



Fire and Ice Sermon Series

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Commentary on the Song of Songs, Chapter Seven

by James Durham

BRIDEGROOM.

Verses 1,2,3. [Introductory Comments]

This chapter hath two parts; in the first, reaching to the tenth verse, Christ continueth in the commendation of his Bride: in the second, thence to the close, the Bride expresseth her complacency in him and in his love, her enlarged desires after communion with him, and that she might be found fruitful to his praise.

That it is Christ, the Bridegroom, who was speaking in the end of the former chapter, that continues his speech throughout the first part of this, there is no just ground to question, the scope, style and expressions being so like unto, and co-incident with what went before; and what is spoken in the first person, verse 8, can be applied to none other, neither would it become any to speak thus but himself, his love is enlarged and loosed (as it were) in its expressions, and this love of his is indeed a depth, that is not easily reached. In this commendation, he doth first enumerate ten particulars (as she had done when she commended him, chap. 5) Then, 2. He shews his acquiescing in her, as being ravished with her beauty, verse 6, &c. We had occasion to say something in the general of such commendations, chap. 4:1, which is now to be remembered, but not repeated; we take this to be understood after the same manner as that was, and although the visible church be in some respect Christ's Bride, and therefore, we will not condemn the application of some of the parts of this commendation to her as so considered; yet, since the scope is mainly to comfort true believers, as differenced from others, and that it is she to whom he speaks, who had ravished him with her eyes in the former chapter (which can agree properly to the true believer only) and

considering also, that some parts of the commendation do respect inherent grace in his people (and indeed it is this, which is the great ground of the Bride's commendation) we therefore incline still to take these commendations, as holding forth the continuance of the expressions of Christ's love to those, who are his own by saving faith; and so much the rather, as the words being taken so, are of special and particular use for believers.

There are four differences in this commendation, from that mentioned, chap. 4, and that which was spoken to, on chap. 6:6,7, which by answering four questions, we shall clear.

Quest. 1. Wherefore is this subjoined now, after so large a commendation in the words immediately preceding. *Answer.* The former commendation shews Christ's love to his Bride (to say so) immediately after the marriage, or on the back of some agreement, after an outcast; but, this is added, to shew what is Christ's ordinary way of carriage to his people, and what are his usual thoughts (to say so) of them; he is not kind only at fits (as men sometimes use to be, and do not continue) or, when he was surprised (as it were) with a sudden gale of affection, chap. 6:12; no, he is constantly kind; and therefore, these expressions are now renewed, to show that such are his ordinary kind ways of dealing towards them, even when there is no connexion betwixt his dealing and their present condition, nor any thing in them that can be looked on as the immediate rise thereof. Our blessed Lord is a most fair, loving and friendly speaker unto, and converser with his Bride.

Quest. 2. Why is this commendation enlarged beyond the former, having more particulars in it? *Answer.* Thereby the Lord shews, 1. The sovereignty of his love, in making the intimations thereof, less or more as he pleaseth. 2. The last commendation is most full, in expressing the riches of his love, to shew that Christ never speaks so kindly to one of his own, but there is more behind in his heart than hath yet vented itself, and that there is more, which they may expect from him, than they have yet met with, however that may be very much. 3. It is to make it the fresher unto them, when by this it is evidenced to be a new intimation of his kindness, although it proceed on the same grounds, on which former intimations did and this may be a reason also of the third difference, and question following, which is,

Quest. 3. Why are the same parts named, as 'eyes, hair,' &c. and yet the commendation is different from what it was, for the most part? *Answer.* 1. This is to show the beauty of grace, which is such, that one commendation cannot reach it. 2. The account that he in his love hath of her, which is so great, that one

expression doth not fully answer it. The various and abundant ways, that love hath to speak comfortably to a believer, there is strange eloquence and rhetoric in the love of Christ, when he thinks good to vent it.

Quest. 4. Why is the way be followed before changed? He began formerly at the head, now at the feet? *Answer.* This is also a piece of his sovereignty, and shows how he delights to vary the expressions of his love to his people; and that it may be seen, that whatever way we will follow in looking upon grace in a believer, it is still beautiful in itself, and acceptable to him.

Verse 1. How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter! The joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.

The first verse contains two pieces of the Bride's commendation: the first part that is commended is the feet, 'How beautiful are thy feet!' &c. In this consider the title she gets. 2. The part commended. 3. The commendation itself. 4. The manner of expressing of it. First, The title is, 'O prince's daughter!' This was not given her before, it is now prefixed to this commendation in general, to usher in all that follows, and to make it the more gaining on her affection: the word in the first language is, Nadib, which signifies a bounteous prince, or, one of a princely disposition, Isa. 32:5. It is given to the visible church, Psalm 45:13, 'The King's daughter is all glorious within.' For more full taking up of the meaning, consider, that it doth here include these three, 1. A nobleness and greatness in respect of birth, that the Bride is honourably descended; from which we may learn, That believers (whatever they be in respect of the flesh) are of a royal descent and kindred, 'a royal priesthood,' 1 Pet. 2:9, 'Sons and daughters to the Lord God Almighty,' 2 Cor. 6:18. 2. It respects her qualifications, as being princely in her carriage, suitable to such a birth, Eccles. 10:17. Hence observe, the believer should be of a princely disposition and carriage, and when he is right, he will be so; for, he is endued with princely qualifications, with noble and excellent principles beyond the most generous, noble, gallant, and stately dispositions of men in the world: a believer when right, or in good case, is a princely person indeed. 3. It respects her provision and expectation; that she is provided for, waited upon, and to be dealt with, and even caressed not as children of mean persons, but of princes, to whom it is her 'Father's good pleasure to give a kingdom,' and such a one as is 'undefiled, and fadeth not away,' Luke 12:32; 1

Pet. 1:4. Hence observe, That the believer is royally dealt with by Jesus Christ, and hath a royal princely allowance bestowed on him; the charter of adoption takes in very much, even to 'inherit with him all things:' no less than this may be expected, and is the claim of a daughter to the King of kings, Rev. 21:7.

2. The part commended is, 'the feet,' by which a believer's walk and conversation, as grace shines in it, is understood, as we may see frequently, Psalm 119:verses 59,101,105. So likewise shedding of blood, or other defiling sins, such as leave foul prints upon a man's conversation behind them are called the 'iniquities of the heels,' Psalm 49:5, by which the nakedness and offensiveness of one's conversation is set forth: and on the contrary, the Bride's feet thus commended, sets out her good conversation.

3. Her feet are commended from this, that they are not bare, but, 'beautiful with shoes.' To be bare-footed, imports three things in scripture, 1. A shameful condition, Isa. 20:4. 2. A present sad affliction, the sense whereof makes men careless of what is adorning; so David, 2 Sam. 15:30, under heavy affliction, walks bare-footed.. 3. An unfitness for travel; therefore, when the people were to be in readiness for their journey, Exod. 12:11, their feet were to be shod: so then, to have on shoes, doth on the contrary import three things, 1. The honourable estate and dignity to which believers are advanced; and more especially, it holds out a singular beautifulness in their walk, whereby their shame is covered. 2. A thriving in their spiritual condition. 3. A readiness and promptness of obedience, to what they are called unto all which are beautiful in themselves, and adorning to the believer. We take it, in a word, to hold out a conversation, such 'as becomes the gospel,' Philip. 1:27, which is, to have 'the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,' Eph. 6:15, because, that as by shoes, men are enabled to walk without hurt in rough ground, and are in the company of others not ashamed of their nakedness; so, a gospel conversation quiets the mind, keeping it in peace against difficulties, and doth exceedingly strengthen the confidence of believers in their conversing with others, and becomes exceeding lovely, that they care not (as it were) who see them; as, Ezek 16:10. 'I shod thee,' &c. Whereas a disorderly conversation is shameful, even like one that is bare-footed.

4. The manner of the expression is, to aggrege the loveliness of a well ordered walk. 'How beautiful are thy feet with shoes!' It cannot be told how beautiful a tender and well ordered conversation is; it is exceeding lovely, and acceptable to me (saith he) to see thy holy walk.

Observe. 1. Our Lord Jesus takes notice of every step of a believer's carriage, and can tell whether their feet be shod or bare, whether their

conversation be such as adorneth or shameth the gospel. 2. The believer hath, or at least ought to have, and, if he be like himself, will have a well ordered walk, and will be in his carriage stately and princely. 3. A conversation, that is well ordered, is a beautiful and pleasant thing: grace, exercised in a Christian's practice, is more commendable to Christ, than either greatness, riches, wisdom, or what the world esteems most of; none of these hath such a commendation from Christ, as the believer, who, it may be, is not much in the world's esteem: practical holiness is a main part of spiritual beauty, and is valuable above speculative knowledge and many gifts. 4. Believers should be walking creatures, therefore hath the new nature feet; that is, they should be much in the practice of holy duties, according to the commands he hath given in his word: and in their way they should be making progress towards perfection; for, that is their mark, Phil. 3:13. Sitting still, or negligence, much more going backward, is unlike a believer. 5. The conversation of all others, though never so fair'd with much civility, and great profession, and many parts, is yet naked and abominable before God, and subject to bruising, stumblings, and such inconveniences as feet that are bare are liable to. 6. A well ordered walk is sure and safe: 'He that walks uprightly walks surely,' Prov. 10:9. And, saith the Psalmist, 'Great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them,' Psalm 119:165. Their feet are shod against an evil time, and there is nothing safer when offences abound than that.

