

## Christ's Heart Towards His People

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. This is a text, which after we have been some while in heaven, we shall be able to understand.
  - a) Certainly, no one can speak fully to this text, but they who have the full enjoyments of this love.
  - b) But things that are not possible to be expressed, are not totally to be omitted; and therefore, we will launch into this great ocean.
2. Some things in general are to be premised.
  - a) For the author, or penman, was Solomon inspired by the Spirit of God.
  - b) For the title of the book; it is called the Song of Songs; or, a most excellent song.
    - (1) *So, it is called this for the excellency and sublimity of its matter.*
    - (2) *The doubling of the words declares its excellency; the song of all songs.*
    - (3) *Like Deut. 10:17, "The Lord your God, is God of gods, and Lord of lords."*
    - (4) *This, then is the song of songs.*
3. As for its matter, the subject matter of this book is a parabolical history of the mutual loves between Christ and his church, set down under the persons of the bridegroom, and his bride.
  - a) This verse which I have read to you is the gracious profession of Christ his love to his church; of which, if I read no more than this verse, we see enough set down here to astonish and amaze us all.
  - b) "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse."
  - c) Christ here speaks in the manner of a lover, whose heart is exceedingly ravished, and taken with the beauties, virtues, and graces of his spouse.
4. Give me leave to explain the words, and we will then come to the doctrine.
  - a) Thou hast ravished. What is meant by that?
    - (1) *The expression is great, that the God of heaven should be so taken, even to ravishment with his church and people.*
    - (2) *And yet let me tell you, the word speaks more than any expression can utter.*
    - (3) *The word in the Hebrew sets down, to great wonder and amazement, the exceeding love of Christ to the church.*
      - (i) **"Thou hast ravished, wounded, stolen away, drawn my heart to thee."**
  - b) My sister, my spouse.
    - (1) *Both are spoken of the same person, the church of God, which Christ calls ...*  
*הַחֵן הַיְהוָה (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) ... i.e. with your graces, your wisdom, and knowledge, your faith, and other graces.

(a) As if he had said, "I do not need to behold both your eyes. The beauty of one of them is so great, it takes my heart. And I do not need to behold all your ornaments. Even one chain alone has taken my heart, and drawn my heart to you."

(b) Christ has a high account of the least of his people's graces.

d) In this way having explained the words, we come to the conclusion.

(1) *Thou hast ravished my heart.*

## II. The Doctrine from the Text

A. DOCTRINE: That the heart of Jesus Christ is exceedingly taken with his church and people. Thou hast ravished.

1. That which so endears the heart of Christ to them, that which takes the heart of Christ, is the beauties and graces of his people.
  - a) The least grace of his church greatly takes the heart of Christ. One eye, one chain.
2. We think he cannot love us because we are so weak in grace.
  - a) But it is his own grace, though never so weak, and he can love this.
3. In considering this we will show:
  - a) 1. What is meant by his heart being taken.
  - b) 2. We will show that Christ's heart is in this way taken.
  - c) 3. We will show on what grounds his heart is so much taken with his church.
4. For the first part, what is meant by his heart being taken?
  - a) And here I must tell you in the entrance to thinking about this, that we cannot sufficiently express it.
  - b) It is one of the highest expressions in the Scriptures towards his church, that the heart of Jesus Christ should be taken with his church.
  - c) An expression, which if we but let it lie on our spirit, the weight of it would sink us.
    - (1) *Shall I say he dearly and entirely loves us.*
      - (a) *Nothing is too much to do, nothing is too great to suffer, nothing too much to give to us, he exceedingly loves us.*
    - (2) *Shall I say, his heart exceedingly delights in us, his soul exceedingly rejoices over us, above all the world.*
    - (3) *Shall I say, we are exceeding precious in his eyes, we are "choice in his esteem," (Isaiah 43:3-4).*
      - (a) *Such as he will give the world for, such as he will give himself for, if he can but gain us, he esteems he has riches enough, and reward enough for it.*
    - (4) *Shall I say, his desires are towards us, he in a manner desires no more than us; shall I say he thinks that he is happy in the enjoyment of us.*
      - (a) *We are reward enough for all his pains, and all his labor.*
      - (b) *Why, all this and more, the scripture says, and all this is yet short of this expression, his heart is taken with us.*
5. The heart of Jesus Christ is exceedingly taken with his church.
  - a) That which the thoughts are taken up with it, that the heart must necessarily be taken with it.

b) This is plain, for you know a man will busy his thoughts about that which he cares for.

