

# CHAPTER 7

In this chapter,

**I.** Christ, the royal bridegroom, goes on to describe the beauties of his spouse, the church, in many instances, and to express his love to her and the delight he has in her conversation (v. 1-9).

**II.** The spouse, the church, expresses her great delight in him, and the desire that she had of communion and fellowship with him (v. 10-13). Such mutual esteem and endearment are there between Christ and believers. And what is heaven but an everlasting interchanging of loves between the holy God and holy souls!

## ~~THE~~ SONG OF SOLOMON 7:1-9

### THE BEAUTY OF THE CHURCH

The title which Jesus Christ here gives to the church is new: *O prince's daughter!* agreeing with ~~PSALM~~ Psalm 45:13, where she is called *the king's daughter*. She is so in respect of her new birth, born from above, begotten of God, and his workmanship, bearing the image of the King of kings, and guided by his Spirit. She is so by marriage; Christ, by betrothing her to himself, though he found her mean and despicable, has made her a *prince's daughter*. She has a princely disposition, something in her truly noble and generous; she is daughter and heir to the prince of the kings of the earth. *If children, then heirs*. Now here we have,

**I.** A copious description of the beauty of the spouse, which, some think, is given by the virgins her companions, and that those were they who called upon her to return; it seems rather to be given by Christ himself, and to be designed to express his love to her and delight in her, as before, ~~THE~~ Song of Solomon 4:1, etc., and ~~THE~~ Song of Solomon 6:5, 6. The similitudes are here different from what they were before, to show that the beauty of holiness is such as nothing in nature can reach; you may still say more of it, and yet still come short of it. That commendation of the spouse, Song of Solomon 4, was immediately upon the espousals (~~THE~~ Song of Solomon

3:11), this upon her return from a by-path (<sup><2183></sup>Song of Solomon 6:13); yet this exceeds that, to show the constancy of Christ's love to his people; *he loves them to the end*, since he made them *precious in his sight and honourable*. The spouse had described the beauty of her beloved in ten particulars (<sup><2181></sup>Song of Solomon 5:11, etc.); and now he describes her in as many, for he will not be behindhand with her in respects and endearments. Those that honour Christ he will certainly honour, and make honourable. As the prophet, in describing the corruptions of degenerate Israel, reckons *from the sole of the foot even unto the head* (<sup><2106></sup>Isaiah 1:6), so here the beauties of the church are reckoned from foot to head, that, as the apostle speaks, when he is comparing the church, as here, to the natural body (<sup><4123></sup>1 Corinthians 12:23), *more abundant honour* might be bestowed on those parts *of the body which we think to be less honourable*, and which therefore *lacked honour*, v. 24.

**1.** Her *feet* are here praised; the feet of Christ's ministers are beautiful in the eyes of the church (<sup><2311></sup>Isaiah 52:7), and her feet are here said to be beautiful in the eyes of Christ. *How beautiful are thy feet with shoes!* When believers, being made free from the captivity of sin (<sup><4118></sup>Acts 12:8), *stand fast in the liberty with which they are made free*, preserve the tokens of their enfranchisement, have *their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*, and walk steadily according to the rule of the gospel, then *their feet are beautiful with shoes*; they tread firmly, being well armed against the troubles they meet with in their way. When we rest not in good affections, but they are accompanied with sincere endeavors and resolutions, then our feet are beautified *with shoes*. See <sup><2630></sup>Ezekiel 16:10.

**2.** *The joint of the thighs* are here said to be *like jewels*, and those curiously wrought by *a cunning workman*. This is explained by <sup><4016></sup>Ephesians 4:16 and <sup><5119></sup>Colossians 2:19, where the mystical body of Christ is said to be held together by *joints and bands*, as the hips and knees (both which are *the joints of the thighs*) serve the natural body in its strength and motion. The church is *then* comely in Christ's eyes when those joints are kept firm by holy love and unity, and the communion of saints. When believers act in religion from good principles, and are steady and regular in their whole conversation, and turn themselves easily to every duty in its time and place, then *the joints are like jewels*.