The second part of the commendation is to the same scope, 'The joints of thy thighs,' &c. It is the coupling and turnings of them, as the word hears; they are also useful in motion, and help the feet to stir, the same thing is intended as in chap. 5:15, by his thighs or legs; only it seems to look to the principles of their walk, as the feet do respect their way more immediately: these are compared to jewels, which are precious and comely, serving much for adorning; and it is not to ordinary jewels, to which they are compared, but such as are the 'work of the hands of a cunning skilful artificer, or workman,' that is, such as are set orderly and dexterously, by skill and art; the work, not of a novice, but of one that is expert; by which, not only the matter of their practice is holden forth to be solid, hut also, in respect of the principles from which their way and duties have their spring and rise and the manner of their performing them, they are rightly gone about, with an holy kind of art and dexterity: which saith, 1. That there are many things necessarily concurring in a well ordered conversation; there must be skill to do rightly, what is in itself right, to make it commendable: it is needful that holy duties, and what is on the matter called for, be done in the right manner, and according to art, and not put by thus, and so. 2. Believers are singularly expert, in doing of the same duties of religion which other men do, they do them in another manner. 3. The several pieces of a holy walk, are in a manner but split, when not

rightly ordered, and every one put in its own place, like jewels undexterously set by one that is unskilful. 4. There is an holy art required to those that would walk commendably, and men naturally are unskilful in such practices, until they be taught them. 5. Being right in the manner, is no less necessary to make a man's way commendable, than to be right in the matter, as much of the commendation lies in this, as in the other; when these two go together in a believer's conversation, it is excellent and beautiful; there is no jewel, most finely set, comparable to a well ordered walk. 6. Believers that use to walk in the way of godliness, may attain to this spiritual dexterity and skilfulness in a great measure: and there is no other way of attaining it, but by accustoming ourselves to it; when her feet are once shod, this commendation follows, that 'the joints of her thighs are like jewels.'

Verse 2. Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies.

In the second verse, the Lord proceeds from the 'thighs,' to the 'navel' and 'belly:' which parts, were not touched in her commendation, chap. 4. These parts in men's bodies have not much beauty in them; and therefore, it seems, that by them the Lord points rather at what is inward and useful, in the spiritual complexion and constitution of believers, than what is outward and visible in their walk, that serving no less to their commendation than this.

The navel hath much influence on the intestines; and when it is sound, it furthers much the health of the whole body; so, Prov. 3:8, it is said, the fear of the Lord 'shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones;' that is, it will be exceeding useful and profitable for thy well-being, as it is useful for the body to have that part in good case: and, on the contrary, a wretched miserable condition (such as is our condition by nature) is described by this, 'thy navel was not cut,' &c. Ezek. 16:4. It is known also, that in nature, the navel hath much influence on the child in the womb, which may be especially taken notice of here, as appears by the following commendation, namely, that it 'is like a round goblet,' that is, well formed and proportioned (opposite to a 'navel not cut,' Ezek. 16:4. 'which wanteth not liquor,' that is, furnished with moisture for the health of the body, or entertainment and nourishment of the child in the womb.

Before we further clear the words, or observe any thing from them, we shall join to this the fourth part here commended, and that is, the 'belly:' the word

differs in the original, from that which is translated belly: being spoken of him, chap. 5:14, and it is taken for the inward parts, Jer. 15:35; Prov. 18:8. It hath a special influence on the health of the body, and on the bringing forth of children: it is here compared to ‘an heap of wheat;’ to ‘an heap,’ to shew her bigness, as being with child, and still fruitful, and that in abundance: to ‘an heap of’ the grain of ‘wheat,’ to shew, it was not big with wind, but with good grain, even the best, whereby she feeds him herself, and others: and so, as in the former similitude, she is represented to be furnished with liquor, so here she is set forth to be furnished with bread, whereby her spiritual liveliness and healthfulness may be understood. Again, this heap of wheat is said to be ‘set about with lilies,’ not only thereby to express its beautifulnes, with its usefulness, but also the fruitfulness thereof, in having particular graces as lilies growing about it, which are moistened and nourished by these two parts; the navel and the belly. Now we conceive, that most likely (though it be hard to be peremptory) the graces of the Spirit may be understood here, which being infused in their habits, and drawn forth in their actings by the influences of the Spirit, are compared to waters and liquor, and are said to be in the belly of the believer, John 7:38, (‘He that believes on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of waters’) because they have such influence on the new man, and (to speak so) are the health of the navel thereof. In sum, the sense of the words comes to this, O prince’s daughter, thou hast a lively spiritual constitution, by the inward flowings of the Spirit, whereby thy navel is formed and beautified (which was by nature otherwise) and therefore thou art not barren, but fruitful, and that of the most precious fruits. Hence observe, 1. That believers’ inward constitution and frame, is no less beautiful than their out-ward conversation and walk: this ‘King’s daughter is all glorious within,’ Psalm 45:13. 2. Soundness within, or heart-soundness is no less needful than outward fruits, for completing a believer’s commendation; to have the navel well formed, is as necessary and requisite, as to have the feet beautiful with shoes. 3. Inward liveliness, or a well furnished inside, hath most influence on a believer’s liveliness in all external duties: this keeps all fresh, being like precious liquor which makes Christ’s Spouse fruitful and big, and that not with wind, but wheat.

Verse 3. Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.

The two breasts (which is the fifth part here commended) are spoken to in this third verse: they were spoken of, chap. 4:5, with the same commendation, and we conceive the same thing hinted there, is aimed at here, namely to shew, that as she was healthful in herself, and prosperous (like that which is said, Job 21:24, 'his breasts are full of milk') so was she both fitted to communicate, and loving in communicating the graces that was in her, as nurses their milk to their children: which clears, that the scope in short is to shew, that the believer is not only a beautiful bride, but a fruitful mother for bringing forth, verse 2, and nourishing and bringing up, verse 3, which was (especially in those times) a great commendation of a wife, and a thing that engaged husbands to them, Psalm 128:3; Gen. 29:34, as on the contrary, barrenness was a reproach to themselves, and a burden to their husbands: now, Christ's Bride hath breasts, and is furnished as becomes a mother and a wife, contrary to that of the 'little sister,' chap. 8:8, whose desolate condition is set out by this, that 'she had no breasts;' and this is repeated particularly, to shew the Lord's particular taking notice thereof, and his respect thereunto.

Verse 4. Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fish-pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim; thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus.

In the fourth verse, three more of the Bride's parts (which make the sixth, seventh, and eighth) are commended. The sixth is the neck: it was spoken of, chap. 4:4, neither doth the commendation differ much: there, it was said to be like 'the tower of David,' here it is 'as a tower of ivory,' that is, both comely and precious, being made of the elephant's teeth, a tower whereof, must be very precious: and by this we conceive, the great defensive efficacy of faith is set forth, which is still a tower, yet comparable to many, it is so excellent and sure; they dwell safely who are believers, because they dwell in God, and in his Son, Jesus Christ. And so we may here observe, 1. Faith is a precious defence; for, Christ is a precious biding-place, and faith must be precious, because Christ is precious: hence it is not only precious as ivory, but 'much more precious than gold,' 1 Pet. 1:7. 2. Faith is a sure defence, and is the believer's tower, where to he betakes himself when he hath to do. 3. It is lovely and pleasant to Christ, when believers by faith betake themselves to him; he will never quarrel with them for it, seeing he

so commends it. 4. There is no safe tower to any of the world, but what the believer hath; for, he, and he only, hath a tower of ivory to make use of: Christ is the only rock and sure foundation, and it is only believers that build their house upon him.

The seventh part instanced, is ‘her eyes,’ which were several times mentioned before; they point at her spiritual discerning, and understanding of spiritual things, and the believing uptaking of them; in which respect, all natural men are blind, because of their ignorance and unbelief; she only hath eyes. They are compared to ‘fish-pools in Heshbon, at the gate of Bathrabbim:’ this city Heshbon is mentioned, Num. 21:25,26. It was a royal city, where Sihon king of the Amorites dwelt; and it is like, there hath been some place there called Bethrabbim, for the great resort that was made thereunto: and the fish-pools that were there, it seems, were excellent and clear, and fit to give a shadow to those who looked into them. Now it would seem, that believers’ eyes are compared to these pools, because of the clear, distinct, and believing knowledge they have of themselves, of Christ, and of other spiritual objects. And from this we may observe, 1. That solid and distinct knowledge in spiritual things, is very commendable. 2. That a believer hath another kind of insight in spiritual things, than the most understanding natural man: he hath eyes in respect of him; the natural man (who hath no experimental nor believing knowledge of spiritual things) is but blind. 3. He is sharpest sighted that discerns himself, and can rightly take up his own condition; ‘the wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way:’ so believers’ eyes, or knowledge, is compared to a fish pond, that gives representations of a man’s face to him.

