

THE DIVINE DRAWING

BY THE EDITOR.

John 6:44
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 THERE are two sayings in the Gospel of John which constitute a kind of twofold cord of redemption—"No man cometh unto the Father but by me," says Jesus, and "No man can come to me except the Father draw him." Jesus Christ is the mediator between God and man. In him alone does the current of human love rise high enough to reach the throne, and through him alone does the divine love descend low enough to touch the lowest point of the footstool. The full bucket let down into the well is certain to lift the empty one against which it is balanced. The full heart of Jesus Christ coming down from heaven, can alone lift the empty heart of the sinner up to heaven. Human love is not sufficient of itself and never can be to love God with all the heart and with all the mind and with all the strength. And, therefore, Christ came to strengthen and reinforce it. In other words, we need a higher love than our own to enable us to love the Most High. We need God's love in our hearts to enable us to come to Christ, and to love him. We need Christ's love in the heart to enable us to love God and to come to him.

1. I wish to remind you then in the first place, that by nature we are fallen and cannot even come to Christ without God's help. I know that this is a very humbling doctrine. It is the sharpest blade of the two-edged sword of truth, and one most likely to cut off the hearer's ears when it is wielded. But the truth is always the most wholesome thing to hear. If a man has fallen out of his nest in Paradise, and broken his wings and dislocated his limbs, it is not a kindness to go to him and tell him that he has nothing to do but to exert the strength that is in him, and that doing so, he can "mount up on wings as eagles, he can run and not be weary and walk and not faint." If our wings of spiritual power are broken, he is our best friend who

tells us so. But thank God, this is not all we have to tell men. If it were, our Gospel would not be glad tidings but sad tidings. The moment we utter the unhappy truth that we are by nature fallen sinners, we are to add the blessed truth and repeat the sweet words of God, "Ye have seen what I did, and how I bore you on eagle wings and brought you unto me." I fell out into my garden after a terrific storm and find that my grape-vine which for years had climbed into the sunlight and basked in its beams, has fallen down, its leaves all torn and its boughs all bespattered with mud. And I begin to talk to my vine, "O vine, you need to be pruned and enriched. I must put ashes about thy roots, and pour water above thee to cause thee to revive. And then you will lift yourself into the light and warmth." Then I do my best at pruning and enriching, but each day as I walk into my garden, I see the vine lying there. It stretches up its tendrils indeed like supplicating fingers to the sky; but because it can find nothing upon which to lay hold, it can only still creep on the ground.

Suppose that instead of talking any more to my vine, I build a trellis upon which it can lift itself into the sunlight. Ah, that is Christ's method! He casts a glance of pity upon us and says, not simply, "I am far above, ye are from beneath." "No man can come to me except the Father draw him." But listen, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee, saith Jehovah. But how, O Father? "I have drawn thee with the cords of love and with the bands of a man." But what love? and what man? I will tell you. "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." And the Son says, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." The Cross is the divine trellis for lifting men's affections to God. The heart that was striving in vain to love the Father and was only falling back to earth, beaten and baffled after each effort, finds at last

its firm support. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness, but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God." It is the power which draws men to Christ, and through him to the Father. The holy Christ dazzles us, but he does not draw us. I believe that it whilst we are sinners, we could have a sight of the spotless and awful holiness of Christ we should be more likely to run from than fly to him.

2. Observe, secondly, that God, in inviting us to be disciples of Christ, draws us whilst he calls us. We cannot conceive of such a thing as that God should say, "Come to Christ, but you cannot come except I draw you, and I have not chosen to draw you." That would be to bar the door while calling us to enter it; to hold us off with one hand, while beckoning us near with the other. No, God's invitations are always furnished with attractions — the most direct and powerful that can be brought to bear. The promises of Scripture are not guide boards, pointing to heaven. Just see how it is. The great evangelical promise is, "He that believeth on the Son shall not perish, but have everlasting life." But what is the basis of the promise? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." Here is the divine fact that energises this promise and gives to it its magnetic power.

Every one who preaches or repeats this promise must have something of the divine attraction in himself in order to succeed. If an invitation were all that is necessary God might have ordered that the Gospel be placarded upon marble tablets in our churches, or graven in deep cut letters over the porches of our sanctuaries. But he has required the Gospel to be preached by consecrated men, that through them God might draw while he invites. A minister may have a brilliant intellect and a sonorous voice, and a graceful delivery, and thus furnished he may preach the Gospel for years without winning a soul to Christ.