(1) *If you want to know what you love, see what things your thoughts are on.*

c) As if he had said, there can be no better character to discover what your hearts are taken with, than to examine what your thoughts are most taken up with; for what the thoughts are taken up with, the heart is taken with.

(1) *Now the thoughts of Christ are exceedingly taken up with his church and people.*

(2) *We are ever on his thoughts.*

(3) *There has not been a moment from all eternity in which we have been out of the thoughts of Christ.*

(4) *Before the world was; we were on his thoughts, he thought on us to everlasting life, loved us with everlasting love.*

d) After we had lost ourselves in the fall, we were then on his thoughts, when he interposed himself between God and us, to stop his wrath from falling on us.

(1) *Before we came into the world we were on his thoughts, witness all the scripture, in which are such expressions of his heart to us.*

(2) *After he came into the world, you see we were the whole of his thoughts, we lay forever on his heart; you see by his doings, sufferings, prayer for us.*

(3) *Read the John chapters 14-17.*

(4) *See how his thoughts were taken up with us, when he was to leave us, what love he showed, what care he expressed to us, what earnest prayers he put up to God for us.*

(5) *Read John 17:9 to the end of the chapter.*

(a) *Yes, and what provision he made for us, he would not leave us comfortless, but sends his Spirit to comfort us, to guide us.*

e) And now he is in heaven, are not his thoughts on us?

(1) *Did he not tell us he went to prepare a place for us, to intercede for us, to plead for us?*

(2) *The church of Christ is never a moment off from the thoughts of Christ, (Isa. 49:15-16).*

(a) *And therefore, his heart is exceedingly taken with his church.*

(3) *That which a man affectionately and endearedly loves, that the heart is much taken with, be it a husband, be it a wife, child, the world, whatever.*

(a) *Now Christ exceedingly loves his church, we are said to be the dearly beloved of his soul, (Jer. 12:7).*

(4) *And read here, he loves us beyond all expressions, God so loved the world, (John 3:16).*

(a) *So, Christ loves us beyond all conceptions, Eph. 3:19, for it is a love which passes knowledge.*

(b) *In the former verse the apostle went about to measure this love, height, depth, breadth, length.*

**(i)** *But he found his line too short, his measure would not reach, therefore he concludes it is a love beyond all knowledge.*

(c) *It is an infinite love.*

(d) *It is a greater love than all.*

**(i)** *Witness what is done, suffered, and yet love above all.*

(e) *And therefore, Christ's heart is exceedingly taken with his church and people.*

f) That which a man causes his heart to be glad with, and which he rejoices over, he must necessarily be taken with.

- (1) *A man will not rejoice over the enjoyment of something he does not love.*
- (2) *The rich fool in Christ's parable rejoiced over his full barns, but it was because his heart was taken with his possessions.*
- (3) *Joy is a fruit of the heart being taken with anything; you rejoice in your riches, husbands, wives, children, etc., in the possession of whatever your heart loves.*
- (4) *Now the heart of Jesus Christ exceedingly rejoices over his church and people; they are his by donation, God gave them to him; they are his by purchase, he laid down his life for them.*

(a) *If we lay down our life to acquire a thing, surely we rejoice in it.*

(5) *We are his riches, we are his treasure, his Ammies, Ruhamas, and Hephzibahs, his precious ones, his people, his spouse; and therefore, he must necessarily rejoice over us, (Isaiah 62:4-5). "Thou shalt be called Heph-zibah, for the Lord delighteth in thee."*

(6) *Yes, "as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee," (Zeph. 3:17).*

(7) *The Lord will rejoice over you with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over you with singing.*

(a) *And therefore, seeing Christ rejoices, his heart is exceedingly taken.*

g) That which a man delights to converse with, that his heart is taken with.

