

## Christ's Heart Towards His People Part 6

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."

### II. The Doctrine from the Text

A. Doctrine: All Christians are Required to Walk Suitably to this Love of Christ.

1. I bring an exhortation, 1. To them of Christ's church. And, 2. To them who are not of the church.
  - a) 1. To them of his church. Is it so that the heart of Christ is so much taken with his church and people?
    - (1) *1. Walk suitably to this love.*
    - (2) *Now this suitable walking we will express in these five things.*
      - (a) *1. Walk cheerfully.*
      - (b) *2. Walk thankfully.*
      - (c) *3. Walk humbly.*
      - (d) *4. Walk watchfully.*
      - (e) *5. Walk obediently.*
2. Walk cheerfully and thankgully.
  - a) Walk as heirs of such a mercy.
    - (1) *Here is a truth that speaks comfort, when all the world speaks nothing but terror, and beware of abusing this love.*
    - (2) *Precious things are committed to us by a word of caution.*
    - (3) *This is a precious truth; and therefore, let me add to it this word of caution.*
    - (4) *Beware of abusing this love of Christ.*
      - (a) *Christ's love are his inner affections, and he will never endure to have his inward affections injured, his love abused.*
      - (b) *So, to speak after the manner of men; Christ can least endure his love should be abused.*
        - (i) ***There is no abuse like it.***
        - (ii) ***Therefore, beware of it.***
    - (5) *Now, this love of Christ is injured these ways, and beware, 1. When we slight the entreaties, reject the tenders, cast aside the offers and beseeches of his love.*
      - (a) *When love stoops to you, when the mercy and goodness of Christ does as it were, come on its knees to you, and intreats you to do this, or not to do that, and yet you will stop your ears, pull back your shoulder, slight the entreaties, this is an abuse.*
    - (6) *2. When the love of Christ slackens our hearts to duty, loosens our engagements, makes us more remiss to or in service, this is to abuse his love.*
      - (a) *We should reason from mercy to duty; and not from mercy to liberty.*
      - (b) *Abundance of grace calls in for abundance of duty, and the love of Christ should constrain us; as the apostle says, (2 Cor. 5).*

- (c) *This should make us live more humbly, more actively, more studious to please, more diligent to obey, more careful to serve him.*
- (d) *This should make us live at higher rates for heaven, more spiritual, more heavenly minded.*
- (e) *It is a cord let down from heaven, to fetch our souls up there.*
- (f) *And does this cause us to be more remiss, more careless?*
- (g) *Does this, which should quicken, slacken our hand to duty?*
- (h) *O! this is a base, ungrateful neglect of his love!*

(7) 3. *When we take heart to sin by it.*

- (a) *When we grow more loose, careless, this is a high abuse of this love.*
- (b) *Because God is good, will you be evil?*
- (c) *Because he is merciful, will you be sinful?*
- (d) *Because he is gracious will you be impious?*
- (e) *What fearful abuse of love is this!*

**(i)** *To return evil for good, is wicked.*

**(a)** *To return good for evil, is Christian-like.*

**(b)** *But to return evil for good, and the greatest evil for the greatest good, sin for love, this is devilish.*

(f) *Were you his enemies, he knew how to deal with you; he could revenge himself, and the abuses of his love on you.*

**(i)** *But you are his friends, and those affections which you wrong, are stirred in him, when he goes about to punish you.*

**(ii)** *“Oh Ephraim! How shall I give thee up! How shall I deliver thee, Israel! My bowels are turned within me. My repentings are kindled together,” (Hosea 11:8).*

(g) *The goodness of God should prevail with us, “there is mercy with thee; therefore you are to be feared.”*

(h) *It is set down as the principle in such, with whom the heart of Christ is taken, (see Hosea chapter 3).*

**(i)** *“They shall fear the Lord, and his goodness, in the latter days.”*

(i) *None but venomous spirits will suck poison from such sweetness, as there to draw encouragements to sin from that which is the great encouragement to be in service of Christ.*

(j) *Anselm said, that if on the one hand he should see sin, and on the other, the torments of hell, he had rather choose to fall into hell, than fall into sin.*

(8) 4. *When we stagger and doubt, give way to misgiving thoughts of Christ’s love, and unbelief of our own hearts, we abuse this love.*

(a) *What, is it possible that Christ should do or suffer more than he has done and suffered to persuade your hearts of his love?*

(b) *If Christ should ask the question of you, who doubt most of his love, “What shall I do to answer your scruples. To satisfy your souls forever, in this, that I love you?”*

(c) *Could you rationally desire more than what he has expressed in his words, and to your heart, and if notwithstanding everything is in vain?*

(d) *May he not justly say as David of Nabal, “Surely in vain have I done all this, when this all commeth to nothing.”*

3. Be much in the contemplation of this love of Christ, dwell on this.

a) This love of Christ will be a matter of eternal perusal in heaven.

b) We shall do nothing but read over this love.

c) O! Let us not be strangers to it now.

d) View it in the 1. Fulness. 2. Freeness. 3. Bounty. 4. Perpetuity of it.

