

“ALTOGETHER LOVELY”

(1)

*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 Solomon 5:16*

This Song of Solomon is called at the beginning “The Song of Songs”—the principle song. All the rest of the songs that are in the Word of God to the praise of God are for his works, but this song is the song concerning himself, that is why it is the Song of Songs, because it is concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. And a very beautiful description it is of Christ, and a beautiful description of his bride. Now you see this is blessed for this reason: all other unions but this will have to be dissolved. Everything of earth ends, but this continues, and not only continues, but increases and will increase for ever. And those that know it are the most favoured of people because they are near to him in the sense that no others are near to him. Mr Hart says concerning the redeemed in heaven:

Near the throne, and first in song,
And shall hallelujah's raise
While wondering Angels round him stand,
And swell the chorus of his praise.

Now there must be acquaintance before we can get delineations. There must be acquaintance before we get a right description. But here we get a clear description of Jesus Christ, and his people as his bride. And every person that is born again of the Spirit is being fitted for it—all being fitted for it, as we read, “He that wrought us for the self same thing is God. He hath also given us the earnest of the Spirit.” And this is what every child of God desires to be brought to the knowledge of.

In union with the Lamb,
From condemnation free,
The saints from everlasting were,
And shall for ever be.

And what a mercy, my friends, to be formed for it. When you consider the infinite disparity there is between the Lord Jesus Christ and what we are by nature and by practice, and what we ourselves feel to be. One said:

Since therefore I can hardly bear
What in myself I see;
How black and vile must I appear,
Most holy God to thee,

And yet, my friends, the love of God in Christ is so wonderful, as the apostle says, "For his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved)." You see, it is the Lord's work, my friends, and his alone, and he himself has formed us to be one with him. And that to me is very wonderful.

Why should it be, thou heavenly King,
That thou shouldest man to glory bring,
Make slaves the partners of thy throne,
Decked with a never failing crown?

All this realised in the soul works this way, to make sin hateful, and the Lord Jesus most desirable; ours is the ruin, and he is the Saviour—and for such a purpose too! "This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise." And he will bring it about, because "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think."

But as the Lord may help me I will try and come to this, and notice the disparity, and yet the similarity, between the bride and the bridegroom. The disparity that there is, when we consider what we were, as the Apostle said, "Gentiles in the

flesh." "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God..." (Eph. 2:1-4). "But God"—that is where it comes. "But God who is rich in mercy." I had a friend, years ago now, before he married, his wife was a bankrupt, but he loved her, and he paid all her debts, and then married her. And I thought, that is typical, though it is feeble when compared with the real. When we consider our bankrupt state by nature, really bankruptcy is nothing compared to it. We are bankrupt through sin. We were "without God and without hope in the world, and we were children of wrath even as others." Yet to think that he should come down, and at the price of his own precious blood should pay the debt of those that are given to him to redeem—there is no love like that, there cannot be.

Jesus, what love was thine!
What are other loves to thine?
Their's a drop, and thine's a sea,
Ever full, and ever free.

When we consider what the people of God shall be made, to be the fit bride of the heavenly Bridegroom, and he that is the God of all creation, he has everything at his control, and he has the control of everything, and he had the control of everything when he was on earth, even though he was so poor in his circumstances that he did not possess anything belonging to him. "Ye know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." And you see, he did that out of love. And there is no love like that love of Jesus Christ. He loved his Father's will. He loved those who were given to

him to redeem. Jesus, "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."

Our lives through many changes goes,
His love no variation knows.

This is the mercy. When you consider what is provided for those that shall be his bride, and a fit bride, and a suitable bride for him, and nearer to him than anyone else, because they are one with him. "I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one."

In union with the Lamb,
From condemnation free,
The saints from everlasting were,
And shall for ever be.

Now my friends, what do you think of it? I know what I think of it, and it is this, "Lord, remember me with the favour thou bearest unto thy people; O visit me with thy salvation: that I may see the good of thy chosen; that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation; that I may glory with thine inheritance." Give me the lot of thy people. That is my prayer. I want to be one with them, because they are one with him. That is why! And I believe I can say this: they are my friends; my choicest friends; my dearest friends are the Lord's people, and,

There is a family on earth
Whose Father fills a throne,
But though a seed of heavenly birth,
To man they are little known.

We know where the world is, as I said to a man many years ago, "I know where you are because I used to live there, But you do not know where I am because you have never been." No worldly person can understand the experience of a child of God, they are separate, they are not reckoned among the nations, but they are separated unto him, and nothing can alter that.

His mouth is most sweet. When you consider his mouth, and when I consider my mouth—what a difference! Oh, what a difference! How many foolish things, and sinful things I have said. I am ashamed, and I often say, "I blush, and am ashamed to lift up my head unto thee because of my foolishness." But you see, with his mouth, those lips never uttered the slightest error, never deviated from the truth of God because, essentially, he is the truth and there is nothing of the truth but him. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Not only that, but every word those blessed lips uttered, it is stronger than the world. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away, ... till all be fulfilled."

