

Christ's Heart Towards His People Part 2

Samuel Bolton, D.D. (1606-1654)

Song of Songs 4:9

I. The Text Opened

A. Song of Songs 4:9, "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse: thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes; with one chain about thy neck."

1. Thou hast ravished.
 - a) The God of heaven is taken, even to ravishment with his church and people.
 - b) My sister, my spouse.
 - (1) *Both are spoken of the same person, the church of God, which Christ calls ...*
הָאֵתְנָהּ (Sol. 4:9).
 - (a) *Sister, because she is the daughter of his Father in heaven, and fellow-heir of glory with Christ.*
 - (b) *Spouse, because Christ had married himself to her.*
 - c) With one of thine eyes: with one chain of thy neck.
 - (1) *In other words, with your graces, your wisdom, and knowledge, your faith, and other graces.*
 - (a) *Christ has a high account of the least of his people's graces.*
 - (2) *And so, "Thou hast ravished my heart."*

II. The Doctrine from the Text

A. DOCTRINE: Christ's people are his in four ways, 1. By choice. 2. By purchase. 3. By donation. And, 4. By covenant.

1. First, we are his by choice.
 - a) He set his heart on us from everlasting, which was his first love, and that which has carried God through all the expressions of his mercy towards us, to this day, even to admiration of angels, and astonishment of men.
 - b) These were his original heart-thoughts to us, his first love, which is most dear and precious.
 - c) The first love of Creator to the creature is most precious in God's esteem.
 - d) It is the virgin-love of the soul to God, those affections the soul has, when first enamored with God.
 - (1) *Therefore, he tells the children of Israel, he remembered "the time of her espousals, the kindness of her youth," which will not go out of his mind, (Jer. 2:2).*
 - (a) *So, the first love of the Creator to the creature; his heart-thoughts, they are most precious.*
 - e) Oh! These take the heart; these are the fullest, these are his freest thoughts towards us, (2 Tim. 1:9).
 - (1) *All the world stood before him, from the first man to the last, and why he should he choose us, and pass by others; others may be finer pieces of clay than we are?*
 - (2) *Others may be of greater parts, greater abilities, which if it had pleased God to have conquered to himself, might have brought him far more glory, done him more service.*

- (3) *Here was only his free mercy.*
- (4) *There was no ground to make him choose us, before he loved us.*
- (5) *But there is some ground to cause him to love us, now that he has chosen us.*
- (6) *We are his, and his by free choice, chosen and singled out of a world of men. And therefore, he will love us.*

2. We are also his by purchase.

- a) He has bought us, and that at a dear rate, with the price of his own blood, (Gal. 4:5).
- b) Christ was made under the law, that he might buy out those, who were under the law.
- c) Therefore, 1 Cor. 6:20, "You are bought with a price."
 - (1) *And what was the price?*
 - (2) *It could not be too little for the meanness of the commodity, not worth owning when he had it.*
 - (3) *But it cost him his dearest heart's blood, as 1 Peter 1:18 says, that we "were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, without blemish, without spot."*
- d) So then, we are his by purchase; we are the fruits of all his pains; of all his doings and sufferings; we are the comings in which Christ had for his blood; we are his purchase.
- e) God covenanted and bargained with Christ, that if he would lay down his life and blood for a people, he should have them.
 - (1) *This you see in Psalm 2:8, "Ask of mee, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance," that is, one good preacher says, merit of me, lay down your life and blood, and you shall have a people, as you see in Isa. 53:11-12, "He shall see of the travel of his soul."*
 - (a) *That if he would die, we should live.*
 - (b) *If he would bear the curse, we should have the blessing.*
 - (c) *If he would bear that wrath our sins deserved, and interpose himself between the justice of God and us, the quarrel should be taken up; God would be at peace.*
 - (d) *If he would purchase us, he should enjoy us.*
 - (i) ***And Christ undertook this.***
 - (e) *He loved us; and seeing he could not have us, except by buying us, and could not buy us, except he gave his blood for us, and as it were, sells himself to the justice of God, that he might buy us out.*
 - (i) ***He was content to do it.***
 - (f) *He redeemed us, not with silver or gold, etc., but by his blood.*
 - (2) *And now being purchased by him, his by purchase, and so dear a purchase, his heart must necessarily be taken with us.*
 - (a) *Indeed, he bought us, because he loved us: and now he loves us, because he has bought us.*
 - (b) *If we did lay down our blood, our life for the purchase of a thing, and could after live to enjoy it, how exceedingly would our hearts delight in it!*
 - (c) *Christ has given his blood, and laid down his life for the purchase of his church and people; and he lives to enjoy his purchase; and therefore, the heart of Christ must necessarily be taken with it.*
 - (3) *Shall I tell you? You are all the delight which Christ has in the world.*

(a) He delights to see you, he delights to be with you; he delights to converse with you; and all the delights of Christ are taken up with you; he has nothing worth beholding but you, in the world.