The eighth particular is, the nose, (it was not mentioned in her commendation, chap. 4). It is not to be taken here for the whole countenance, but for apart thereof therefore it is distinguished from the eyes, and is described as being eminent (like a tower) beyond the rest of the face, and so it is to be applied to the nose properly, which ariseth with a height on the face, like a tower, and is the seat of smelling to discover what is hurtful, or savoury; also anger or zeal appear in it, therefore is it in the Hebrew language in the Old Testament, sometimes put for these, because it shews a real indignation, when a man’s anger smokes forth at his nose, Psalm 18:8. It is said,

1. To be like ‘the tower of Lebanon:’ there is no partitular mention of such a tower, but, that Solomon built there a stately house, 2 Chron. 8:3, called the ‘house of the forest of Lebanon,’ wherein, 2 Chron. 9:15,16, he put many ‘targets’ and ‘shields;’ and Lebanon being on the north side of Judah, near to Syria (where enemies soon brake out against Solomon) it is not unlike, but either this house

was made use of as a frontier-tower, or that some other was there builded, for preventing of hurt from that hand, to which this alludes. Next, this tower is said to look 'towards Damascus:' Damascus was the head city of Syria; so, Isa. 7:8, it is said, 'the head of Syria is Damascus:' those that dwelt in it, were at that time amongst the most malicious enemies that Israel had; they were so in David's time, 2 Sam. 8:5, he slew two and twenty thousand of them; they were so in Solomon's time, 1 King 11:34. Rezon (whom God raised up to be an enemy to him) did reign in Damascus; and generally they continued to be so. They lay on the north of Judah (therefore it is called evil from the north, which came from Syria) and Lebanon was on the north border of Israel next to it: and it is like, that for this cause, either Solomon did change that place into a tower, or built some other of new, to be a watch especially against that enemy, which was his chief enemy, to prevent the hurt that might come from that hand; therefore, it is said to look toward (or to the face of) Damascus, as having a special respect to that enemy. Now we conceive, that by this, the Bride's watchfulness and zeal, in prosecuting and maintaining her spiritual war against her enemies, is understood; as also, her sagacity, in smelling and discovering the stirrings and motions of her spiritual enemies, as the nose doth easily smell and discover what is pleasant or hurtful to sense. Christ's Bride hath many enemies, and some more terrible than others; therefore, she hath her watches, and (as it were) sentinels at the post, to observe their motions, especially she hath an eye upon her most inveterate and malicious enemy, the enemy nearest her doors, that is naturally most predominant, and her great care is to be kept from 'her iniquity,' Psalm 18:21. This we conceive, agrees both with the scope, and also with the discription and comparison here made use of.

Observe. 1. The most beautiful Bride of our Lord Jesus hath enemies, and such enemies, as are strongly seated and fortified (as the Syrians at Damascus were) to watch against. 2. There are some particular quarters, or enemies, from which, and by which, believers often suffer most and although they have enemies on all hands, yet is there ordinarily some one particular enemy, more terrible, malicious and predominant than others, from which they are most in danger. 3. Believers should ever be on their watch against those enemies, and must neither make peace with them, nor be negligent to provide against them. 4. Although the believer should not be secure or careless, in reference to any ill, but every evil is to be carefully watched against; yet, where one ill doth more often assault him than others, and is more strong, by the concurrence of tentations from without, or from his own inclinations within, there the believer hath need of a special watch. 5. This watchfulness impartially extended, and constantly maintained, is a main

piece of spiritual beauty, and hath much influence on the adorning of a believer, and is a good evidence of a person that is commendable before Jesus Christ.

Verse 5. Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple: the king is held in the galleries.

The first part of verse 5, contains the ninth and tenth particulars, that are commended in the Bride: the ninth is her head; it looks here to be taken for the uppermost part of the head (from which sense and motion do flow) as being distinct from eyes and nose; therefore it is said, 'Thy head upon thee,' to wit, upon and above those parts before mentioned: next, it is said to be 'like Carmel;' which may be understood, 1. As it relates to a fruitful place, mentioned with Sharon, Isa. 35:2, 'The excellency of Carmel and Sharon:' 2. It may be translated scarlet or crimson, as the same word is, 2 Chron. 3:14, thus it is a rich colour, wherewith princes and great men used to be decorated; and the hair being in the next words compared to purple, it is not unlike that it is taken for a colour here also.

By 'head,' we must understand either Christ himself, who stands in that relation to the believer, and in respect of dignity is called 'a head to all men,' 1 Cor. 11:3. Or, 2. (which is not inconsistent with the former) some grace in the believer, acting on Christ, and quickening the new life; and seeing the scope is to commend the believer from inherent grace, and the new nature being compared to an inner-man, which is described from its several parts, and so must have an head, we think that it is some particular grace that is here especially aimed at. By 'head' then, we conceive the grace of hope may be understood, it being the grace whereby the soul sticks to Christ, expecting the enjoyment of him; for, not only is hope a grace necessary and commendable (and so it cannot be unsuitable to the scope, to take it in upon one branch or other) but it may be called the head, 1. Because it is above, having Christ himself for its object; and though the word may be said to be the object of hope, yet it is not so much the word, as Christ held forth in the word; and therefore, hope is said to be 'within the vail,' Heb. 6:19, for, properly we hope for him, because of his word, and so he is 'our hope,' 1. Tim. 1:1. 2. Hope is a grace, which hath its rise from faith, and is supported by it, as the head is by the neck; though hope be someway above faith, yet doth faith sustain it, and give it a being; the believer hopes, because he believes. 3. It hath much influence on all spiritual duties, and especially on our consolation, and is useful in

the spiritual war, as being an essential piece of the believer's spiritual armour, and is therefore called the 'helmet' or head-piece 'of salvation,' 1 Thess. 5:8, and the head-piece may be someway called the head; so hope, which keepeth (to say so) grace's head, may not unfitly be called the head, seeing without it the head will be at least without its helmet; and taking it so, for this special piece of the believer's armour, it follows well on watchfulness: however, it is certain, that hope bears up the believer under difficulties, Rom. 7:24, and that it rests on Christ, who therefore is called our hope and so, co-relatively being considered, as acting on him, it may get the name of head, as faith is upon the like account called our righteousness, and thus our head is Christ hoped upon: and the commendation, that is, like crimson, will suit well this interpretation, the red or crimson colour having a special reference to Christ's death and sufferings, which puts the right colour on our hope, and makes it of this dye, that it is never ashamed or stained, Rom. 5:3. *Observe.* 1. The exercising of hope is a necessary piece of a believer's beauty, and as to have the heart sustained and comforted in the hope of what is not seen, is both necessary and profitable; so, when by the power of hope, a believer's head is helped up, and kept above in all waters, that he sink not, it is his singular ornament. 2. Hardly will a believer be in good case, without this grace of hope, and when other graces are lively, hope will be so also these pieces of armour, and spiritual decorating go together. 3. There is no other in the world that hath a well-grounded hope but the believer; it is only the believer, whose head is like crimson: all others, their hope makes ashamed, and their confidence shall be rooted out; whereas, his will be always fresh and green.

The tenth and last particular here commended in the Bride, is her 'hair:' this was spoken of, chap. 4:1. But here, both the word in the original, and the commendation that is given of it, do differ from that which is there recorded: the word here translated, 'hair,' is not elsewhere to be found, it comes from a root that gives ground to expound its smallness, or tenderness: therefore, it is taken by some, to signify a pin, or some of the small decorations of the head: and it is compared to 'purple,' for its preciousness, loveliness, and other reasons formerly mentioned in speaking of that colour.

We take the scope here to be, to shew the universal loveliness and preciousness of grace in a believer, even in the least things; what shall I say (saith he) that thy 'feet, navel, eyes' and 'head' are beautiful? Even thy 'hair,' or the pins that dress it, are lovely and excellent so glorious, princely, and stately a creature is this Bride, that there is not a wrong pin or hair to be found upon her: and thus, all the commendation is well closed with this. By the 'hair' then, we conceive is understood, even the meanest gestures and circumstances of a believer's walk,

which being ordered by grace, are beautiful, and serve much to the adorning of the gospel.

Observe. 1. That grace makes an observable change upon the whole man, it regulates even the least things, it orders looks, gestures, and circumstances, wherein often men take too much liberty. 2. Grace vented in the meanest piece of a christian carriage, is very beautiful; it puts a special beauty and lustre upon the meanest circumstances of the christian's actions: or, when a believer squares all his walk, even in the least things, by the right rule, it makes his way exceeding lovely; whereas, often a little folly, or unwatchfulness in such, proves like a dead fly, that makes a whole box of ointment to stink, Eccl. 10:1. 3. Our Lord takes notice of the smallest things in a believer, even of the hair, yea, of the smallest thereof; there is nothing in his people so mean, but he takes notice of it, and there is nothing so little, but grace should be exercised therein; in a word all things in a believer should be suitable, 'eyes,' 'hair,' 'head,' &c.

The particulars of the Bride's commendation, of which we have spoken (if they were understood) certainly they contain much; but, as if these were little, he proceeds in expressing this beauty of, or rather his love to, his Bride, in three wonderful expressions, as proofs of what he hath said concerning her loveliness and beauty, or (if we may improperly so call them) aggravations thereof, whereby that commendation is raised and heightened to an exceeding great height. The first is in the end of the fifth verse, and it is this, 'the King is held' (or bound) 'in the galleries:' the sense in a word is, what ravishing loveliness is this that is to be found in this Bride, that the king is thereby (as it were) held and bound, and must stand to look upon it, he is so delighted with it? 1. This 'King' is our Lord Jesus, the prince of the kings of the earth; he is not only here, but elsewhere often styled 'the King,' because he is eminently so, and it is much to the believer's consolation that he is so; if the faith of it were fixed in them. Our Lord is a most royal kingly person. 2. The 'galleries' here, are the same that were, chap. 1:17, called there 'rafters,' the word there, is our galleries. Galleries are places where great men use to walk, and here (Christ and the believer having one house, wherein they dwell together) the galleries signify the means or ordinances, wherein, in a more special way they come to walk together. 3. To be 'held' (or bound as the word is) signifies a holy constraint that was on him, that he could do no otherwise, because he would do no otherwise, it was so delightful to him, as, chap. 3:4, and 4:9, and chap. 6:5,12, where, on the matter, the same thing is to be found. The word here used, is borrowed from the nature of affection amongst men, that detains them to look on what they love: in sum this in an abrupt manner comes in on the close of the particulars of the Bride's commendation; as if it were said, so lovely

art thou, that Christ as captivated, or overcome, cannot withdraw, but is held (as, chap. 3:4.) to look upon thy beauty; which is the more wonderful, that he is so royal a person, whom enemies, death, and devils could not detain, yet he is so prevailed over by a believer. And it is observable, that there is not one thing oftener mentioned in this Song, than the wonderful expressions of Christ's yielding himself to be prevailed over by them, as if his might were to be employed for them, rather than for himself, and as if he gloried in this, that he is overcome by them, which is indeed the glory of his grace.