**3.** The *navel* is here compared to a round cup or *goblet*, that *wants not* any of the agreeable *liquor* that one would wish to find in it, such as David's cup that ran over (<sup><2315></sup>Psalms 23:5), well shaped, and not as that miserable

infant whose navel was not cut, <sup>(2304)</sup>Ezekiel 16:4. The fear of the Lord is said to be *health to the navel*. See <sup>(2088)</sup>Proverbs 3:8. When the soul wants not that fear then the *navel wants not liquor*.

**4.** The *belly is like a heap of wheat* in the store-chamber, which perhaps was sometimes, to make show, adorned with flowers. The *wheat* is useful, the *lilies* are beautiful; there is every thing in the church which may be to the members of that body either for use or for ornament. All the body is nourished from the *belly*; it denotes the spiritual prosperity of a believer and the healthful constitution of the soul all in good plight.

**5.** The *breasts are like two young roes that are twins*, v. 3. By the breasts of the church's consolations those are nourished who are born from its belly (<sup>(2348)</sup>Isaiah 46:3), and by the navel received nourishment in the womb. This comparison we had before, <sup>(2005)</sup>Song of Solomon 4:5.

**6.** The *neck*, which before was compared to *the tower of David* (<sup>(2001)</sup>Song of Solomon 4:4), is here compared to *a tower of ivory*, so white, so precious; such is the faith of the saints, by which they are joined to Christ their head. The name of the Lord, improved by faith, is to the saints as a strong and impregnable tower.

**7.** The *eyes* are compared to *the fish-pools in Heshbon*, or the artificial fish-ponds, *by a gate*, either of Jerusalem or Heshbon, which is called *Bath-rabbim*, the daughter of a multitude, because a great thoroughfare. The understanding, the intentions of a believer, are clean and clear as these ponds. The eyes, weeping for sin, are as fountains (<sup>(2301)</sup>Jeremiah 9:1), and comely with Christ.

**8.** The *nose* is like *the tower of Lebanon*, the forehead or face set *like a flint* (<sup>(2307)</sup>Isaiah 50:7), undaunted as that tower was impregnable. So it denotes the magnanimity and holy bravery of the church, or (as others) a spiritual sagacity to discern things that differ, as animals strangely distinguish by the smell. This tower *looks towards Damascus*, the head city of Syria, denoting the boldness of the church in facing its enemies and not fearing them.

**9.** The *head like Carmel*, a very high hill near the sea, v. 5. The head of a believer is *lifted up above his enemies* (<sup>(3276)</sup>Psalms 27:6), above the storms of the lower region, as the top of Carmel was, pointing heaven-ward. The more we get above this world, and the nearer to heaven, and the more secure and serene we become by that means, the more amiable we are in the eyes of the Lord Jesus.

**10.** *The hair of the head* is said to be *like purple*. This denotes the universal amiableness of a believer in the eyes of Christ, even to *the hair*, or (as some understand it) the pins with which *the hair* is dressed. Some by *the head and the hair* understand the governors of the church, who, if they be careful to do their duty, add much to her comeliness. *The head like crimson* (so some read it) *and the hair like purple*, the two colours worn by great men.

**II.** The complacency which Christ takes in his church thus beautified and adorned. She is lovely indeed if she be so in his eyes; as he puts the comeliness upon her, so it is his love that makes this comeliness truly valuable, for he is an unexceptionable judge.

**1.** He delighted to look upon his church, and to converse with it, rejoicing in that habitable part of his earth: *The king is held in the galleries*, and cannot leave them. This is explained by <sup><412></sup>Psalm 132:13, 14, *The Lord has chosen Zion*, saying, *This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell*; and <sup><471></sup>Psalm 147:11, *The Lord takes pleasure in those that fear him*. And, if Christ has such delight *in the galleries* of communion with his people, much more reason have they to delight in them, and to reckon *a day there better than a thousand*.