3. We are his by donation.

- a) God has given us to him, John 6:37, “All that the Father has given me, shall come unto me.”
- b) John 17:9, 11-12, “I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me. — Holy Father, keep through thy own name those whom thou hast given me.”
- c) We were so bought, and yet, we were given.
 - (1) *Otherwise, where is God's mercy?*
 - (a) *And so given, as yet we were bought.*
 - (i) *Otherwise, where is his justice?***
 - (2) *God's arms are equal; in the length of the one, you have the measure of the other.*
 - (3) *And therefore, he so expressed his mercy to man, as with it he preserved his justice.*
 - (4) *They were so given, as yet bought; and so, bought as yet given.*
 - (5) *And being his by donation, God having given them over to Christ by deed of gift, being the full desire of Christ, we find that the heart of Christ is taken with them.*

4. We are also his by covenant, Ezek. 16:8, “Then I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine.”

- a) Christ became ours, and we became his.
- b) He is our king, and we his people; he is our husband, and we his spouse.
- c) He has given himself to us, and we have re-given ourselves to him.
- d) We are his delight, and he is ours.
- e) And being his in covenant, in mutual stipulation, and bargain, the heart of Christ is taken with us.
- f) Because she is adorned with his beauties.
 - (1) *She is beautiful, Song of Songs 4:1, 6:4, 10.*
 - (2) *There is a twofold beauty which Christ communicates to his church, which makes the church lovely in his eyes.*
 - (a) *The beauties of his righteousness.*
 - (b) *The beauties of his holiness and graces.*
 - (i) *But these are not communicated the same way.***
 - (ii) *The one is communicated to us by imputation.***
 - (a) *The other by emanation, or infusion.***
 - (b) *The one a beauty, imparted.***
 - (c) *The other is imputed.***
- g) Christ communicates to his church his imputed beauty, then his righteousness, with which he clothes our souls.
 - (1) *Therefore, he is called God-our-righteousness, and is said to be made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.*
 - (2) *And we in this are to put on Christ.*
- h) Now this righteousness Christ communicates to us by imputation making it ours, is as if we in our own persons had worked it.
 - (1) *And it is as truly ours to save us, to justify us, as it is his to glorify him.*
 - (2) *And God looking on us through Christ, and Christ looking on us in himself, as clothed with his righteousness, he beholds us as beautiful.*
 - (3) *He sees no iniquity in Jacob, nor transgression in Israel.*

- (4) *Not but that there was iniquity in Jacob; but God did not see it; God looked on him as clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and so is said, not to see it.*
- (5) *As the sun shining through red glasses upon a wall, the wall looks red.*
- (a) *Not that this color is inherent in it; but lucent on it.*
- (b) *So, God looking on us through Christ, beholds us righteous in his righteousness; not that this is inherent in us, or beheld in us, we are rather beheld in it.*
- (c) *We say there is a twofold righteousness in Christ.*
- (i) *His essential and personal righteousness, as God.*
- (ii) *His mediatory righteousness, fashioned as Mediator.*
- (6) *The first of these cannot be imputed to us; it is essential, but the latter of these, his mediatory righteousness, or that righteousness he fashioned for us as Mediator, by which he subjected himself to the precepts, to the penalties, commands, and curses; answering both God's vindictive and rewarding justice, this is communicated to us, and made ours, by virtue of which we stand justified in God's sight, which is the first beauty Christ adorns his church with.*
- (7) *A second beauty with which Christ adorns his church, and makes her lovely, is, the beauties of his graces; which may be called the beauties of holiness, and set forth to us by those bracelets, and chains.*
- (a) *And here by one chain, as the Song says, etc.*
- (b) *Which is communicated to us, by way of infusion, or emanation, by which Christ by his Spirit, derives from himself as the universal principle, and common stock of grace, grace for grace, according to John 1:16, "Of his fulness we have all received grace for grace."*
- (8) *For every grace that is in Christ, there is some grace communicated to us answerable to it, in some proportion.*
- (a) *As the child in generation receives from the parent's member for member; or as the paper from the press, letter for letter; or the mirror from the face, image for image; or the wax from the seal, stamp for stamp, so we from Christ, receive grace for grace.*
- (9) *There is no grace in Christ appertaining to our sanctification in general, which is not in some weak degree fashioned in us.*
- (a) *And here the work of grace and regeneration is called "a forming of Christ in the soul."*
- (b) *And while we behold him, we are said to be changed into his likeness, (2 Cor. 3:18).*
- (c) *And we are said to have the same Spirit in us, that is in Christ.*
- (d) *Romans 8:9, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."*
- (e) *And the same mind is in us, that is in Christ, (Phil. 2:6).*
- i) *There is a false holiness, a painted false beauty, which is spun out of ourselves, fashioned out of our own principles, with which we shall lie down with sorrow at last.*
- (1) *Sparkles of our own kindling.*
- (2) *But the true holiness flows from Christ, and is imparted from Christ to his church, by which she is beautiful with his beauties, adorned with his graces.*
- (3) *And being in this way, the heart of Jesus Christ must necessarily be taken with her.*
- (4) *In this way, you see the second reason, why the heart of Christ is so much taken.*