- (1) 1. Measure it in its fulness.
- (a) It is a love which reaches to every necessity.
- (b) A love able to make you holy, and able to make you happy.
- (2) 2. Read it over in its freeness.
- (a) 1. It was an undeserved love.
- (i) We may provoke him to anger, but we cannot tempt him to love.
- (ii) The former arises from our sins, the latter from himself.
- (a) His choosing, justifying, adopting, saving love, all are free.
- (b) 2. It was an unsought-for love.
- (i) Never a prayer put up for it. "I am found of them that sought me not," (Isa. 65:1).
- (3) 3. Read it over in the bounty and expressions of it.
- (a) 1. What he did. 2. What he suffered. 3. What he has given to his church. 4. Look upon it, in its perpetuity, permanency, and continuance.
- (i) It is a love which reaches from eternity to eternity; from eternal choosing, to eternal glorifying, an unchangeable love.
- (4) Let us then peruse this love. Read it over in all the dimensions.
- (a) Dwell on its thoughts until your hearts are humbled, melted, enabled, ennobled, won, quickened, comforted, etc.
- e) The thoughts of this love are, 1. Soul-humbling thoughts. Nothing lays the soul lower than love.
- (1) The consideration of this will loathe a person in their own thoughts, (Ezek. 36:25-33), where we find some expressions of love, how it affects us to humble us.
- (2) These would be, soul-melting thoughts.
- (a) They will not only humble, but melt; not only break, but dissolve the heart.
- (b) Nothing melts the soul more than love.
- (c) The law may break us; but it is as the breaking of a flint; every piece of dust retains hardness.
- (d) But it is the gospel that melts us.
- (e) The thoughts of God's justice make the heart stony, make it harder; but the thoughts of God's mercy melt the heart.
- (f) You know you never mourn indeed, until love, until mercy melts you.
- (g) When love comes in, then all the springs are opened, and a man is dissolved into waters.
- (3) The thoughts of this love have, a soul-enabling power.
- (a) It will not only engage us to service; (as the apostle says, "The love of Christ constrains me.")
- (b) But it will enable us to service; make us pray, and pray with affections, pray with life; make us hear, and hear with strength.
- (c) This puts us on working, and puts life, virtue and vigor into our actions.
- (d) There are no actions stronger than those that come from love.
- (i) Things incredible and impossible to others, are yet easy to them who love.
- (4) See what the saints have gone through, what they have done, what they have suffered.
- (a) Let but the thoughts of this love lie on your spirits a little, and you will find that love is strong as death, (Song of Songs 8:6).
- (b) And will mightily carry us through that, which otherwise may seem impossible.

- (5) *They will be, soul-ennobling thoughts.*
- (a) *They will make you like themselves.*
  - (b) *Whatever the soul feeds on, the soul is digested into its nature.*
  - (c) *So here, feed on the thoughts of this love, and your spirit will be digested into it.*
  - (d) *While we behold through these eyeglasses the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, (2 Cor. 3:18).*
  - (e) *In nature the meat is digested into the nature of the eater.*
  - (f) *Here the eater is turned into the nature of the meat.*
  - (g) *The contemplation of his glory makes you glorious.*
- (6) *They will be, soul-winning thoughts.*
- (a) *Love, you, know is of an attractive nature.*
  - (b) *Nothing wins more than love.*
  - (c) *As the sun shining on a glass creates a reflection of the beams back again, so the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, creates a reflection of love back again toward God.*
  - (d) *You see Mary, much was forgiven her; she had tasted of much love from God; and she returned much love again to him; she loved much.*
  - (e) *The power of God shakes the heart.*
  - (f) *The majesty of God brings dread to the heart.*
  - (g) *The justice of God makes the heart to look in awe.*
  - (h) *But it is the mercy of God, the love of God, which persuades, wins, and draws the heart.*

