

Christ's Love to the Believer Part 4

By John Durant (1620-1686)

Eph. 3:19

I. The Text Opened

A. Eph. 3:19

1. "And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

II. The Doctrine from the Text

A. Doctrine: The love of Christ passes knowledge by his command over his people, his care for them, and, his endeavor to not only declare but to persuade believers of this love.

1. Tell me, could you not wish to have your mind and heart continually attuned to the truth that Christ loves you with a love that passes knowledge?
 - a) With a little more to demonstrate that the love of Christ passes knowledge, I shall encourage you to see 1.) his command over them, 2.) his care for them, and, 3) his endeavor to not only declare but to persuade believers of this love.
2. 1.) First, if we consider the command which Christ exercises over believers, we shall see the transcendency of his affection even in that.
 - a) It is Christ's glory that he is the King of the saints (in a peculiar manner) and through his grace he exercises that kingly power in a sweet way.
 - b) He rules the nation with a rod of iron, yet he rules the saints with a golden scepter.
 - c) So although in wrath, his iron rod breaks the nations in pieces, his golden scepter is still stretched out in love to entertain the saints.
 - (1) *Love is the throne on which he sits, love is the scepter with which he rules, and all his government is managed in such a way that believers may say that he is the Lord of love even in his ruling of them.*
 - d) First, Christ lays no commands upon believers, but such as are full of love and sweetness.
 - (1) *He reduces all the decalogue to these two commands, "Thou shalt love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. And you shalt love your neighbor as yourself," (Matt. 22:37-39).*
 - (2) *Well might John have said that his commandments are not grievous (1 John 5:3), because the word here is "burdensome," and what burden is there in the commands of Christ unless love is a burden?*
 - (a) *Indeed, it is his prerogative to command what he pleases, but he commanded nothing but what is pleasant in itself and will be so to a sanctified soul.*
 - (b) *In this we see the transcendency of his love.*
 - (3) *"All her ways are ways of pleasantness," (Prov. 3:17).*
 - (a) *The ways of Christ (i.e., his commands) are ways of pleasantness.*
 - e) Secondly, Christ gives all his commands in love.
 - (1) *Whatever he bids believers to do, he does so in a loving way.*

(a) *As the command, so is the manner of its imposing, i.e., sweet and loving.*

(b) *Observe how he says, “you are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you,” (John 15:14).*

f) Thirdly, consider the end of all Christ’s commandments, and here you will also discover the transcendency of his love to believers.

(1) *“Take my yoke upon you, and you shall find rest for your souls.”*

(2) *Christ lays a yoke upon their necks, not to burden them but to ease them; not to break their backs, but to refresh their hearts.*

(a) *The end of his commandments is your comfort.*

B. Consider the care that Christ has of his own.

1. O the transcendent love that Christ expresses to believers in how he cares for them in all their necessities!

a) He is not only a Lord who commands but a Father who cares and provides for his own.

(1) *And it is easy to observe transcendency of love in the transcendent care that Christ provides.*

(2) *Food, clothing, and lodging are the least of his provisions; and yet you see Christ not only provides these, but he also gives us many other things.*

(3) *Even his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed; and this he gives for the life of your souls.*

2. Secondly, Christ has provided not only food for the belly, but raiment for the back too.

a) And as the food, so also the raiment transcends in love.

b) Christ has provided a garment of rich and costly attire for believers.

(1) *Before Christ, you were spiritually naked and had nothing but the filthy rags of your own works.*

(2) *Then, even then, he clothed you with embroidered work, and shod you with badger’s skins, and covered you with fine linen, and decked you with ornaments, and put bracelets on your hands, and a chain on your neck, and a jewel on your forehead and earrings on your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head.*

(3) *The transcendent love of Christ gives to believers the same righteous garments that he himself wears.*

(a) *Righteousness is his garment, and so it is believer’s too.*

3. Thirdly, as for lodging, Christ has provided this for believers as well.

a) Indeed, he himself had no home here on earth (not so much as a hole in which to lay his head).

b) So believers can fare no worse, as we have better lodging here on earth than our Lord had.

c) But as to hereafter, he has provided a mansion for his bride, the church.

(1) *This mansion is a building of God, a house not made with hands (Heb. 9:11).*

(2) *He does not provide for a little chamber but a great mansion.*

(3) *He offers not a stool but a throne, not a candlestick but himself as a light, “Father, I will that they also, whom you hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which you hast given me: for you loved me before the foundation of the world,” (John 17:24).*

4. Thirdly, we might abundantly demonstrate the transcendency of Christ’s love to believers in his endeavor to declare and persuade the hearts of believers of all this love.

a) That Christ should love at all, and love so much is transcendent; but that he should take pains to persuade the hearts of sinners to believe is an added layer to the transcendency of his love.

(1) *Christ saw how unlikely we would be to believe, and how hardly we would be brought to persuade ourselves that indeed he loved us at all.*

(2) *So he took such great care, and made such provision for the persuading of the hearts of believers to close with the truth that he loved them.*

(a) *“I have declared your name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith you hast loved me may be in them,” (John 17:26).*

(b) *And it is the great longing of his soul to fill you, not only with his own love, but with his Father’s love too.*

(c) *Wherever the gospel of free grace is preached, the message is this: that God so loved the world that he sent his Son.*

(i) *And that Jesus Christ himself so loved poor souls that he came.*

(ii) *If any man will come to the fountain of love, he may partake of the waters freely.*

(d) *That fountain is not sealed, but rather a perpetual, open fountain.*

5. Objection: Some will object further and say, “I do not question whether Christ loves me transcendently because of the sufferings I am under, but rather because of the desertions in which I am in. Alas! I question whether he loves me at all, because he withdraws himself from me so long. I have much more reason to question whether he loves me transcendently when I see him deny me his company altogether. I will not deny that he smiles sweetly, but I am a stranger to those smiles. There was a time when I thought he loved me transcendently, but now I fear he does not love me at all, for he deserts me all too often.”

a) Answer: To those who fear Christ has deserted them, I would say but three words.