- (a) *Because she is adorned with his beauties, clothed with his righteousness, adorned and beautified with his graces; which engages the heart of Jesus Christ.*
- (b) *He that loved us in our own blood, cannot choose but love us, as we have his beauty put on us; he cannot but love himself, and delight in himself, where-ever he beholds himself.*
- (c) *Why, these beauties are pieces of himself, part of his beauty, his rays with which he himself is adorned.*
- (d) *And he cannot look on any soul clothed with his righteousness, and beautified with his graces, but his heart is exceedingly taken with them.*
- (i) *Song 6:4-5, "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me."*
- (ii) *Christ seems as not able to bear the view of such a beauty.*
- (a) *Turn away thine eyes, etc.*
- (5) *This is because they are the persons, on whom God intended to advance the great design of glorifying the riches and freeness of his grace and mercy.*
- (a) *Now those whom God has intended for so great purposes, as these are, which are the greatest purposes that ever came on his heart, so his heart must necessarily be taken with it.*
- (b) *You know the more glorious and excellent the end to which anything serves, the more precious is that thing in our eyes.*
- (c) *Now we serve for no other end, but the expression of his mercy, the advancement of the glory of his free-grace, which are ends as high as himself, purposes as great as himself.*
- (6) *And therefore, God is not only taken with its expression, but with the persons upon whom he expresses it.*
- (a) *Therefore, I say is the heart of God so exceedingly taken with his church.*

III. The Text Applied

A. Christ's Sight of What He will Make Us to Be

1. Indeed, God may single out some men for the purposes of expressing the glory of his power and justice, the advancement of them; and yet God hates these men, as you see it plain in Pharaoh, who for this cause was set up to advance his power.
 - a) But God never singled out any to be the subjects on whom he intends to advance the riches of his grace and mercy but his heart is exceedingly taken with them.
 - b) Those, who serve to such high purposes as these, and are designed to such high ends as these; the advancement of the glory of his grace and free-mercy (which is the most precious attribute of God, and which some think is called his glory, Exod. 33:18, "Let me see thy glory,") and if the 19th verse may interpret it, that glory was his mercy, and his mercy his glory; and therefore, such must necessarily be precious in his esteem.
2. Now his people are they, whom God has singled out for these great purposes, for the expression of more mercy, than we can express, no, than we can conceive, no, than we can believe at all times, but weakly at best.
 - a) And therefore, the heart of Jesus Christ must necessarily be taken with them.
3. My brethren, if God had not singled out some to express himself in this way on, God would have not been known in the world; for there is nothing so much reveals God to be God, as his mercy and grace.

- a) And therefore, God singled out a few on whom he would advance the riches of his grace, that his mercy, and in that himself might be made known in the world.
- b) As Paul says of himself, 1 Tim. 1:16, "That he obtained mercy, that he might stand up a pattern of all long-suffering."
- (1) *As if he had said, We should not have known how patient God is, we should not have apprehended how long-suffering God is to sinners, if he had not had such an example of patience, such a pattern of all long-suffering, as I was.*
- (2) *So we should not have known how merciful, how good God is, if the choicest attribute of God had been lost to us; like as if a great river had run underground not discerned, if God had not singled out some, on whom he might have expressed the riches of his mercy.*
- c) And those whom God intends to be the subjects on whom he may advance so high designs, so great purposes, must necessarily be exceedingly precious to him.
- (1) *My brethren, you that are the people of God, are such as he has intended to advance his mercy, and glory of free-grace on; you are they he sent Christ to die for, the greatest work that ever was fashioned in the world.*
- (2) *You are they whom he reared the fabric of heaven for.*
- (3) *You are they in whom he intends to delight, and with whom he will solace himself for ever.*
- d) And God looks on us now, not as we are, but what he intends to make us.
- (1) *He sees to the utmost of his design on you, to eternity, and loves you now with that love.*
- (2) *If God should look on us, as we are, he might see enough in us, to withdraw his heart from us.*
- (3) *Or if not, yet enough to cool and quench his affections towards us; being there is so much blackness with our beauty, so much deformity with our comeliness, so much corruption with our graces.*
- (a) *No, so much blackness, and so little beauty, and so much corruption, and so little grace.*
- (4) *But he looks upon us, not as we are in ourselves, but as we are in Christ, and not what we are for present, but what he intends to make us in Christ.*
- (5) *He looks to the end of his design, even to that which he has designed us to, when we shall be presented without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.*
- (a) *Holy, and without blemish, (Eph. 5:27), when we shall be satisfied with his likeness, (Psalm 17:15), when we shall be like to the angels; no, like to God, glorious with his glory, as now gracious with his grace.*
- e) And therefore, God having intended us to such high purposes, and looking on us for the present, what he purposes to make us, and what he has designed us to, necessarily the heart of Jesus Christ must be taken with us.