Observe. 1. There are some more than ordinary admissions to nearness with Christ, that believers may meet with; which are more than ordinary for clearness, so as they may be said to have him in the 'galleries,' and also for continuance, so as they may be said to have him 'held' there. 2. Christ Jesus by the holy violence of his peoples' graces (so to speak) may be held and captivated to stay and make his abode with them; it is good then to wrestle with Christ, that he may be held and prevailed with. 3. Holiness in a believer's walk, hath much influence on the attaining and entertaining of the most sensible manifestations of Christ: thus he is 'held in the galleries.' 4. Our Lord Jesus thinks no shame to be out of love prevailed over by his people; yea, he esteems it his honour, therefore is this so often recorded for the commendation of his love, and the comfort of believers.

Verse 6. How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!

This verse contains the second expression, whereby the Bride's commendation is heightened, in three things, 1. By the title he gives her, 'O love, for delights;' he calls her in the abstract, love itself, there can be no more said, she is not only lovely, but love itself; 'for delights' is added as the reason of it, because of the various and abounding delights that are to be found in her; she is (to say so) a person so excellently beautiful, and hath so many lovely things in her. The second thing is the commendation he joins with this title, and it is in two words, 1. She is 'fair:' this looks to the external loveliness of her person. 2. She is 'pleasant:' this respects the sweetness, and amiableness of her inward disposition: these two may be separate in others, but they meet in the believer, as they do in Christ; therefore she had given him these two epithets, chap. 1:16. The third thing is the manner of expression, which heightens all this: it is expressed

with an ‘how!’ ‘how fair!’ &c? (as chap. 4:10) shewing an incomparableness, and an inexpressibleness to be in her beauty: whereby in sum, the love of this blessed Bridegroom shews his satisfaction in his Bride, by multiplying such wonderful expressions, as holds forth the high esteem that he hath of her. *Observe.* 1. There is nothing so lovely in all the world, as grace in a believer; the most delightsome pleasant thing in the world is nothing to this. 2. The love that Christ hath to his people, is inexpressible; although he useth many significant ways to express it, yet must it close with an indefinite expression and question, to which an answer cannot be made, ‘how fair!’ it cannot be told how fair, and men cannot take it up otherwise than by wondering at it. 3. This loveliness of the Bride, and the king’s being kept in the galleries, or the sense of the enjoyment of his presence go together; and therefore it is subjoined here, as the cause of the former, like one that is ravished with the admiration of some excellent sight, he stays and beholds it, and O (saith he) how pleasant it is! The believer is the uptaking object of the love of Christ, wherein he delights. 4. There is no lovely nor delightsome thing in all the world, that Christ cares for, or esteems of, as he doth of the believer: grace makes a person Christ’s ‘love for delights:’ riches, honour, favour, parts, will be of no value without this: whereas one without these, may with this, have Christ’s affection engaged to them.

Verse 7. This thy stature is like to a palm-tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.

8. I said, I will go up to the palm-tree, 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 mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.

The former two expressions, verses 5,6, have fallen from him (to speak so) in a ravished abrupt manner, by way of exclamation: the third way how he amplifies the commendation of the Bride, follows, verses 7,8,9, (as subjoined to the preceding particular description) and this amplification is expressed these three ways: 1. By commending her stature, as the result of all her parts (formerly described) put together with a repetition of one of these parts

mainly taken notice of, verse 7. 2. By shewing his resolution to haunt her company, by which his respect to her appears, verse 8. 3. By promising gracious effects to follow on his performing the former promise, of his keeping company with her, verses 8,9.

The seventh verse then speaks to two things, her stature and her breasts: her stature respects all the by-gone parts being now put together, for so they represent the whole stature and by stature is understood the proportionableness and comeliness that is in the whole, being considered as jointly united in one body, as well as severally (as was said of him, chap. 5:16,) and the relative 'this,' clears it, 'this,' that is, 'this' which is made up of all the several parts I have been enumerating, they being put together, make thy stature, and thy stature thus made up of these members and parts, is 'like the palm-tree:' and so from this similitude, her stature is commended the palm-tree is recommended in scripture to have divers commendable properties, 1. It is straight: therefore it is said of the idols that they are 'upright like the palm-tree;' Jer. 10:5, straightness is comely in a stature, he was 'like to a cedar' chap. 5:15, she is like to a 'palm-tree' here. 2. A palm-tree hath good fruits, the dates are the fruit thereof. 3. It is a tree of long continuance, and keeps long green; hence, Psalm 92:12,14. It is said of the righteous, 'they shall flourish like the palm-tree:' therefore, Joel 1:12. It is an evidence of great drought, when 'the palm-tree withereth.' 4. They were looked on as most fit to be used in times when men were about to express their joy in the most solemn manner, and so when Christ is coming triumphantly to Jerusalem, John 12:they cut down 'branches of palm-trees,' to carry before him, and, Rev. 7:4, these victors have 'palms in their hands,' and in Levi. 23:40, we find branches of these trees commanded to be made use of in the joyful feast of tabernacles, and the 'seventy palm-trees' that were found by the Israelites at Elim, are mentioned, Num. 33:9, as refreshful, so is the city of palm-trees also mentioned as a most pleasant place, Deut. 34:3. All these may be applied to believers, who, both by the change that is wrought upon them by the grace of Christ, and also, as they are in him by faith, are such; they are straight not crooked, but beautiful and flourishing, and to him refreshful, as the next verse shews, being the living signs and monuments of his victory over death and the devil. *Observe.* 1. There ought not only to be in a believer, a thriving of graces distinctly, but a right joining, ordering, and compacting of them together, that they may keep a proportionableness, and make up complexly a lovely stature: that is, not only should all graces be kept in exercise together, but as members of one new man, each ought to be subservient to another, for making up of a sweet harmony in the result; love should not wrong zeal, nor zeal prudence; but every grace, as being a distinct member of the new man, should be settled in its own place, to make the

stature lovely. 2. When this proportion is kept, and every grace hath its own place, it is exceeding lovely, like a beautiful stature; whereas grace, when acting unorderly (if then it may be called grace) is like an eye, beautiful in itself; but not being in the right place of the face, doth make the stature unlovely and disproportionable: it is not the least part of spiritual beauty, when not only one hath all graces, but hath every one of them acting according to their several natures, even when they are acting jointly together. 3. This furthers much believers' usefulness, and continues them fresh and green, when the whole stature of grace is right, and kept in a due proportionableness.

The particular that is again repeated, is her 'breasts,' which are compared to a 'cluster of grapes,' or 'wine,' as it is in the eighth verse. We conceive, by 'breasts' here, is signified her love and affection, whereby he is entertained, so, chap. 1:13. 'He shall lie all night between my breasts.' and so it agreeth well with that expression, Prov. 5:19, 'Let her breasts satisfy thee at all times, and be thou always ravished with her love:' this is confirmed from the similitude unto which it is compared, and that is, 'grapes,' or 'wine;' shewing that her love is refreshful, and cordial (to speak so) to him: thy breasts (saith he) that is, to lie between thy breasts, and, to be kindly entertained by thee, is more than wine to me: and this is the same thing which was said, chap. 4:10, 'How much better is thy love than wine?' And the similitude being the same, we think the thing is the same that is thereby set forth and commended; and it is singularly taken notice of by Christ through all the Song, and marked in chap. 4 and here, as that which makes all her stature so lovely in itself: love makes every grace act (therefore is it 'the fulfilling of the law') and makes grace in its actings beautiful and lovely to him. These words then, may either express, 1. The loveliness of her love: or, 2. The delight which he took in it, as esteeming highly of it; she was so very lovely, that nothing refreshed him so much as her breasts: which expression (as all the rest) holds out intense spiritual-love, under the expressions that are usual amongst men. And it says, 1. That the beauty of grace is a ravishing beauty; [f]or Christ's love delights in the love of his people; a room in their hearts is much prized by him. 2. Christ hath a complacency and acquiescence in his people, which he hath in none other, and where more grace is, there his complacency (though one in itself) doth the more manifest itself. 3. When a believer is right and in good case, then his love to Christ is warm: and particularly, a right frame is by nothing sooner evidenced, than by the affections; and it is ordinarily ill or well with us, as our love to Christ is vigorous or cold.

