate of Revenues, Wages. A fifth part was then reasonable allowance to the Farmer.

*Object.* But *Joseph* referred but a fifth part to the chief Lord or owner, *Gen.* 47:24.

*Answ.* It was because the whole land became *Pharaohs*, *Gen.* 47:20. And meet it was the State should be kept a free State, that it might be more durable, and peaceable, and honourable.

*Doct.* 1. After the calling of the Jewish Churches, the Lord Jesus will keep all his Churches in his own eye and hand, and take all the increase in kind unto himself, and yet allow a fifth part for a recompence to the fruit-keepers, *ver.* 12. *Isaiah* 27:3. I will watch and keep it night and day *Cant.* 7:13. The fruits are laid up for thee, all the fruits in kind, to wit, their faith, their love, their obedience, their consciencious subjection, &c. These shall not be to the Ministers, but to Christ. A fifth part is reserved to the keepers (to wit, two hunched to them, a thousand to Christ) but a double portion to that of the Priests.

But this wages is given to them, as keeping not so much the Vineyard as the fruits, that is, not so much in regard of their relation to the Vineyard, as for their faithfulness in calling for fruit, and keeping them in a fruitful estate.

*Reas.* 1. From the bad returns have been made to Christ in times past, when he let out his Vineyard to husband-men, *Cant.* 1:6. *Matth.* 21:33 to 39.

*Reas.* 2. From Christ's care to prevent all annoyance to his Vineyard now, *Isaiah* 27:3.

*Reas.* 3. From the revenue due to Christ in kind, from all

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Spiritual Ordinances. The Ordinances are all of them Spiritual and Divine, and do sow good seed in his field. And therefore meet it should be returned in the like kind to the Spiritual Owner the Lord Jesus; not to Apostles, *Acts* 10. 25, 26.

*Reas.* 4. From the encouragement and maintenance Christ thinketh meet to be reached forth to such as labour in his Vineyard, especially to such as reserve fruits to Christ, *Matth.* 10:7. *1 Cor.* 9:7, 13. *1 Tim.* 5:17, 18. The fifth part is a double portion to the Levitical tenths.

*Use* 1. This will not argue the personal bodily presence of Christ on the Earth. His Spiritual presence will reach it.

*Use* 2. To expect a better watch to be kept over Churches then hath been found and seen in many ages.

*Use* 3. To teach Ministers and Churches to reserve all our fruits in kind to Christ. It is not enough to pay Christ in money in goodly Temples and monasteries, &c. but he looketh for all his returns in faith and love, and the obedience flowing both.

*Use* 4. To teach us Ministers to be fruit-keepers for Christ, and he will minister to us a fifth part.



## Chap. 8. Ver. 13.

13. *Thou that dwellest in the Gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it.*

**I**N this *Verse* the Church is described, 1. By the place of her habitation, Thou that dwellest in the Gardens. 2. By the mutual respect and relation they bear one to another, 1. As companions, 2. As attendants, hearkening to her voice. 3. By Christ's call for her voice to be lifted up to him, cause me to hear.

*Doct.* 1. The whole Church of Christ, in times of purest reformation resideth (or dwelleth) not in any one visible General assembly, but in many particular Churches. For thou that dwellest תילשבת being of the feminine gender, it argueth, the words are spoken by Christ to his spouse, the Church of those times. The Church of Christ in the whole body of it is one, *Ephes.* 5:23,24,25. *Heb.* 12:13. But this Church doth not dwell, nor present itself before God in one Catholic visible assembly: but as it is exant in the several particular Churches, as in so many several Gardens: whereto particular Churches have been resembled above, *Cant.* 4:12. and 6:2.

*Companion]* Are such as enjoy mutual, 1. Society. 2 Equality, 3. Familiarity, *Gal.* 1:2. and 22. *Rom.* 16:16.

*Reason* 1. From the defect of all provision, require for a general visible assembly. Christ hath provided, 1. No general Officers like the National high Priests in the Church of *Israel*, *Levit.* 16. The Apostles were but for a time, no provisions for any to succeed their general Office. Nor did they any general act of Office, save writing the Scriptures, preaching to infidels, baptizing the converted and their families though this last was to Church-members. All their other acts were in particular Churches. 2. No general worship like that in the

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Law, *Deut.* 16:16 with *Levit.* 16:3. No government by a general assembly. They never meet not such as thrice a year (as they did of old, *Deut.* 16:16.) The general Councils have been rare (not above six in sixteen hundred years:) & yet they were nor assemblies of all Churches. Neither do particular Churches derive their power from general Councils, but general Councils from them. If all should meet, they could not hear and determine all offences in all Churches. And it would be a great grievance, the major part being often corrupt, that they should rule all, even the purest Churches.

*Reason 2.* From the complete proportion of Christ's Institutions to particular Congregations, and of particular Congregations to Christ's Institutions, Church Officers, Church-Worship, Church-Government, *Matth.* 18:17; *1 Cor.* 5:4,5. And the ratification of this in Heaven admitteth no appeal to an higher assembly, *Matth.* 18:18.

*Use 1.* Against a Catholic visible Church; And against its being the first subject of all Church-power. It did never exercise it, never can.

*Use 2.* To argue a necessity of the separation of Churches from the World, else how do they dwell in Gardens, if the Church lie open to the wide wilderness?

*Use 3.* To teach Churches and Church-members to be savoury and fragrant as Gardens; purity of Churches, and Church-members hereto be attended.

*Use 4.* The Churches of Christ are equally and mutually companions one to another, and attendants one to the voice or another.

*Reason 1.* From their immediate equal relation to God in Christ. They are each of them alike, 1. The house of God, *1 Tim.* 3. *ver.* 15. 2. The spouse of Christ, *2 Cor.* 11. *ver.* 2. 3. The Temple of the Holy Ghost, *1 Cor.* 3. *ver.* 16.