**2.** He was even struck with admiration at the beauty of his church (v. 6): *How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love! How art thou made fair!* (so the word is), “not born so, but made so with the comeliness which I have put upon thee.” Holiness is a beauty beyond expression; the Lord Jesus is wonderfully pleased with it; the outward aspect of it is fair; the inward disposition of it is pleasant and highly agreeable, and the complacency he has in it is inexpressible. *O my dearest for delights!* so some read.

**3.** He determined to keep up communion with his church.

**(1.)** To *take hold of her* as of *the boughs of a palm-tree*. He compares her *stature to a palm-tree* (v. 7), so straight, so strong, does she appear, when she is looked upon in her full proportion. The *palm-tree* is observed to flourish most when it is loaded; so the church, the more it has been afflicted, the more it has multiplied; and the branches of it are emblems of victory. Christ says, “*I will go up to the palm-tree*, to entertain myself with the shadow of it (v. 8) and *I will take hold of its boughs* and observe the beauty of them.” What Christ has said he will do, in favour to his people; we may be sure he will do it, for his kind purposes are never

suffered to fall to the ground; and if he *take hold of the boughs* of his church, take early hold of her branches, when they are young and tender, he will keep his hold and not let them go.

**(2.)** To refresh himself with her fruits. He compares her *breasts* (her pious affections towards him) *to clusters of grapes*, a most pleasant fruit (v. 7), and he repeats it (v. 8): They *shall be* (that is, they shall be to me) *as clusters of the vine*, which *make glad the heart*. “Now that I come *up to the palm-tree* thy graces shall be exerted and excited.” Christ's presence with his people kindles the holy heavenly fire in their souls, and then their *breasts shall be as clusters of the vine*, a cordial to themselves and acceptable to him. And since God, at first, *breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life*, and breathes the breath of the new life still, *the smell of their nostrils is like the smell of apples*, or oranges, which is pleasing and reviving. *The Lord smelt a sweet savour* from Noah's sacrifice, <sup><102></sup>Genesis 8:21. And, *lastly, the roof of her mouth is like the best wine* (v. 9); her spiritual taste and relish, or the words she speaks of God and man, which come not from the teeth outward, but from *the roof of the mouth*, these are pleasing to God. *The prayer of the upright is his delight*. And, when *those that fear the Lord speak one to another* as becomes them, *the Lord hearkens, and hears with pleasure*, <sup><3016></sup>Malachi 3:16. It is like that wine which is,

**[1.]** Very palatable and grateful to the taste. It *goes down sweetly*; it *goes straightly* (so the margin reads it); it *moves itself aright*, <sup><1231></sup>Proverbs 23:31. The pleasures of sense seem right to the carnal appetite, and go down smoothly, but they are often wrong, and, compared with the pleasure of communion with God, they are harsh and rough. Nothing *goes down so sweetly* with a gracious soul as the wine of God's consolations.

**[2.]** It is a great cordial. The presence of Christ by his Spirit with him people shall be reviving and refreshing to them, as that strong wine which makes *the lips even of those that are asleep* (that are ready to faint away in a deliquium), *to speak*. Unconverted sinners are asleep; saints are often drowsy, and listless, and half asleep; but the word and Spirit of Christ will put life and vigour into the soul, and *out of the abundance of the heart* that is thus filled *the mouth will speak*. When the apostles were filled with the Spirit they spoke *with tongues the wonderful works of God* (<sup><410></sup>Acts 2:10, 12); and those who in opposition to being *drunk with wine, wherein is excess*, are *filled with the Spirit, speak to themselves in psalms and hymns*,

<sup><458></sup>Ephesians 5:18, 19. When Christ is thus commending the sweetness of his spouse's love, excited by the manifestation of his, she seems to put in that word, *for my beloved*, as in a parenthesis. "Is there any thing in me that is pleasant or valuable? As it is from, so it is for my beloved." *Then* he delights in our good affections and services, when they are all for him and devoted to his glory.

## <sup><270></sup>SONG OF SOLOMON 7:10-13

### DESIRING COMMUNION WITH CHRIST

These are the words of the spouse, the church, the believing soul, in answer to the kind expressions of Christ's love in the foregoing verses.