The second way how our Lord expresseth his love to his Bride, is in the beginning of verse 8, and it is by expressing of his resolution to accompany with

her, beyond any in the world: she was compared to a palm-tree in the former verse, now (saith he) 'I will go up to the palm-tree' (that is, to the palm-tree before mentioned) it is on the matter the same with that promise, chap. 4:6, 'I will get me to the mountain of myrrh,' &c. Consider here, 1. The thing promised or proposed, and that is, his going 'up to the palm-tree,' and taking 'hold of the boughs thereof:' that the scope is to hold forth his purpose of manifesting himself to her, is clear, 1. By the dependence of this on the former, he had said, Thou art a palm-tree, and now (saith he) 'I will go up to the palm-tree,' which speaks his prizing that tree above all others. 2. The effects also of his going up, in the following words, do clear it; it is such a going up as hath refreshful and comfortable influence upon her: the importance of the similitude is, as men love the trees they converse much about (and it is like, palm-trees were much used for that end) or as climbing up upon trees, and taking hold of their boughs, do shew the delight and pleasure men have in such or such a tree, and how refreshing it is to them to be near it; so having compared her to a palm-tree, he expresseth his delight in her, and his purpose of manifesting himself to her, under the same similitude, as is ordinary in the strain of this Song. 2. Consider, that this resolution is laid down as no passing thought, but is a deliberate and determined resolution, 'I said I will go,' &c. 'I will take hold,' &c. which doth shew, 1. Christ's inward thoughts and conclusions with himself, this is his heart language. 2. The expression of these, and so the words come to be a promise, which the believer may make use of, as of a thing which Christ hath said. 3. It shews a deliberateness in both, that they were not sudden, but the advised result of a former deliberation, and that of old, I said it in a word (saith he) my Bride is my choice in all the world, the tree that I have resolved, for my delight, to climb up upon, beside all others. *Observe*, 1. The scope and result of all Christ's commendations of his Bride, is, that she may be brought to look for, and expect to be made happy with his own company, and to be unspeakably made up in the enjoyment of his presence. 2. It is not every one that hath the promise of Christ's company and fellowship, or that may expect it; it is the believer only who may look for it, he hath Christ's word for it, and none but he. 3. Christ's most passionate expressions of love are not from any surprise of affection in him, but are deliberately resolved, and that of old, so that now they cannot be altered; his delight was in the habitable parts of the earth, and his resolution was laid down to 'go up to the palm-tree' before it was. 4. Christ's thoughts to his people (if known) would be found to be precious, thoughts of peace and not of evil; many a good purpose hath been in his heart of old, and there is no greater evidence of love, neither can be, than to intimate and accomplish these, as he doth here; I laid down this resolution (saith he) long ere now, and I will follow it out. 5. A holy tender walk in believers

(which is indeed to have the stature lovely as the palm-tree) will obtain the manifestation of Christ's heart to them; and there is no greater evidence of Christ's respect, than that, John 14:21, & 23.

The third way how he expresseth his love, is by the effects, which he promiseth shall follow on his presence with her, as his presence is subjoined to her lovely stature (which connexion is observable) the effects that follow, are three, the first two are in the second part of the eighth verse, and the first of them in these words, 'Now also thy breasts shall be as the clusters of the vine;' this is the first fruit of his going up to the palm tree, which (as also the rest of them) may be taken as comprehensive of these two. 1. Of some gracious effect that shall be wrought in the Bride, and so these words bring him in speaking to this purpose, when I come to thee, then by my presence thy grace shall flow, and thou shalt be in a capacity to edify others, and to satisfy me, as if thy breasts were clusters of the vine, to furnish what might be refreshful: thus he comforts her, from what should be wrought in her, by his presence with her: and the scope and connexion shews, that this cannot be excluded, it being a native consequence of his presence, and comfortable in itself to her, 2. They are to be looked upon as comprehensive of his gracious acceptance of her and her fruits, as being well satisfied with her; and thus the meaning of these words, 'Thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine,' is this, when I shall come to thee, thy love and company, thy bosom (to say so) shall be to me more refreshful than clusters of the vine, I will feed upon it, and delight in it, as, chap. 4:10, this completes her consolation, and the evidence of his love, that he undertakes it shall be well with her inward condition, and that he shall accept of her also, and be well satisfied with her: these are not only consistent together, but do necessarily concur for making up the scope, which is to evidence his love, and to comfort her; and the one of these follows on the other, therefore, we comprehend both in all these effects. *Observe.* 1. Christ's presence hath much influence on believers' liveliness; their breasts run when he is present. 2. Liveliness is a singular and comfortable mercy in a believer's estimation; therefore it is promised as a thing that is in a special way comfortable to her. 3. Christ's presence, or nearness with him, and fruitfulness, go together: and where thy breasts are not as clusters, no condition the believer can be in, is to be accounted presence.

The second effect is in these words, 'And the smell of thy nose like apples.' Apples are savoury fruit, the smell of the nose is the savour of the breath, that comes from it, which in unwholesome bodies is unsavoury; saith he to the Bride, thine shall not be so, but thy constitution shall be lively, and all that comes from thee shall be savoury, and so shall be accepted of me; it shall be savoury in

itself, as apples are to the smell, and it shall be delighted in by me, as having a sweet air and breath with it: this imports a conspicuous inward change, by the growth of mortification, whereby believers being purified within from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, there proceeds nothing from them but what is savoury, whereas a loose and ragged conversation, as corrupt breath (Job 17:1.) evidenceth much inward rottenness. Observe, 1. Christ's presence, is of an healing, cleansing virtue, and makes an observable inward change. 2. An inward change evidenceth itself in the outward fruits and effects, the very smell and savour of the conversation, and of all external duties, is changed. 3. This inward purity is very desirable to the believer; for so it is here a piece of his comfort, to have a promise that the smell of his nose shall be as apples, and it is a special evidence of Christ's respect, to have that performed.

It may also take in the savouriness of the believers' breathing, in respect of themselves; when Christ is present, they shall draw in a wholesome, pleasant and refreshful air; whereas now ordinarily we breathe in a corrupt air: it shall not be so then, saith he, the smell of thy nose shall be as if thou didst savour of apples: Christ's company makes all both fruitful within, and refreshful to the believer, and also makes all duties and all dispensations he is exercised with, savoury and acceptable to himself; all which follow on Christ's presence, and suits with the scope, that saith, both taste and smell are satisfied.

The third lovely effect of Christ's presence, is in the 9th verse: and, 1st, The effect itself is set down, then its commendation is amplified. The effect, or advantage of Christ's presence, is in these words, 'The roof of thy mouth' (or thy palate) 'shall be as the best wine;' the palate, or roof of the mouth, is the instrument of taste, and so is sometimes taken for the taste itself, and is so translated, chap. 2:3, 'His fruit was sweet to my taste:' so Job 34:3, or by palate may be understood the mouth, as, chap. 5:16. Next, it is compared to wine, yea, the best wine (the reasons of the comparison have been often spoken to) the best wine is that which is most refreshing and exhilarating: now this wine is three ways set out in its excellency (for, that the following expressions are to this purpose, is clear) 1. It is 'for my beloved,' that is, such wine as he allows his friends, whom he styles beloved, chap. 5:1. (and this shows what kind of wine is understood) and so it must be excellent wine, being that which is allowed on Christ's special friends. Or, it is an abrupt expression, whereby he speaks in name of the Bride; it is such wine as I (as if she were speaking) allow on thee, my beloved, and which I reserve only for thee for which reason, she is called a fountain sealed, and garden inclosed, as being set apart for him, and not common to others; and thus is he expressing in her name, what she expresseth herself in the last words of this

chapter, it is all ‘for thee my beloved;’ and it implieth both a commendation of its sweetness, and her devoting of it to him. However, the words hold forth something that proves it to be excellent and not common, but such as is; found among those who stand in this spiritual relation. 2. It is commended from this, that ‘it goeth down sweetly,’ that is, it is pleasant to the taste, and is not harsh, but delightfully may be drunk off; or, it may respect that property of good wine, mentioned, Prov. 23:31. (that it ‘moves itself rightly’) if the words be translated as the margin imports. 3. It is commended from the effects, it drinks sweetly, and when it is drunk, ‘It causeth the lips of those that are asleep to speak.’ Wine is cordial and refreshful, but this wine must be in a singular way refreshful, that makes men that are infirm, or old (as the word may be rendered) and almost dead, to revive and speak, or those that were secure (as the Bride was, chap. 5:2.) and in a spiritual drowsiness, it can quicken them, and make them cheerfully speak; thus the wine is commended.

Now we conceive, by this comfortable effect, that is promised to her upon Christ’s coming to her, these two things are here holden forth. 1. How refreshing it shall be to herself, all her senses shall be taken with it, both the smell and the taste; it shall be singularly sweet to her spiritual taste, as it is, chap. 2:3. And thus the wine of the Spirit is commended, which accompanies his manifestations, and is reserved for his beloved, chap.5:1. And it is a joy that no stranger is made partaker of: this wine is indeed peculiar for his beloved, (and is suitable to himself) and is the wine that goeth sweetly down; and is most refreshful, and makes secure sinners to speak, and those that are faint it revives them, as Eph. 5:18, ‘Be not filled with wine,’ &c. but ‘be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord:’ this effect agrees well to the Spirit, yea, only to this wine of the Spirit: and it suits well the scope, which is to shew what comfortable influence Christ’s presence should have on her, so that when he comes to his palm-tree, her taste shall relish as with the best wine; his presence shall thus revive and quicken her, and be a special evidence of his singular respect to her.

2. It holds out (which follows on the former) that not only her breath shall savour well to him and others, and her inward senses abound with refreshings to herself, but also the expressions of her mouth, to others shall be savoury, and to him refreshful, as a delightful fruit flowing from her: thus (saith he), when I betake me to fellowship with thee, and come near by sensible embracements, to take hold of thy boughs (as a man embracing one whom he loves; for thus the allegory is spiritually to be understood) thou shalt be to me, and in my esteem, exceedingly lovely; thy breasts, smell, and mouth, will be cheering and savoury,

like grapes, apples, and the best wine: and here spiritual affections and holy reason should be made use of, to gather the life of Christ's love from the effects of it, with some resemblance of what useth to be betwixt man and wife, in their mutual loving carriage (for so runs the strain of this song) although our carnalness makes it hazardous, and unsafe to descend in the explication of these similitudes: and thus, as chap. 5:16, by his mouth or palate, was understood the kisses thereof, or the most sensible manifestations of his love to her: so here, by her palate or mouth, is understood her most affectionate soul-longings of love to him, which being warmed and melted by his presence, doth manifest itself in a kindly way, in spiritual embraces and kisses (as from verse 11 and 12 will be clear) which are exceedingly delightsome to him: and so the sense of this promise is, when I come to thee, then, yea even now, thy love with the sense of mine shall be warmed and refreshed, so that it shall in an affectionate way vent itself on me, and that shall be as the most exhilarating cordial unto me, as the manifestations of my love will be cheering and refreshing unto thee; both which are notably comfortable to her, and special evidences of his respect, which is the scope.