(1) *First, when you feel that Christ has withdrawn himself from you, this feeling is only in show, not in substance.*

(a) *When the sun does not shine, it is absent in show.*

(b) *However, it is still present behind a cloud.*

(2) *Secondly, these withdrawals are not complete.*

(a) *Christ never so withdrew from the believer without leaving something behind, (“My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him,” (Song 5:4).*

(b) *If Jesus were not within your heart, you would not hunger after him.*

(3) *Thirdly, Christ’s withdrawing will not be final.*

(a) *He will be found again, even if he is not felt now.*

(b) *And when he returns, he will make rich amends for his absence.*

b) What do these experiences declare, but that his love is transcendent, passing knowledge.

III. The Text Applied

A. I shall add by way of application, namely, 1.) information, 2.) exhortation, and, 3.) persuasion.

1. First, for information, in as much as it is clear that Christ loves his own with transcendent love, then it may inform us of these four things.

- a) The first is regarding the matter of that great and dreadful curse which Paul denounces against those who do not love Christ, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema, maranatha," (1 Cor. 16:22).
- (1) *That is, let him be cursed with the highest and greatest degree of cursing that may be possible.*
- b) Secondly, you see here the true ground of a believer's glory.
- (1) *Is it not glorious to be beloved of Christ with such a transcendent love as you have heard?*
- c) Thirdly, the truth that Christ loves believers with a transcendent love is the foundation for all that he does for them.
- (1) *You may wonder how it is that Christ does so much for you.*
 (2) *He fills you with his unsearchable riches, he crowns you with his own glory, he gives you choice gifts, and he showers you with choice graces.*
 (3) *He embraces your souls in his arms until you are ready to cry out.*
- (a) *Why does Christ do all this for me?*
 (b) *O believer, it is because he loves you with a transcendent love!*
 (c) *All that he does for you, all that he gives you, all that he bestows on you, is because his love is beyond understanding.*
- d) Fourthly, because Christ loves you with such a transcendent love, you have just ground to build your faith upon him.
- (1) *Whatever it is that you need, whatever it is that you would have, believe that Christ will not let you go without it.*
- (a) *He hears their prayers.*
 (b) *He counsels them that they might know his mind.*
 (c) *He assists in times of suffering.*
- (i) **Christ is not an austere man, but sweet.**
 (ii) **His name, as well as his nature, is love.**

B. By exhortation

1. Thirdly, upon consideration of this transcendent love which Christ bears to them, this should exhort believers to do at least these four things.
 - a) First, tremble to think that you should ever sin against him who loves you so much.
 - (1) *View your sins in the light of your Savior's love; and when you see the transcendency of that love which is in his heart towards you, then sit down and grieve your great sins against him.*
 - (2) *O let his transcendent love, written with the blood of his heart, dissolve your adamant spirit.*
 - (3) *And let it make you mourn for your sins greatly.*
 - (4) *"They shall see him whom they have pierced, and mourn," (Zech. 12:10).*
2. Secondly, I urge you to be ambitious to answer this transcendent love of your Savior, with a similar love.
 - a) Let this love of your Lord magnetize your love for him; let it constrain you to love him transcendently, who loves you so.
 - b) I know it is impossible to parallel it.
 - (1) *But you can strive to at least imitate it.*
3. Thirdly, upon all occasions, know that you have recourse to this transcendent love.
 - a) Believers, though the world deride you, you can take refuge in this love of Christ to comfort you when you come home.

- b) Look into Christ's heart and there see that which is better than gold, which is to say his grace.
- 4. Fourthly, make it your concern to imitate your Savior.
 - a) Love all his as he does, with a transcendent love.
 - b) Beloved, if Christ loved us, we ought then to love one another, and that very dearly.
 - c) Be followers of Christ as dear children, and walk in love one to another, as Christ has loved you all.

C. For Persuasion

1. I shall add but a word of persuasion to persuade all those who are strangers to Jesus Christ to come in unto him.
 - a) O that you could behold the glorious beams of transcendent love towards all believers!
 - b) There is no doubt but such a sight as that would work on your heart and draw your spirit to close with him, who is so lovely in himself, and so loving to those who wonder up and down the wilderness of the world.
 - (1) *Return, sinner, to the Son.*
 - (2) *Embrace Jesus Christ.*
 - (3) *Know that he is the Lord of love who embraces all that come to him freely and loves them all transcendently.*
2. Be contented now to break off from the ways of sin and vanity and come into the ways of righteousness.
 - a) It does not matter if men turn away from you and leave you alone, for Christ will embrace you.
 - b) Though they hate you, Christ will love you.
 - c) And why should you fear the sons of Satan when you enjoy the love of Christ's heart?
 - d) Be wise, and you shall taste love.
 - e) Christ calls you all, whoever you are, to come to him, embrace him lovingly, and you shall find him loving you transcendently.