*Reason. 2.* From their sisterly relation one to another, *Cant.* 8. *ver.* 8.

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*Reason* 3. From the exemption of one Church from the offences or another, which could not be, if one Church had power over another, *Ephesus* is nor taxed with the offences of *Corinth*.

*Use* 1. Against the usurpation and ambition of Cathedral Churches.

*Use* 2. To reprove the non-attendance of one Church to the voice of another, yea, of more.

*Doct.* 3. The more that others hearken unto us, the more need have we thar Christ should hear of us.

*Reas.* 1. From the end of one Churches hearkening to another: which is to hear the voice of Christ in the counsel and advice of their brethren. We had need hear what Christ will speak to us, that we may speak his mind (not our own) to them. Want of this made *Nathan* give rash advice to *David*, 2 *Sam.* 7:3.

*Use* 1. To teach Ministers to be much in prayer, That Christ may hear from us, seeing so many of his people hearken to us and to our Ministry, as to the Word of God, *Psalms* 85:8.

*Use* 2. To reach Churches, who are sent unto for counsel, to see that Christ hear from us, before we return answer.

## Chap. 8. 14.

14. *Make haste my beloved, and be thou like to a Roe, or to a young Hart upon the mountain of spices.*

**F**ROM the beginning of *ver. 11.* we have had a description of the Estate of the whole Church, from their time to the end of the World, which hath been set forth by five Arguments, 1. From Christ's continual presence with her, and watchfulness over her, *ver. 11, 12.*

2. By her place of habitation.

3. By the respect and relation one Church beareth to another; they are, 1. As Companions. 2. As attendants hearkening mutually each to other.

4. By Christ's all unto them, with the greater respect to hearken to him, *ver. 13.*

5. By the spouses prayer for Christ's speedy coming, for her translation into heavenly Glory, *ver. 14. Text.*

The words of the Text are the Prayer of the whole Church, that is, of all the Churches, when as all things shall have been accomplished, which the Prophets or Apostles have foretold; They will then be the more earnest in prayer, That Christ would hasten his second coming, as swiftly as the swiftest pleasant creatures, the Roe or young Hart, to come and take them up with himself into the highest Heavens, those mountains (as it were) of spices, where all manner of sweet, and fragrant, and pleasant things are to be found, even fulness of joys for evermore, *Psal. 16. ver. 11,* Thus in the end of the *Revelation* the Spirit and the Bride, and every faithful soul saith in the like sense, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, *Rev. 22:17, 20.*

*Doct. 1.* The spouse of Christ in her best times, doth earnestly desire his speedy coming, for her translation unto Heavenly glory, *Rev. 22:17, 20.*

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*Reason 1.* From the efficacy of the Spirit, to kindle such in ardent desire in the Church after Christ's second coming, to take his coming the more welcome. As at his first coming be kindled the like earnest desire in them after it: so here, *Hag.* 1:7. *Luk.* 2:25,26,29,30, and 38. *Matth.* 11:3.

*Reason 2.* From the end they have seen of all perfection of Ordinances, *Psalms* 119:96.

*Reason 3.* From the promise of Christ's speedy coming *Revelation* 12:20. and his desire, that they might come to his house, *John* 17. *ver.* 14.

*Reason 4.* From the spouses strong love to Christ, to enjoy more of himself face to face, *Phil.* 1:23. 2 *Tim.* 4:8. She hath hitherto enjoyed him in her house, now me would enjoy him in his own house.

*Object.* But before the last judgement, there will come a general drousy security, *Matth.* 25:5.

*Answer.* Such a pang may fall upon them, whilst the Bridegroom tarryeth long, as in the very Text, *Matth.* 25:5. But at that time they all went out to meet the Bridegroom, which argueth they Expected him, Desired him, *Matth.* 25:1.

*Use 1.* To reprove and convince the dangerous estate of such as do not desire the coming of the Lord, but put it far from them, *Amos* 6:3. Or else do desire it, but are not prepared for it, *Amos* 5:18,20. As all carnal and scandalous sinners, such as those mentioned, *Rev.* 21:8 and 22:15. Where amongst others Sorcerers and Witches are rejected. This sin is one of the worst kinds of rebellion, 1 *Sam.* 15:23, It is one of the most horrible kinds of Apostasy, *Jer.* 2:11,12,13. Yet *Mannasseh* recovered out of that, and other the like horrible wickedness, 2 *Chron.* 33:6. with *verses* 12, 13.

*Use 2.* To teach us to imitate this desire, it is an argument of a sincere and chaste heart: a chaste spouse desireth the hastening of her husband homeward she that would have her husbands; return delayed, 1 Either doubteth of his love. 2. Or is defective herself in love to him, and runneth a whoring after others. 3. Or is wandering from home out of her calling, where she would be loth her husband should find her.

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*Use 3.* To teach us to prepare for that day: else we desire our woe in desiring it. Means of preparation. 1. Oil, 1. Not only in our Lamps, that is, in our profession, *Matth.* 25:3. 2. But in our vessels, that is, in our faith uniting us to Christ, and deriving all supply from him, *Matth.* 25:4. 2. Watchfulness, *Luk.* 12:35,36. 3. Self-judging, *1 Cor.* 11:31.

*Use 4.* For comfort to such as seriously desire this day. It is a fruit of a spouses heart, Text. It is a pledge of a Crown of righteousness, *2 Tim.* 4:8. The place we are going to, is a mountain of spices, Text, *Psal.* 16:11. Christ will speedily hasten to fetch us thither: for this prayer of the Church in the Text, is a prophecy as well fore-telling what shall be, as desiring what we will should be. *Hebrews* 10:37.

**FINIS.**