Observe. 1. There are some secret flowings of love, and soul-experiences between Christ and believers, that are not easily understood; and that makes the expressions of his love so seemingly intricate. 2. These flowings of love that are betwixt Christ and his people (how strange soever they be) are most delightsome to the soul that partakes of them, they are as 'wine that goeth down sweetly.' 3. Christ's presence hath many benefits and advantages waiting on it, which contribute exceedingly both to the quickening and comforting of the believer; many things hang on this one, 'his going up to the palm-tree.' 4. The joy of the Spirit hath notable effects, and can put words in the mouth of those that never spoke much before, yea, can make the dumb to sing, with a sensible warming of the heart and inward affections, stirring up melody in their souls, which yet will be distinct in the impressions and effects of it. 5. Our Lord Jesus hath designed the comfort of the believer, which he holdeth out in comfortable promises, and alloweth them to make use of it, and it is pleasant and delightsome to him to have them so doing.

BRIDE.

Verse 10. I am my Beloved's, and his desire is toward me.

The Bride hath been long silent, delightfully drinking in what she hath been hearing from the Bridegroom's sweet mouth, and so suffering him to say on: now in this tenth verse, and those that follow, she comes in speaking, and having well observed what he said, the result and effect thereof upon her heart doth appear in what she saith. And, 1. She comforts herself in her union with him, as now being clear in it from his owning of her; and she lays down, and begins with this conclusion, verse 10. Now (saith she) I may say, 'I am my beloved's,' &c. Then, 2. Looking to his promise, verse 8, she puts up her great desire after communion with him, that according to her interest in him, she might be admitted to enjoy him which suit is put up, qualified or enlarged, and by several arguments pressed on him, verses 11,12,13.

The conclusion which she gathers, verse 10, from his discourse, comes not in altogether abruptly, but is the expression of a heart comforted with the intimations of Christ's love, and wakened with the wine that makes them that are asleep to speak; and so breathing out the great ground of her consolation: now (saith she) seeing he loves me, and out of the infinite freedom of his grace is pleased to commend unworthy me so much, certainly, I may conclude, 'I am my Beloved's, and his desire is towards me.' The first part of this verse, wherein she asserts her interest in him, was spoken to chap. 2:16, and 6:3, and it is now repeated on this occasion; for these reasons, 1. Because it is the great commend of all her consolation, and that wherein it consists, that she is Christ's, and Christ is hers: this is indeed matter of solid consolation, and whatever is comfortable doth flow from it. 2. To shew that she kept the clearness of her interest in him, in some measure constantly, and carried it along with her in the several parts of her exercise, she can assert it this day, and the next day, and the third day. 3. It's now a full tide with her, as to Christ's manifestations, and the flowings of his Spirit; he hath been liberal and large in the intimations of his love, and she makes this use of it, to put her interest in him out of question, while the evidences of it are so legible. *Observe.* 1. Believers may at sometimes, more clearly and distinctly gather and conclude their interest in Christ, than at other times. 2. When believers

are admitted to nearness with Christ, and clouds that would darken their faith are scattered, then they should endeavour to fix their confidence, and put their interest out of question; that when their sun comes under a cloud, and they see not to read their evidences so distinctly, they be not put to question their interest, and all by-past experiences, as delusions. 3. When the Lord owns his people, and speaks comfortably, to them (as he hath been doing to the Bride) then they should own him, and acquiesce in that consolation allowed upon them by him.

The last part of the verse, in these words, ‘and his desire is towards me,’ shews not only that the interest was mutual, and that he loved her, as she did him; but that he loved her affectionately, so that in a manner he could not be without her, his desire was to her. 2. That he condescended to love her with such a kind of love and respect as a woman hath to her husband; for, so this is spoken of the first woman, Gen. 3, ‘Thy desire shall be towards him,’ that is, subordinate to his, or seeking to conform to his, that she may please him: and so here it shews Christ’s great condescending, to have the believer carving (as it were) to him, so ready is he to please and satisfy his people for their good. 3. It shews a deal of satisfaction that she had in this; it was the matter of her humble spiritual boasting, that Christ so loved her, hate or condemn her who would. 4. She thinks still much of this privilege of an interest in Christ, and esteems nothing the less of it that she had attained clearness in it before now: clearness is ever of much worth, and those who are clearest anent this, will esteem most of it: that holy fainness (to say so) that this word, ‘My Beloved is mine,’ brings in to the soul, easeth and comforteth the more that it is often renewed.

Verse 11. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages.

12. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.

13. The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

When she hath laid down this ground of her interest in him, she proceeds to improve it, verse 11, by giving him a kindly and familiar invitation, which she, first, qualifies in the end of the eleventh verse, and beginning of the twelfth, and then in what followeth, adds some motives to press it. The similitude of a loving wife's carriage to a kind husband is continued, as if such a loving wife, desirous of her husband's company, did invite him to the fields, thereby in a retired way to be solaced with his company, especially by going abroad with him in a pleasant spring time, and staying some nights in villages for that end, and that they might the more seriously and comfortably view the state of their orchards and gardens, which is both pleasant, profitable, and delightsome to be done in the husband's company, even so doth the Bride follow the similitude, to shew what she desired from Christ in desiring of his company, and for what end, to wit, both for the profit and comfort she expected to reap thereby.

The invitation she gives him, is, 'Come, my Beloved;' Come, is a word much used betwixt Christ and the believer, and is a kindly word. He saith, 'Come,' chap. 2:10, and now she useth the same word; her putting up this desire, expresseth a desire of communion and nearness with him, and also much affection, and is the language both of the Spirit and the Bride, who saith 'Come,' Rev. 22:17, here it imports a petition, pressing for a greater degree of communion, which, by comparing this with the former words, may be gathered; for, she possessed it in a good measure for the time, and yet here she saith, 'Come:.' First, considering this invitation in itself, we may observe, that communion with Christ is the one, principal, and common suit of the believer, wherein he is never satisfied till it be perfected. Next, comparing these words with the preceding,

Observe. 1. The more that Christ be manifested to his people, the more near they be admitted to him, and the better that their frame be, and the more clear they be anent their interest in him, the greater will their desire be of more near communion with him. 2. Clearness of interest in him, when it is solid, is a good ground to press for his fellowship, and still it presseth the person who hath it to pursue after more full manifestations of Christ. Again, considering these words as they respect his promise, verse 8, 'I said' (saith he) 'I will go up to the palm tree,' &c. Now she having heard it, layeth hold on this promise, and is not long in saying, 'Come.'

Observe. 1. That believers should improve the promises they have, for attaining what is promised in them, and should not suffer promises to lie by them not made use of. 2. What is promised to a believer may, and should be prayed for by him. 3. Believers in their prayers and suits to Christ, should have a special respect to the promises, not only to conform their desires to them, but to ground them upon them. 4. The more tender believers be in their frame, they will the more carefully gather up all Christ's words and promises, and strengthen their faith thereby in their dealing with him.

Next, she contents not herself to put up this suit, but she further qualifies it, in several repeated petitions (whereby the ardency of her desire, and the strength of her faith doth appear) all which are recorded, both as a pattern to teach believers how they should carry in prayer, and also as evidences what will be their way and manner in that duty, when their spirit is in a good condition. The first qualification of the former petition is, 'Let us go forth into the field.' Going forth into the field, holds forth these two, 1. The extent of her desire, she would have him at home and abroad also, she desires not to go out of doors without him. 2. A desire of retiredness with him, that she might be alone in his company, as a wife going abroad to the fields alone with her husband, as Gen. 24:63, it is said, that 'Isaac went out to the fields to pray:' that is, that he might be the more retired in that duty.

Observe. 1. That where desire of fellowship with Christ is right, it breathes after a walk with him every where, at home and abroad, they cannot endure to go out at doors, or to the fields without him. 2. Delight in Christ's company seeks to be retired with him, to be alone with him, to be freed from all other companies, and abstracted from all distraction, the more freely to be solaced with him.

Again, the pronoun, 'us,' 'let us go,' is not without good purpose added: it is not, go thou, nor, I will go; but, 'Let us go,' as bearing in it a double motive, and evidence of her affection. 1. That she offers herself to bear him company.

Observe. When Christ's company is loved and respected, the soul will be content to leave all others, and go with him, for the entertaining of it. 2. It implies, that

though she had an errand, and desire to be abroad yet, she could not endure to go about it without him; therefore (saith she) 'Let us go.' *Observe.* 1. The fields, and most pleasant recreations, are heartless and wearisome without Christ's company in the believer's esteem. 2. His company is the believer's great encouragement to undertake any thing, and that which makes his out-going and in-coming pleasant: she is content to go with him, and cannot aide to go without him. Lastly, It shews her respecting that which was her part in the exercise, as well as his, and her resolution to conform her practice to her prayers; for, as she desires him to go, so she is willing to go herself: if we would expect the answer of prayer, our practices should be like our prayers.