**(i) *Nothing wins a man's heart to God but his love.***

- (i) *The fear of God, dread of God, may bring a man's feet into God's ways, but it is the love of God, which brings his heart into his ways.*
- f) They are, soul-quickening and soul-comforting thoughts.
- (1) *Oh then! That we were but wise to improve this doctrine, this truth, to the good of our souls!*
  - (2) *I tell the Christian, if you would give this truth but room in your heart, it would help you, and relieve you of all the burdens under which you groan.*
    - (a) *1. Do you labor under a proud heart? This would humble you.*
    - (b) *2. Do you labor under a dejected heart? This would raise you.*
    - (c) *3. Under a dark heart? This would comfort, and revive you.*
    - (d) *4. Under a dead heart? This would quicken you, and put the Spirit of heaven into you, while you are on earth.*
    - (e) *5. Under a hard heart? This would break you. No this would melt you, dissolve you into waters.*
      - (i) *I say, the more you get up (with Elijah) into this chariot of love, the more would the mantle of sin and corruption depart from you.***
    - (f) *6. Under a worldly heart? This would kill your heart forever to the world, and set you all aflame with the fire of heavenly affections.*

4. I am confident of it; whatever a Christian desires to enjoy, whatever a Christian desires to be rid of, if he can but dwell on this truth, and be able to manage it, he shall have it more fully, he shall have it more quickly than any other way.

- a) Would you be rid of a proud heart? Would you have a humble heart?
- b) Would you be rid of a dead heart, and desire a quick heart?
- c) Would you be rid of a hard heart, and have a broken heart?
- d) Would you be rid of an unbelieving, of a doubting, of a dejected heart, and would you be mighty in faith, full of comfort?

- (1) *Then let your soul be carried captive with this truth.*  
 (2) *Be content that this truth should master you; be willing to entertain it, believe it and embrace it.*
5. I am confident on it, so that all this will be done, I will set down the manner in which we may be wise to manage this truth!
- a) There are many who look on this but as a pleasant dream, a fiction.  
 b) And some believe it, but slightly; there lack depth in them.  
 c) And there are some (poor souls!) to whom the comfort of this truth belongs, who thinks this is news that is too good for them.  
 d) They think, if they should own it, it would be but too great a sail for too small a boat; rather overturn them, than do them good; rather ruin them, than help them.
- (1) *And therefore, they must feed on hard and dark thoughts, black thoughts, on hell, on justice, on sin, on their corruptions.*  
 (2) *Ah! Poor souls! Satan deludes you; you take a way which will undo yourselves.*  
 (3) *Either to discourage you, to say there is no hope; or else to break you, that you shall never be able to do God service.*  
 (4) *Look as long as you will into hell.*  
     (a) *Pry as long as you will into the dark vaults of your souls.*  
     (b) *You shall find nothing in hell but hell, in your hearts nothing but sin; and having found it, you will run from him.*  
 (5) *That man who looks too much on sin, who shuts his eyes from a mutual interview of love between God and his soul, it is here that you must come at last.*  
     (a) *Free-grace must be owned; free-mercy must be acknowledged, and advanced by you; if ever you would be saved; if ever you would be comforted.*
6. You may think what you will; but I am very sure,
- a) There are no Christians more cheerful, thankful, more humble, more believing, more active, more courageous, n. None more serviceable and useful toward God and men, than they, who lie continually at the breast of the promise of God's free-grace; and own that good which God makes out to them.
- (1) *You may be a Christian, but you will be a sad Christian, an uncomfortable Christian, a dark Christian, a deserted Christian, a dead Christian, an unserviceable Christian, if you go on to feed on black thoughts; and will not own that comfort which Christ tenders.*  
 (2) *If you do not embrace that good which Christ speaks, and believe the riches of his grace and mercy to poor sinners, it will not be so well with you.*
- b) Do but sit down, and from the sight and sense of your own unworthiness, take but occasion to advance free-grace and mercy.
- (1) *Let those thoughts find entertainment, and you shall quickly find a strange change in your spirit.*  
 (2) *1. You, who could not mourn before, shall now be able to pour out tears, as if you were all turned to water.*  
 (3) *2. You, who before could not believe, could not be comforted, will even think it a wonder, that your heart should be so dark, and so doubtful.*  
 (4) *3. You, who before were dead, shalt now find a Spirit of life come into you, and make you active in the work of the Lord.*  
     (a) *Make an experiment of it, and you will converse more with the promise, with the love of Christ, with the free-grace of God, while you live, if you would but remove your unbelief.*
- c) But who shall remove this stone?