**I.** She here triumphs in her relation to Christ and her interest in him, and in his name will she boast all the day long. With what a transport of joy and holy exultation does she say (v. 10), "*I am my beloved's*, not my own, but entirely devoted to him and owned by him." If we can truly say that Christ is our *best beloved*, we may be confident that we are his and he *will save us*, <sup><1394></sup>Psalms 119:94. The gracious discoveries of Christ's love to us should engage us greatly to rejoice in the hold he has of us, his sovereignty over us and property in us, which is no less a spring of comfort than a bond of duty. Intimacy of communion with Christ should help clear up our interest in him. Glorifying in this, that she is his, to serve him, and reckoning that her honour, she comforts herself with this, that his *desire is towards her*, that is, he is her husband; it is a periphrasis of the conjugal relation, <sup><1036></sup>Genesis 3:16. Christ's desire was strongly towards his chosen remnant, when he came from heaven to earth to seek and save them; and when, in pursuance of his undertaking, he was even straitened till the baptism of blood he was to pass through for them *was accomplished*, <sup><2120></sup>Luke 12:50. He desired *Zion for a habitation*; this is a comfort to believers that, whosoever slights them, Christ has a desire towards them, such a desire as will again bring him from heaven to earth to receive them to himself; for he longs to have them all with him, <sup><6724></sup>John 17:24; 14:3.

**II.** She humbly and earnestly desires communion with him (v. 11, 12): "*Come, my beloved*, let us take a walk together, that I may receive counsel, instruction, and comfort from thee, and may make known my

wants and grievances to thee, with freedom, and without interruption.” Thus Christ can walk with the two disciples that were going to the village called *Emmaus*, and talked with them, till he made their *hearts burn within them*. Observe here,

**1.** Having received fresh tokens of his love, and full assurances of her interest in him, she presses forward towards further acquaintance with him; as blessed Paul, who desired yet more and more of *the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus*, <sup>408</sup>Philippians 3:8. Christ has made it to appear how much his desire is towards us, and we are very ungrateful if ours be not towards him. Note, Communion with Christ is that which all that are sanctified earnestly breathe after; and the clearer discoveries he makes to them of his love the more earnestly do they desire it. Sensual pleasures pall the carnal appetite, and soon give it surfeit, but spiritual delights whet the desires, the language of which is, *Nothing more than God*, but still *more and more of him*. Christ had said, *I will go up to the palm-tree*. Come, saith she, *Let us go*. The promises Christ has made us of communion with him are not to supersede, but quicken and encourage, our prayers for that communion.

**2.** She desires to go forth into the fields and villages to have this communion with him. Those that would converse with Christ must go forth from the world and the amusements of it, must avoid every thing that would divert the mind and be a hindrance to it when it should be wholly taken up with Christ; we must contrive how to *attend upon the Lord without distraction* (<sup>409</sup>1 Corinthians 7:35), for therefore the spouse here covets to get out of the noise of the town. *Let us go forth to him without the camp*, Hebrews 14:13. Solitude and retirement befriend communion with God; therefore *Isaac went out into the field to meditate* and pray. *Enter into thy closet, and shut thy door*. A believer is never less alone than when alone with Christ, where no eye sees.

**3.** Having business to go abroad, to look after their grounds, she desires the company of her beloved. Note, Wherever we are, we may keep up our communion with God, if it be not our own fault, for he is always at our right hand, his eye always upon us, and both his word and his ear always nigh us. By going about our worldly affairs with heavenly holy hearts, mixing pious thoughts with common actions, and having our eyes ever towards the Lord, we may take Christ along with us whithersoever we go.

Nor should we go any whither where we cannot in faith ask him to go along with us.

**4.** She is willing to rise betimes, to go along with her beloved: *Let us get up early to the vineyards.* It intimates her care to improve opportunities of conversing with her beloved; when the time appointed has come, we must lose no time, but, as the woman (<sup>41162</sup>Mark 16:2), *go very early*, though it be to a *sepulchre*, if we be in hopes to meet him there. Those that will go abroad with Christ must begin betimes with him, early in the morning of their days, must begin every day with him, seek him early, seek him diligently.