The second qualification is, 'Let us lodge in the villages.' Villages are rural, or land-ward places, by that name distinguished from towns or cities; in these, men travelling, or continuing a time in the fields for their recreation or business, do lodge, as retired from their ordinary vocations in cities. Her desire, 'let us lodge' in these (or, as the word is, let us night or dwell there) shews that she desired him abroad with her, nor for a piece of a day, to return at night, but for a greater length and continuance of time, as loving rather to lodge with him in the villages, and to take what might be had in his company, for lengthening their retirement, than to return hastily to the city, or business whereby she might be distracted, and in hazard of an interruption of her communion with him. *Observe.* 1. True desire of communion with Christ in the enjoyment of his presence, as it presseth for retiredness with him, so is it desirous to have that lengthened, and cannot endure to think of parting with him, when it gets him in a corner. 2. A back-side, or a corner alone with Christ's company, is good lodging to a lover of Christ: solitariness with his presence, is more frequented and delighted in by such, than more public fellowship and societies.

In the twelfth verse we have some more qualifications of her petition, and some of the motives, that press her to seek after Christ's company. The third qualification is in these words, 'Let us go up early to the vineyards:' the similitude is continued, but this word 'early,' is added, and it implies (as it is used in scripture,) 1. Timeliness, so the women came to Christ's grave 'early,' Luke 24:1, 'while it was dark.' 2. Seasonableness, so it is taken in that expression, 'the Lord will help, and that right early,' Psalm 46:5. 3. Seriousness, so Hos. 5:15. 'They shall seek me early,' that is, seriously. Here it implieth, that she, as one impatient of delays, desires to go with expedition, and for that end offers him her company. *Observe.* 1. Sincere desire of fellowship with Christ cannot endure delays, but would presently be at enjoyment. 2. There is a season of earliness, a fit opportunity of keeping company with Christ, and that should not be neglected. 3.

As privacy is a great friend to communion with Christ, so is earliness and timeliness in setting to it: the more early one begin, they may expect to speed the better. 4. As no duty should be put off, or delayed, so especially this great and concerning duty of endeavouring for fellowship with Christ, should by no means be delayed or shifted, but early and promptly should be gone about.

The fourth qualification follows in the motives, that she might see how the several fruits budded: and it shews, that she desired not his company only for her satisfaction, but, for her profit also, that thereby she might be helped to thrive in her spiritual condition, and might be enabled the better to do her duty.

Observe. A sincere and right desire of communion with Christ, studieth to improve it for spiritual advantage, when it is attained, So then, all these put together, shew, that she desires Christ's presence retiredly, constantly, promptly, and in order to her spiritual advantage and profit: this last will appear more in the motives, especially the first. This is indeed a main desire, and therefore, in what follows she presseth it with motives, which put her to it, and also (as being well pleasing to him) give her ground to expect it from him and though she useth these motives, as if they were arguments to induce him to grant her desire, yet they are mainly for strengthening her own faith in pressing her suit. The using of motives, and her thus qualifying of her desire, with, that believers in their petitions, should insist and press them: for, although Christ be not informed by words, nor persuaded by our arguments, yet this both helps to warm the affections, and strengthen the faith of the believer himself, and is becoming believers in their prayers to him, who calls for, and admits of reasonable service. The motives in particular are four, the first is taken from the end of her petition, which is to see how her graces prosper: the similitude continues, as a wife intending to visit her husbandry (to say so) is helped and encouraged therein by her husband's presence, and therefore desires his company; so, the believer hath a husbandry, 'vineyards, grapes, pomegranates,' and divers plants to oversee, which are the graces of the Spirit, and divers duties committed to him (as was said upon chap. 4:12,13, and 6:11,) and his visiting of these, is the taking of a reflect view of himself, in an abstracted retired condition, that thereby he may be distinctly acquainted how it is with him, and with his graces: in following of which duty, Christ's presence in some secret corner is exceeding helpful; therefore, for that end doth the Bride seek it, and makes use of this motive to press it, because it is a duty of concernment to her to search herself; it is pleasing to him, and a thing that she would be at, yet, cannot win to it in a common ordinary frame, it is so difficult; therefore doth she propose this (which is her end) as that which would be respected and well taken off her hand by him. *Observe.* 1. Believers have a task, and husbandry committed

to them to manage, that is, several duties and graces, holden forth under the similitude of 'vines, pomegranates,' &c. which they are carefully to notice. 2. It is necessary, in the managing of this task, for a believer to be well acquainted with the condition of his graces, and it is his duty to be reflecting on himself for that end; and if men ought to look to the state of their flocks and herds, Prov. 27:23, how much more ought they carefully to look to this. 3. This duty should be purposely, retiredly, and deliberately intended, undertaken, and gone about, with a resolute design for attaining to the discovery of her own case, as she doth here. 4. This duty hath difficulties in it, and ordinarily the heart is not prevailed with to be kept serious about it, except the frame thereof be more tender than ordinary. 5. To a tender believer it will be a great favour to get this duty of self-examination profitably and unbiassedly discharged it is a mercy worth the seeking from God, and the more tender believers be, they will be the more in this. 6. Although believers be clear as to their interest (as the Bride was, verse 10,) yet may they be indistinct as to the knowledge of their own condition, and therefore ought not to neglect this duty of self-examination: but where clearness is solid, they will be the more careful in the searching of themselves. 7. Christ's presence, as it is a notable help to all duties, so particularly it is in a special way helpful to believers in searching themselves, by making the heart willing and pliable, to follow it sweetly, by discovering things as they are, and by making the eye single, rightly to judge of every thing, and impartially to take with that which is discovered: much presence should encourage the Lord's people to follow this duty, which otherwise is gone about in a heartless way. 8. It is a good use of Christ's presence and company, when it is improved for attaining of more thorough and distinct knowledge of our own condition; and then especially believers should take the opportunity of putting themselves to trial. 9. A believer, when tender, will be particular in his search. He will search even to the least, he will not disapprove any thing of God's grace that is real, although it be weak and tender, therefore she looks to buds, as well as more mature fruit, and acknowledgeth them, because Christ doth so, chap. 6:11. 10. Believers promise not much in themselves, or, they expect not great things anent their own fruitfulness; therefore, it is to see what is budding or appearing, rather than what is ripe, which she proposeth here to herself, as her design. 11. A tender believer will esteem much of little grace where it is real, a bud is much to him, if it look fruit-like, as it is the evidence of Christ's Spirit in him, and the work of his grace: he that is humble will have a high esteem of it, though he expect no great thing, nor yet think much of it, as it is inherent in him, yet he will not cast what is least, if solid. 12. The more tender one is, he will be the more desirous to search his own condition, as being unsatisfied with what he hath attained. Again, if we compare this with chap. 6:11, where it is said 'He

went down to his garden' for this very end, for which she desires his presence; we may see, 1. A co-incident betwixt Christ's work and the believer's (to say so) they have one task. 2. A going amongst both of their ends and ways to attain them; he takes pains on his people by the means of his grace to make them fruitful, and they diligently haunt and improve the means for that same end, And, Christ's words are near the same with hers, the more to strengthen their faith in obtaining what she sought, when it so concurred with his design: a believer that aims at fruitfulness and tenderness by Christ's company in the means and ordinances, may expect to obtain his desire; for, that same is his work, which he drives by the means of grace amongst his people.

The second motive which makes her press for Christ's company in this retired way, is in these words, 'There will I give thee my loves;' that is (in short) as in retirements the Bridegroom and the Bride rejoice together, in the expressions of their mutual love, with more than ordinary familiarity: so (saith she) let me have thy company continued with me, that thereby my heart being warmed, I may get opportunity to let out my love in a lively manner on thee. By 'loves' here, love simply is not meant, but love in the highest degree of it, manifesting itself in the most sensible manner, when the heart is melted, as it were, and made free to pour out itself in love to him: it is therefore called 'loves' in the plural number, to shew the many ways it will vent itself, as, in thoughts delightfully making the heart glad, in cheerful exulting in him, and affectionate embracing him in its arms, feeding and delighting on him, and such like ways; there is nothing kept up from him, and all doors, whereby love useth to vent, are opened. While she saith, 'I will give thee my loves,' it is not to be understood, as if then she would begin to love him, (for, the thing that made her put up this suit was her love to him) but that then she would with more freedom do it, and with ease and delight get it done, which now would not do for her, (till his presence warned her) at least in the manner she would be at. The word, 'there,' that in the latter relates to the 'fields, villages,' &c. is to be understood of that retirement in fellowship, which she desired with him; in the scope it looks to his secret manifesting of himself to her, in admitting of her to his bosom; O! saith she, come, my heart longs to be near thee; and this advantage I expect from it, I would then get my heart drawn from idols, and my affections engaged unto thee, which in thy absence I cannot get done so as I would: as a person cannot vent love so in company, as when he is alone in solitariness with his bosom friend: thus Joseph, being to manifest his love to his brethren, Gen. 45:1, commanded all to go out, that so he might with the greater freedom let forth his affections on them: and as Jonathan sent away his boy, when he was to embrace David in the fields, 1. Sam. 20:40, &c. so here, the secret manifestations of Christ, by his Spirit to his people, being that which gives