- (1) *God alone must do it; but if this were done, this truth would let in a flood of mercy on you, and even sink and overwhelm you in a sea of mercy and glory.*
- (2) *You droop and hang down your heads, because you will not own that portion, which Christ has left you; nor that comfort which Christ tenders and speaks to you.*

### III. The Text Applied

#### A. Directions to the Church

1. I give a direction to them of the church.

- a) Labor for a reciprocal affection, a mutual taking between Christ and us.
- b) Is Christ's heart taken with you? O! Let your hearts be taken with him.
- c) Does Christ love you? O! Do you love Christ. Are you dear? Are you precious to him? Let him be dear and precious to you.

(1) *Whatever God does to the soul, it makes an impression in the soul of the same to God.*

(2) *He loves us, and on this we love him; so his heart is taken with us, and on this our hearts are taken with him.*

(3) *You see here the mutual endearments between Christ and his church, "His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem," (Song of Songs 5:16).*

- d) Paul's heart was so much taken with Christ, that he was ever in his thoughts, ever on his tongue.

(1) *He names him sixteen, or seventeen several times in one chapter, (1 Cor. 1:1), as Chrysostom makes note.*

(2) *Peter did but let a word of Christ fall, and it is a door to open to further discourse of him.*

(3) *He takes occasion on naming him, to enter into discourse concerning him, as you see, in 1 Peter 1:7-8.*

(4) *So greatly were their hearts taken with Christ, that they could think nothing but Christ, speak nothing but Christ.*

(5) *No sentence complete, in which Christ was not part of it.*

(6) *He was the one of their esteems; the one of their affections; the one of their desires; the one of their delights, and so he ought to be ours.*

- e) Get your hearts taken with Christ, this will make you Christians indeed; this will make you humble, active, cheerful Christians.

(1) *A heart taken with Christ is heaven on this side of heaven; a heaven on earth; glory in clay.*

(2) *It is the paradise, where Christ delights to walk.*

(3) *It is the house, where Christ delights to dwell.*

(4) *It is the throne, where Christ sits in his glory.*

(5) *It is the habitation of the blessed Spirit.*

(6) *It is the delight of all the blessed Trinity.*

(7) *A heart taken with Christ is the humble soul indeed, is the active soul, the living soul, which breathes forth nothing but love and desire after Christ.*

(8) *It is a heart dead to the world; for the world can never take that heart which once is taken with Christ.*

(9) *All is empty to him, whom fulness fills, and all is blackness where beauty shines.*

- f) O! Then get but a heart taken with him, and you will live a life of glory, and a life of grace.

- (1) *This earth, this place, is the porch of glory, the suburbs of heaven.*
- (2) *I told you before, there were four special times in which the heart was taken with Christ.*
- g) I might add a fifth, which I hope is worthy to consider in our times.
- (1) *When Christ goes forth in his glory, for the redemption and deliverance of his church, and punishment of his enemies, then is the heart taken with him.*
- (a) *1. Taken with his wisdom.*
- (b) *2. With his justice.*
- (c) *3. With his power.*
- (d) *4. With his mercy and goodness.*
- (e) *Which are the visible attributes Christ manifests in the deliverance of his church.*
- (2) *You see this in Isa. 25:9, when God went forth in his glory, to deliver his church, the saints were taken with him, even to admiration, and speak glorying. "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited, and will be glad in his salvation."*
- (3) *Here was a triumphant song of the church.*
- (a) *This is our God; this who appears so glorious, so full of majesty.*
- (4) *This, this is our God, and there is good reason for this.*
- (5) *1. Christ never appears in his glory to his church; but he makes his church glorious.*
- (a) *You see, when God delivered his church from Babylon, he appeared in his glory. Psalm 102:16, "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory."*
- (b) *And you see, as he appeared in his glory, so he made the church glorious, Isa. 54:11-13, (speaking of the same time), "Behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones."*
- (6) *2. Christ now comes in, with the performance of promises; and he necessarily must be glorious, and the church taken with him.*
- (a) *If Christ were so glorious, when he made those promises, what is he, when he comes in to make good those promises?*
- (b) *Christ has reserved abundance of his visible glory to be seen by his church; now at the end of the world.*
- (c) *Our fore-fathers have seen him but an obscured Christ, a persecuted and kept-down Christ.*
- (d) *Though glorious, yet humble-glory.*
- (i) ***But it will not be long before the church sees him in all his glory, when he comes to destroy that man of sin with the brightness of his coming.***
- (e) *Blessed be God for what our eyes see.*
- (i) ***Let us follow him with admiration with the church.***
- (f) *This is our God; follow with spiritual triumph.*
- (g) *This is our God, and let our hearts be taken with his goings forth; who is set forth in his glory now to redeem, and to deliver his church and people.*