His mouth is most sweet. And what those lips have brought into the soul when they have been favoured to listen to his words. Think of that man, when the sick of the palsy was let down before the Lord Jesus. The first thing he said was, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." And they who did not know him said, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" And he said, "Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise up and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." And he took up his bed and went forth before them all. What lips but those of the Lord Jesus could utter such sounds as this?

His mouth is most sweet. There is no bitterness there. There is no disappointment in those lips, no superficiality in those lips.

His every word of grace is strong
As that which built the skies;
The voice that rolls the stars along
Speaks all the promises.

Now my friends, when he speaks to you, when he speaks to me, *his mouth is most sweet.* It has been to me, because he has spoken pardon to me. When I have been sunk in sin he has

spoken pardon to me. He said this to me once when I was very low. I was brought low because of my sins, I was under the chastening hand of God, and I felt I could not survive, yet he gave me this word. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee: I will help thee: Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." What was my reaction to that? It was this: I said, "Lord, it is enough. It is enough." Because his words were never empty words. There was power attending every word and sentence, either to condemn, or to reprove, or comfort, or console. You see, there is power in them. I said, "Lord it is enough." And although my pathway then was very difficult and very trying—very much so—yet I knew this, because his word to me was what it was, I knew it was well, and I could walk through trouble and trial. And I knew this: "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee: and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned: neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." O my friends, *his mouth is most sweet*. His words are always suitable to our case. Like an old man said when the Lord spoke to him, he said it in his Wiltshire brogue, "Lord, thou couldst not have said anything better." His words are so suitable. He never uttered a wasted word, never a superfluous word, every word had wisdom and power in it. Because there is this to remember, the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ is joined to the sinless and pure humanity. There is none like him. Bunyan said, "This Man has not his fellow in heaven or in earth." There is none like him. He stands alone. And as Christian felt when he stood by the cross and his burden was gone, he said, "He gave me rest by his sorrows, and life by his death."

His mouth is most sweet. All the gospel promises in the Scriptures are the promises of the Lord Jesus Christ. "All the promises of God in him are yea and Amen, to the glory of God by us." Now my friends, has he given you a promise? Do you want him to give you a promise? Do you want him to say to

your soul, "I am thy salvation?" It is one thing for us to know the words of Jesus, it is another thing for him to speak to us. That is what we want, we want him to speak himself, then his word will be suitable.

His mouth is most sweet. They are lips of truth, and lips of grace. "Grace is poured into thy lips therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. ... Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." O my friends, here is a field, if we had time and ability, it is so boundless. There is nothing outside the promises of the gospel the children of God can need, in any part of the pathway in which they tread, and every word will be fulfilled. Not one word will fall to the ground. If he speaks a promise once, the eternal grace is sure, because he does not forget like we forget. We are weak and sinful, and changeable, but he is the same Jesus Christ, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." And whatever changes the child of God may see,

Thou hast, my soul, whate'er may be,
A never changing friend.

His mouth is most sweet. It is very likely now they go over in your mind, there will be words that you believe the Lord has given you to enable you to hope on. "Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope." And, my friends, it cannot fail you. Your faith may fail, but his promise never will. "He is faithful that promised." This is what we have to be thankful for, though we change, he never changes, yet he gives to his people a changeless principle. The new man of grace is a changeless principle, it cannot sin. The new nature cannot sin. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth, and abideth for ever." What a mercy that is, my friends. I would not part with what I believe the Lord has given to me in the way of gracious promise to meet my need—I would not part with that for all

the world, because his word to me, in my right mind, is more than everything beside in the world. You may rest there, if you can, you may—if you can, you may—because that will not give way. And if you can trust, you may trust; fully trust.

Trust him, he will not deceive us,
Though we hardly of him deem;
He will never, never leave us,
Nor will let us quite leave him.

And I have been thankful for that word *quite*. He will never let us quite leave him. When the Psalmist felt his feet slipping, as he said, that his feet had well nigh slipped when he saw the prosperity of the wicked. He said, "Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. ... They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?" But he said, "Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches." And the Lord brought his servant, notwithstanding his fears, where the world cannot come, into his presence. He said, "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. ... So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee. Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." The Lord never leaves his people.

We must leave that part now and come to this, *Yea, he is altogether lovely*. There are no defects in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is the comeliness of God Incarnate, the perfect comeliness. And the Lord Jesus in everything he did, as the dying thief said, "Dost thou not fear God, seeing we are in the

same condemnation? We indeed justly, but this man hath done nothing amiss." Ah! My friends, he has never done anything out of place, everything in the Lord Jesus was balanced. He is lovely in his person, Jesus is. I wish I could feel it more.

O that my soul could love and trace him more:
His beauties trace, his majesty adore;
Live near his heart, upon his bosom lean;
Obey his voice and all his will esteem.