(1) *Now Christ delights exceedingly to converse with his saints, he loves to speak to them, and he loves to hear them speak to him, Song of Songs 2:14, "Oh my dove, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for thy countenance is comely, and thy voice is sweet."*

(a) *When the disciples are talking of him, Christ joins himself to them.*

(b) *His heart is much taken.*

(2) *When the two were going to Emmaus, Luke 24:15, Christ comes and joins with them, delights in their talk.*

(a) *Mal. 3:16, "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name."*

(b) *When God's people were gathered together, the Lord hearkened and heard.*

6. That which a man thinks nothing is to dear for, nothing too much to give for, to do for, or suffer for, that the heart must necessarily be taken with such things.

a) But in this way, it was with Christ to his church.

(1) *He suffered in his body, those spittings, buffetings, scourgings, etc., that was dear to him, which he gave his heart-blood for.*

(2) *He suffered in his soul even the wrath of God for her.*

(3) *He emptied himself of his own glory, took on him the form of a servant, with all our infirmities, sin excepting; as it is said of Jacob, he counted all his labors but little for Rachel, because he loved her, (Gen. 29:20).*

(4) *That which a man's soul is satisfied and contented with in its enjoyment, that is what a man's heart is taken with.*

7. Now you shall see that the heart of Jesus Christ is fully satisfied and contented with the enjoyment of his church, though it had cost him so much pains, so much sweat and blood, yet its enjoyment is reward enough to him.

a) It is the reward which God promised him for his work, Psalm 2:8, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen," etc.

(1) *Here, merit of me, lay down your life, and I will then give you a church, a people.*

(2) *And that which satisfies, Isa. 53:11, "He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied."*

(3) *What does this mean but that he shall see the fruit of his sufferings in the saving of souls, in making them holy, and shall be satisfied with it.*

(4) *It shall be reward enough to him for all pains that souls are saved.*

(a) *Isa. 62:11, "His reward is with him, and his work before him, he is the salvation of his people."*

b) And this is that which some think is meant by the "joy set before him," in Heb. 12:2, "Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame."

(1) *Which joy (a holy and learned interpreter says) is nothing else but the fruit of his sufferings, the redemption and salvation of his church and people, according to that in Isa. 53:12, "Therefore will the Lord divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death."*

(a) *And all this is a true interpretation.*

### III. The Text Applied

#### A. Christ's Heart is Taken with you his people

1. Well then, seeing whatever the heart of man rests satisfied in its enjoyment, the heart is taken with it.

a) And that Christ rests satisfied in the enjoyment of his church and people, though it cost so much to obtain it.

b) Therefore, it necessarily must follow that the heart of Jesus Christ is exceedingly taken with you, his people.

(1) *That which a man is exceeding dear of, his heart must necessarily be taken with.*

(2) *Those things which take our hearts, we are exceeding dear for them.*

(3) *If it is the world, husband, wife, child, a man is exceeding excited for them.*

2. Now Christ is exceeding taken over you, his church.

a) Oh! It is dear to him, therefore he gives charge to the world, do not touch one of these, for if you touch the apple of my eye, do not offend one of these little ones, for they are dear to me, he is taken with them and protective of them.

b) Yes, he not only charges, but menaces too, and threatens men if they shall hurt any of his little ones.

(1) *It had been better for you, that a millstone were tied about your necks, and cast into the middle of the sea, than to offend any of these little ones.*

(2) *Christ is exceeding suspicious over you, his people for your good, for his church is very dear to him.*

c) When he himself was in that agony, and when he suffered himself to be hailed before the judges, and to die, yet you see how he was over his disciples; "why" Christ says, "I am he you seek for, if therefore you seek me, let these go their way."

(1) *As if he had said, I am he whom you seek, and against whom your malice goes forth, do what you will with me, but spare these, let these go (what have these done?).*

(2) *With Jonah, "cast me into the sea, that the storm may cease;" nail me on the cross, fling me into the grave, do with me what you will, that these may escape.*

d) Oh! Christ must necessarily be protective of them, when he would put his back between his church and the stripes, interpose his soul between the wrath of God and them.