them liberty to let forth their hearts on him, especially in their unknown access to him, to which no man is witness, are by this word 'there,' signified. *Observe.* 1. There are many more good things than one which accompanies Christ's presence: and where love is in a believer's heart, there will be no scarcity of arguments to hold forth the advantage thereof. 2. As there are some more than ordinary manifestations of love from Christ to his people, which are not constant; so, there are some more than ordinary flowings of the love of believers towards him; there are some times, and cases, wherein especially the heart will melt in affection to him, and wherein it will be made to pour out itself with ease and delight upon him. 3. It's no less the desire of believers to love Christ, and to have their affections flowing on him, than to have the manifestations of his love to them; therefore speaks she of this as of a benefit she exceedingly desired, to get leave to pour her heart out in love upon him. 4. Believers that love Christ, will not be satisfied with the degree of their own love, but will be desirous to have it more withdrawn from other things, and more fully venting on him. 5. Altho' sometimes, yea, oftentimes, the believer's heart comes not up that length in love to Christ that he would have it, yet he designs to set it on Christ alone, and there is none that willingly he gives it unto with consent but Christ, it is on him only he allows it. 6. There is no greater gift can be given to Christ, than his people's love; this is therefore the motive that is proposed by the Bride in her dealing with him, as holding forth the propine or entertainment which he should receive. 7. Christ's presence, and the manifestations of his love conduceth notably unto, and hath great influence upon, the gaining of our affections to him; it doth not only, (as it were) give us the opportunity of his company, but it gains the heart, softens it, ravisheth it, and heightens the esteem of Christ in it, (which no report of him can do so effectually as his own presence) and also it oileth all the affections, that they have a freedom to flow out (like the ice before the sun) which otherwise are key-cold. 8. Love to Christ, loves solitariness and retirements with him; it is neither so stirred itself as when it is alone with him, nor are the men of the world able to bear, or understand the intimate familiarity, that will be in the flowings of the love of Christ to a believer, or of a believer's liberty and holy boldness with Christ; nor were it meet, that they should be witnesses of the love-secrets that are betwixt him and them. 9. It is an evidence of single love to Christ, when his presence is longed for, that we may the more ardently and affectionately love him, and when all opportunities are sought for that may increase this; this is singleness and spiritualness in a great length, when this makes us glory in Christ's love to us, and desire the manifestations thereof, that we may have access thereby to love him: a believer will love heaven, because there he will have access fully to love Christ, as well as to be loved of him; and will abhor hell, not only because there are no

intimations of Christ's love there, but also because there is no access to love him there: to get the heart loving Christ is indeed the believer's great delight, and in a manner his heaven. 10. Love in a believer to Christ, is the result or reflex of Christ's love to him, it is the sun which begets this heat in the soul that loves him: and the more brightly he shines on believers, the more is their love hot toward him; for 'here is love, not that we loved him, but that he loved us' first. 11. It's an evidence of true love to Christ, and esteem of him, when the heart is longing, praying and using means that it may love him, and get its love to him heightened till it be all bestowed on him allenerly.

In the thirteenth verse, we have the third and fourth motives, whereby the Bride presseth her suit: the third is, 'The mandrakes give a smell,' &c. It is like that motive which he useth in pressing her to hearken to his call, chap. 2:12, 'The flowers appear on the earth,' &c. The graces of the Spirit, growing up (as in a garden) in the believer's walk with Christ, are like flowers in the spring, which by their pleasantness and savour, invite men to the fields: thus the sense of this motive comes to this, all things (saith the Bride) are in a good condition, and there is a thriving amongst my graces, which are for pleasantness as flowers; therefore come. This avowing of the flourishing of her graces, is not from any vain boasting, but in humble sincerity, acknowledging what she found in herself to his praise, and what she knew to be acceptable to him, as a confirmation to her faith in the expectation of what she prayed for; for (which is a lesson we should learn) although the goodness of our condition can merit nothing which we pray for, yet, it may give us confidence and boldness in prayer, when we have a good conscience and testimony within us, I John 3:20, this fruitfulness of hers is four ways set forth, 1. That these her fruits are ripe, and in their flower, 'the mandrakes give a smell:' mandrakes were much longed for by Rachel, Gen. 30:14, and by their savouriness of taste there, and of smell here, it appears that they were some lovely fruit, and now in their prime most pleasant, because they give their smell. 2. Her fruitfulness is set forth in its comprehensiveness and variety, she is adorned 'with all manner of pleasant fruits;' whereby is holden forth, that as believers have many divers graces, like variety of spices, chap. 4:13,14, which they should entertain, so all of them were in good case with her. 3. These fruits were 'new and old,' whereby the plenty of the same kind is set forth, both (to say so) of this and the former year's growth; whereby is signified, a thriving or increase of the believer's grace, there being a new degree of faith and love, &c. of this year, added to the former degree she attained before: she preserves the old, and she brings forth new, as Matt. 13:52, the scribe, taught in the kingdom of God, 'brings out things new and old;' he hath the old stock, and the new increase, the talents that were given him, and five more gained by them. 4. These fruits are said to be

‘at our gates;’ this looks most simply to signify this, that it is pleasant to have such fruits at the doors, and it betokens a frequency or plenty, and great abundanoe of them, when not only in the garden, but at the gates they so abound; so this abounding of grace in a believer, makes (to say so) Christ’s entry savoury and pleasant, and shews, that all things are in a good readiness for him, as the last motive (that they are laid up for him, even while they are at the gates) doth shew: in sum, all things (saith she) are in readiness, and for thee only beloved; although not in perfection, yet in sincerity, provision is made for thy entertainment.

Observe. 1. There are many various kinds of graces in a believer; and when it’s right with one, or when one of them is thriving, it is ordinarily so with all. 2. Grace hath its growth, and should be increased by new additions, where it is begun; and when it goes well with the believer, there will be of these spiritual fruits, ‘both new and old.’ 3. There is no keeping in good case of the old stock of grace, but by continuing and growing in fruitfulness; where the old is preserved, there will be found new also, otherwise, what seemed once to blossom, becomes almost withered. 4. Those who are seriously desirous of Christ’s, company, should be making ready for him, by liveliness of all manner of graces, new and old; and they who aim at such a condition, may with some confidence expect his presence and company. 5. Believers who seriously, tenderly, and humbly follow holiness, may attain a great length in it, as this expression of her case signifies: and therefore, the blame is only our own, that our attainments in grace are so small.

The last motive is in the last words, these are the fruits (saith she) ‘which I have laid up for thee, O my Beloved;’ these fruits are many, and at the doors, yet they are laid up for him; they are then such fruits, as are reserved for Christ. And this motive completes the former, whereby having asserted her fruitfulness, lest she should seem to boast of it, that her graces did so abound, whatever increase they have made, O my Beloved (saith she) I have devoted them to thee; they shall not be for my own satisfaction or boast, but for thy glory; therefore (saith she) come: as one would say, I have such good fruits of purpose kept for thee, which no other shall share of, and therefore I invite thee to come and enjoy them which is a kind invitation, turning over the acknowledgment of what she had on Christ, as indeed belonging to him, and as only to be made use of for his honour: so then, to lay up, signifies, 1. A carefulness and solicitousness, carefully to gather together as covetous worldly men use to lay up riches, and to gather them together. 2. It signifies the success which she had in her endeavour, that there was much gathered, a store of fruits, as in a treasure; so we find laying up, to have this sense, Psalm 31:19, ‘How great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up,’ as it

were in store, &c. 3. It signifies a setting apart of that store from common uses, as men do what they lay up, and a reserving of it for some peculiar use. And the peculiar uses for which she laid them up, follows in these words, 'for thee, O my beloved!' which implies, 1. That in her gathering and storing up, respect was had to Christ; and that her provision was not to rest herself upon it, but to honour him with it. 2. That even when it was attained, she was denied to it, and did not look upon it as if it could be any stock to herself to live upon, but that she had prepared it as an offering to present or entertain him with: even as a kind wife would provide what might be for the husband's refreshment and honour, and would be still laying up for his return, aiming singly to satisfy and entertain him with it; (so saith the Bride) this store is for satisfying and honouring of thee, and for thee only, O my Beloved! It is for thy cause, because thou commandest it, lovest it, and art honoured by it. 'O my Beloved,' is added, to shew how affectionately she insisted in this discourse; and in particular, how well bestowed she thought all that she had laid up was, when it was bestowed upon him; 'O my Beloved!' it is for thee, and I have willingly and affectionately laid it up, for that use, therefore come and lodge, and dwell with me, which is the scope. *Observe.* 1. Increasing in fruitfulness, or growing in holiness, is a work that will not be done in one day; but it will take time, and both carefulness and diligence to gather together and lay up these spiritual fruits. 2. When Christ is absent to sense, it is a suitable and seasonable duty to be laying up provision by fruitfulness in holiness, for his coming and return: or, when Christ seems not presently to come and accept of a believer's prayers, duties, or graces, yet are they not to be rejected, and cast at, as null and useless; nor is the believer to desist from performing of them, but to continue and persevere in stirring himself up in the exercise of graces and duties, until he come. 3. Although Christ come not at the first, but suffer many of the believer's duties, and the exercise of his graces (if we may say so) to lie long on his hand, yet they are not lost, but laid up (and grace is no ill treasure) and Christ will one time or other come and make good use of them. 4. It is no less practick (to say so) or it is no less difficult in believers' walk, to reserve what store they have gathered for Christ's use alone, and to be denied to it themselves, than to get duties performed, and spiritual provision laid up. 5. It is not enough to do duties, and to lay up fruits, unless they be laid up for Christ; and this is no less a duty than the former. 6. It is no small attainment in a believer, and a strong motive for attaining of Christ's company (without which all will be nothing) when not only he hath store of fruits, and is painful in holiness, but also is denied to these, as to any use-making of them for his own ends, more than if he had never been taken up in attaining them, and when he reserves the praise of them to Christ Jesus alone, that they may be subservient to his honour; this laying up of fruits for him,

is opposite to the laying up for ourselves, as living, eating, fasting, &c. to him, 2 Cor. 5:15; Zech. 7:5, 6, are opposite to living, eating, fasting to ourselves, which in God's account is to be as an empty vine, Hos. 10:l. 7. Grace is of a durable nature, it can keep, or it will endure laying up; all other treasures are fading; if men lay them up, they will rust and canker; but, the laying up of this spiritual treasure, which makes men rich in good works is profitable, commendable; and the riches thereby treasured up, are most durable.

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