**5.** She will be content to take up her lodging in the villages, the huts or cottages which the country people built for their shelter when they attended their business in the fields; there, in these mean and cold dwellings, she will gladly reside, if she may but have her beloved with her. His presence will make them fine and pleasant, and convert them into palaces. A gracious soul can reconcile itself to the poorest accommodations, if it may have communion with God in them.

**6.** The most pleasant delightful fields, even in the spring-time, when the country is most pleasant, will not satisfy her, unless she have her beloved with her. No delights on earth can make a believer easy, unless he enjoy God in all.

**III.** She desires to be better acquainted with the state of her own soul and the present posture of its affairs (v. 12): *Let us see if the vine flourish.* Our own souls are our vineyards; they are, or should be, planted with vines and pomegranates, choice and useful trees. We are made keepers of these vineyards, and therefore are concerned often to look into them, to examine the state of our own souls, to seek whether the *vine flourishes*, whether our graces be in act and exercise, whether we be fruitful in the fruits of righteousness, and whether our fruit abound. And especially let us enquire whether *the tender grape appear* and whether *the pomegranates bud forth*, what good motions and dispositions there are in us that are yet but young and tender, that they may be protected and cherished with a particular care, and may not be nipped, or blasted, or rubbed off, but cultivated, that they may bring forth fruit unto perfection. In this enquiry into our own spiritual state, it will be good to take Christ along with us, because his presence will make the *vine flourish* and the *tender grape appear*, as the returning

sun revives the gardens, and because to him we are concerned to approve ourselves. If he sees the *vine flourish*, and the *tender grape appear* — if we can appeal to him, *Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee*, — if his Spirit witness with our spirit that our souls prosper, it is enough. And, if we would be acquainted with ourselves, we must beg of him to search and try us, to help us in the search, and discover us to ourselves.

**IV.** She promises to her beloved the best entertainment she can give him at her country seat; for he will come in to us, and sup with us, 418 Revelation 3:20.

**1.** She promises him her best affections; and, whatever else she had for him, it would utterly be contemned if her heart were not entire for him: “*There therefore will I give thee my love; I will repeat the professions of it, honour thee with the tokens of it; and the out-goings of my soul towards thee in adorations and desires shall be quickened and enlarged, and my heart offered up to thee in a holy fire.*”

**2.** She promises him her best provision, v. 13. “*There we shall find pleasant odours, for the mandrakes give a smell;*” the *love-flowers* or *lovely ones* (so the word signifies), or the *love-fruits*; it was something that was in all respects very grateful, so valuable that Rachel and Leah had like to have fallen out above it, 419 Genesis 30:14. “*We shall also find that which is good for food, as well as pleasant to the eye, all the rarities that the country affords: At our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits.*” Note,

**(1.)** The fruits and exercises of grace are pleasant to the Lord Jesus.

**(2.)** These must be carefully laid up for him, devoted to his service and honour, must be always ready to us when we have occasion for them, as that which is laid up at our gates, that, by our bringing forth much fruit, he may be glorified, 420 John 15:18.

**(3.)** There is a great variety of these pleasant fruits, with which our souls should be well stocked; we must have all sorts of them, grace for all occasions, *new and old*, as the good householder has in his treasury, not only the products of this year, but remainders of the last, 421 Matthew 13:52. We must not only have that ready to us, for the service of Christ, which we have heard, and learned, and experienced lately, but must retain that which we have formerly gathered; nor must we content ourselves only

with what we have laid up in store in the days of old, but, as long as we live, must be still adding something new to it, that our stock may increase, and we may be *thoroughly furnished for every good work*.

(4.) Those that truly love Christ will think all they have, even their most *pleasant fruits*, and what they have treasured up most carefully, too little to be bestowed upon him, and he is welcome to it all; if it were more and better, it should be at his service. It is all from him, and therefore it is fit it should be all for him.