(1) *Drink of that bitter cup that they might not taste of it, be wounded that they might be healed, bear the curse, that they might carry away the blessing, as there was no sorrow to his sorrow, so no love to his love, all loves are lost, no, they seem as hatred in comparison of his.*

e) Another place, John 17:9-16.

(1) *See there when he was to go from his disciples, how protective he was over them.*

(2) *He commends them to his Father, and designs him to keep them whom he had given him.*

(3) *As if he had said, "Father they are mine, and I love them dearly, I have done much for them, but I will do more, therefore preserve them, therefore keep them. I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, holy Father, through your own name keep those whom "thou hast given me."*

(4) *In this way you see how concerned Christ was over them.*

(a) *And therefore, his heart is exceedingly taken with his church.*

f) He will keep them from trouble, he will buy out their trouble with the troubles of the whole world, and their lives with the lives of thousands.

(1) *You have a place for this in Isa. 43:3-4, "I gave Egypt for your ransom, I gave Ethiopia and Seba for thee."*

(2) *God will give whole kingdoms for his church to preserve them from trouble.*

(a) *"I have loved you, therefore will I give men for you, and people for your life."*

(b) *As if he had said, I stand at it to give the heads of a thousand men, the lives of ten thousands to save your life, to preserve you like the ram to save Isaac, he is protective and concerned with them; if not to keep them from trouble, yet to support them in trouble.*

g) He is concerned for them, for he will deliver them out of trouble, and he will not suffer the rod of the wicked to rest.

(1) *Though for a time, yet, etc., many are the troubles of the righteous, but he knows how to deliver his, and reserve the wicked.*

(2) *If Christ does not deliver you from trouble, yet he will deliver you in trouble; and at last he will deliver you out, who knows how to deliver his own.*

(a) *That which a man thinks everything else is too little, nothing is too much, too dear, to bestow on them, that heart of a man is exceedingly taken with it.*

(3) *When a man does not think riches, nor labor, nor his blood, or his life is too dear, this shows the heart is much taken with it.*

3. Now the church is so dear to Christ, that he thinks nothing is too dear, nothing is too much for it.

a) It was not his blood within his veins, nor his life within his breast, which he counted too dear for her.

(1) *He can seemingly bestow anything on her.*

(2) *He will bestow temporal things on her, at least so much as is necessary for her.*

(3) *All things necessary for life and godliness, if he gives himself, how much more all things? (Rom. 8:32).*

(4) *Will he give the greater, and deny the less? No.*

- (a) *That love which gave the greater, will not deny you the less; if it is good for you.*
- (5) *So much so that he has engaged himself by covenant to give you as to bear your charge to heaven, and then there is nothing lacking for you at all.*
- (a) *He bestows grace on you, and faith that is more precious than gold.*
- (6) *If you are wicked, he might bestow outward things on you, and yet his heart never taken with you.*
- (a) *The rich man Dives had more wealth, uttered more eloquence, Saul had more command, Agrippa had more glorious apparel, than those his heart is taken with.*
- (i) *He may give wealth to a rich man, command to a Saul, eloquence to a Herod.*
- (ii) *But he never bestows grace on any, but it is an evidence his heart is taken with a man.*
- (a) *Abraham gave some portions to the sons of the concubines, but Isaac had the inheritance.*
- b) He will bestow his Spirit on you, to enlighten you, renew you.
- c) He will bestow himself on you, the Collector of all other blessings.
- (1) *God cannot extend his love further in giving, nor we ours in desiring.*
- (2) *And that which a man bestows himself on must necessarily be precious in his eyes.*
- (3) *Christ bestows himself on you.*
- (a) *Who is the greatest of gifts, the gift of gifts?*
- (b) *The gift which entitles us to all other gifts, all is yours, if you are Christ's.*
- (c) *The gift which sweetens and sanctifies everything.*
- (d) *There is a curse with all other temporary gifts if Christ is not given.*
- (i) *A curse to your gold, your silver, your prosperity, your food, drink, health, and strength.*
- (e) *But where Christ is given, he takes off the curse, and sanctifies everything; he not only turns comforts into blessings, but crosses into blessings.*
- d) A blessing in sickness, in poverty, in death, etc.
- (1) *Christ bestows himself on his church, he passes over himself, and all his by his deed of gift, he and all his is yours: as you and all yours are his; your sins, and sorrows are all his.*
- e) And all his are yours; his works, his merits, his Spirit, his kingdom.
- (1) *As Christ said to the Father, so may you say to Christ, "all yours is mine;" his merit is your clothing, his blood is your drink, his flesh is your meat.*
- (a) *He is meat, drink, clothes.*
- f) Christ bestows heaven on his church.
- (1) *It is the manor house which he has reserved for his spouse.*
- (2) *"Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, may be where I am," etc. (John 17:24).*
- (3) *They are married together, and co-habitation is a marriage duty, etc.*
4. And therefore, seeing Christ thinks nothing is too dear to bestow on his church, here must necessarily follow; that the heart of Jesus Christ is exceedingly taken with you, his church.
- a) Those which Christ has made all things for, to serve for their good.
- b) Those whom he has prepared glory for, heaven for.