I wish I could, because he is altogether lovely in himself. You see, there is no defect; there is no infirmity with the Lord Jesus. And when he was here upon earth, the infirmities he had were all sinless infirmities. He needed sleep, he became weary. "Jesus, therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well." But his weariness was never brought on by any wrong doing. But being a servant, doing his Father's will, as he said to his disciples when they said, "Master, eat." "I have meat to eat that ye know not of. My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." When you realise the gracious persistence of Jesus Christ in a life of righteousness, the greatest persistence, nothing caused him to deviate, or turn away to what was wrong in the sight of his Father, or in his own sight. There was no deviation from the straight line. He is lovely in himself, in his work, and in his grace. What a mercy it is, my friends, to feel the loveliness of Christ. So different from us! So different from me! There is much in me that is unlovely, sinful. But with him is no deviation. He is lovely in his life, lovely in his work. How persecuted the Lord Jesus was, and yet he still carried on with his work. Even in the garden, the last miracle that is recorded. That is when he touched the ear of the High Priest's servant and healed him when they were about to take him and crucify him. But he was altogether lovely. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and there was never any unkindness in the Lord Jesus—never any unkindness: never a word to be repented of, drawn back, or qualified.

I have noticed that in the 6th chapter of John, he spoke of himself as the Bread of Life, and they said, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." And how the hungry will find that, the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ is full of loveliness—and holiness, grace, pity, and compassion. "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." And there is a pity that fills his heart.

In every pang that rends his heart,
The Man of sorrows bears a part;
And to the suffering sends relief.

He is altogether lovely. "His hair is black as a raven." No age can touch the Lord Jesus, there can be no diminishing of what he is, and feels. He is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." Now, my friends, if you have a right appreciation of the Lord Jesus, it is the appreciation of relationship. It is not merely that we admire it because it is beautiful and blessed in itself, but because we have got a nature that loves it, cleaves to it, and that is the new nature in the children of God. It is the estimation of it, and if you have this revelation, this right estimation, this new nature, nothing can separate it—time, death, cannot separate it. Death separates everything but this. The Lord Jesus Christ, as that appears to you, is the revelation of the Spirit of God to your soul, and, because you belong to him. That revelation is never given but to those who have that relationship.

Now you see how much there is in the pronoun *my*. As Thomas realised that in a very blessed way and manner, he said, "My Lord, and my God!" O my friends, be thankful if ever the Lord has turned your mind away from earthly things to this one object which is so lovely. And you have this because he has given you his Spirit. The same Spirit that he has given you, the same Spirit he is favoured with. "If any man have not

the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." The Scripture cuts off everything that is superficial in our experiences. It is not our associations; it is not whether you belong to this, or belong to that; it is whether you belong to him. How the teaching of the Spirit goes over the ground.

Pause, my soul, and ask the question,
Art thou ready to me God?
Art thou made a real Christian,
Washed in the Redeemer's blood?
Have I union
To the Church's living Head?

Am I quickened by the Spirit?
Live a life of faith and prayer?
Trusting wholly to his merit:
Casting on him all my care?
Daily panting
In his likeness to appear?

If my hope on Christ is stayed,
Let him come when he thinks best;
O my soul, be not dismayed,
Leaning on his loving breast;
He will cheer thee
With the smilings of his face.

He is altogether lovely in the estimation of those that have the same spirit, and are joined together, because they have the same spirit. We have that Spirit in measure that Christ was not given by measure. The Lord Jesus Christ is full of grace. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." That is, perfect in his

experience. *He is altogether lovely* because of this, because you belong to him and he belongs to you. One said:

Come and claim us as thy portion,
And let us lay claim to thee.

God is first, he must claim us before we can claim him. And he claims us because he is ours. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." To be able to claim him and know it is not presumption! Now as you claim him, as you feel a union with him, you need not envy anyone.

Should I envy then the miser,
Doting on his golden store?
Sure I am, or should be, wiser,
I am rich, 'tis he is poor.
Having Jesus
I have an immortal store.

And if you sensibly have him, he fills your heart, and it is a blissful filling and fulness. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." And there is no room for anyone else in the place of Jesus Christ. There is no competitor to the Lord Jesus Christ in the estimation of his people as you realise he is yours, and you are his.

He is altogether lovely in his love. He was lovely to the Father. The Father said himself, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." "Hear him!" And he was never anything else but pleased with his Son until the time came when through the broken law the Father forsook him. But he never forsook his Father. He said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" These are depths, my friends, which we want grace to tread with reverence, and with holy caution, because we cannot understand it, not in the fulness of it. What it meant to the Lord Jesus to suffer the eclipse of the forsaking of his Father! We may well say:

The pangs of his body were great,
But greater the pangs of his mind.

Yet he was lovely in his sufferings. "The Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world." The Lamb in whom there is no blemish. There was nothing in the Lord Jesus to detract when he who knew no sin was made sin for us. He honoured the law. He magnified it, because there was the worth of Deity with the sinless sufferings of the sinless humanity. *He is altogether lovely.* We do not have to say, *But*, like we do about everything else in the world because there is some drawback. There is some drawback in everything here, but there is no drawback in him.

May the Lord add his blessing, Amen.