c) Those which he has shed his blood for, must necessarily be dear to him, his heart is much taken with them.

*(1) If a king should build a stately house, for one with whom he would support all his life, and should at last give life too, you would think, surely, he loved him.*

d) God made everything for you, the sun, moon, stars, creatures; all this frame of the world; surely you are dear to him.

e) God prepared heaven for you, a place of glory, happiness; where you should forever enjoy him, and comfort yourself with his love.

f) Christ shed his blood for you, which was more dear to him than ten thousand worlds.

*(1) What is all the world, and ten thousand worlds in comparison of one drop of his blood?*

*(2) And therefore, they whom he shed his blood for, must necessarily be more dear to him than all the world; his heart is very much taken with them.*

5. In this way we have looked at the rich cabinet of Christ's love, of which he has cheered and revived us.

a) But I ask you, why is the heart of Christ so much taken with his church and people?

6. I give you in brief, that he is taken with us by his own mercy; by his own grace to us, or from his own grace in us.

a) It is because we are his.

*(1) Ownership you know is the great ground of love.*

*(2) We love our own; our own husbands, wives, children.*

*(3) They are ours.*

*(4) So here, we are his; he owns his people, and therefore, loves us.*

*(5) In Song of Songs 7:10, the spouse makes the same argument.*

*(a) "I am my beloveds, and he is mine," therefore his desire is towards me, therefore his heart is taken with me; therefore his soul loves me.*

*(b) And we are his, in the dearest and sweetest relations.*

*(6) We are his people, his subjects.*

*(a) Christ is the King of saints, whose throne is in our hearts, and will allow no rival.*

*(b) His scepter is his word, and whose word is our law.*

*(c) And if all this amounts to too little:*

*(7) We are his friends.*

*(a) "Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends."*

*(b) We are his friends and favorites.*

*(8) We are his children, begotten again, and born again to everlasting life, (1 Peter 1:3-4).*

*(a) Being born again, etc.*

*(9) We are his spouse, such as he has married to himself in faithfulness and truth, and such as he delights in.*

*(10) We are his members.*

*(a) The church is his body, his fulness, and every one members in particular, as the apostle speaks.*

*(11) We are his jewels, his treasure. Malachi 3:7, "In the day that I make up my jewels, they shall be mine."*

*(a) And therefore, his heart must necessarily be taken with us.*

*(b) Christ has the same argument.*

*(c) Where one's treasure is; there will the heart be also.*

(d) *The heart, and a man's treasure lie together.*

**(i)** *Now, we are his jewels, his treasure, his portion, his inheritance; that which his Father left him; and he must dearly earn it too.*

(e) *And therefore, the heart of Christ is exceedingly taken with you, his church and people.*

(f) *So, you see this is the first ground, why, because we are his, and his in the dearest, nearest, choicest of relations, that he loves us so much.*