God must dwell in him by his Spirit in order that when he says, "Come," he may draw as well as invite. Fenelon had such communion with God that his very face and presence were magnetic, and when Lord Peterborough, a polished sceptic, had spent a night with him at an inn, he rushed forth in the morning saying, "If I stay in this man's presence any longer, I shall become a Christian in spite of myself." Fenelon said, "Come to Jesus," and the Father who dwelt in him drew so strongly that it was well nigh impossible to resist the attraction. President Finney was once visited with such power of the Holy Ghost that he seemed literally "to be filled with all the fullness of God," and when he went forth to preach the people were drawn to him for miles around, as to a sort of spiritual load stone. He said "Come," and the Father that dwelt within him drew him. That is what God wants us all to be, me in the pulpit, you in the pews — spiritual magnets to draw men.

And we must constantly beware that through our worldly associations we do not become demagnetized. You can see the difference in Peter as he appears on two memorable occasions. As he stood warming himself at the fire in the High Priest's palace on the night of his Master's trial, he was simply demagnetized. Instead of drawing any to the Lord, he was himself drawn away from him into denial and sin. But on the day of Pentecost he had been remagnetized, and as he stood up, the people could not resist him, and three thousand were drawn to Christ under a single sermon. Ah, here is the lesson which we want to learn—to make our life and example reinforce our words, so that when our mouths say "Come," our conduct shall not say "Go."

Preaching was never more universal than to-day. Ministers are preaching and laymen are preaching: young men are preaching and young women are preaching. The Scripture is fulfilled. The Spirit and the

Bride say "Come" and every one that heareth is saying "Come." But in spite of this no man can come except the father draw him. And his way is to draw through consecrated unworldly, self-denying, sincere Christians. The want of the church and the demand of God is the same, "ministers that can draw," but except God be in us of a truth, our drawing will be quite as likely to be away from God as to him.

And lastly the great attraction is Christ crucified. He who cries "come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden," shows himself heavy laden with our sins, and laboring in agony and bloody sweat for our redemption. Here is a blessedly safe attraction, one which separates while it saves; which rebukes our sins while it forgives them, and so guards the purity of God against intrusion. As the rose attracts by its fragrance and wards off with its sharp thorns, and so protects itself against the destroyer, Christ's cross condemns sin in the flesh by the penalties of a violated law there poured forth, and so keeps off the false and the insincere. But it sets forth also all the blessed love of God, and so draws the penitent and sorrowful.

I desire now to remind you, my hearers, of these three unquestionable facts:

1. God has been drawing you all your life, though you may not have recognized the fact. God's attractions are for the most part invisible and unrecognized till the time comes for us to note them. I saw one day a little boat following in the wake of a great ship. I watched it for some time, curious to know why it kept on so steadily and strongly in the track of the big vessel. Huge waves would strike it, causing it to careen for a moment; the motion of the ship would sometimes throw it almost out of the water, but still with astonishing pertinacity it kept on. A sudden lurch of the great steamer, however, made all clear. Under the water, hidden hitherto from view, was a rope attaching the boat to the ship. It was all plain now. There was an invis-

ible bond that held the boat in tow and carried it forward in spite of itself. Some of us have lived long enough to realize the same thing in our own lives. God has had us in tow for years, though we knew it not, and in spite of sinful obstructions, in spite of opposing currents, in spite of the resistance of our own selfish hearts, God has been drawing us. If you are a moral man or woman, unstained by the grosser vices of the flesh; or if you are a Christian, delighting in spiritual things, ask yourself this morning why it is so. Is it because of your persistence in following God or of God's persistence in drawing you? O that God, thou hast saved me in spite of myself, and drawn me against my resistance and made me willing contrary to my will." So have I said to my heavenly Father again and again. Have you found no occasion to say it?

2. God has been drawing us by the things that we considered most against us. It seems a strange way of attracting us to obstruct our pathway with trials and disappointments. "I find it extremely hard for me to believe that there is a God when he allows me to suffer so," said one to me not long since. "If God would win me, why does he not hear my prayer for my children, for my husband, for my friends?" asks another. Are God's repulsions to be interpreted as attractions? Are his trials to be named his caresses? Are his judgments to be regarded as his comforts? These are difficult questions, and can only be answered satisfactorily as we get toward the end of life's chapter. I know too much, that the broken stones by which the highway is covered, greatly hinder the travel and hurt the feet of the pedestrian, but when trodden down they make the hardest and smoothest road. So the broken stones of life is macadamized road, in which the stones of stumbling and rocks of offense have been bravely trodden under foot, and that on stepping stones of our dead selves we have been steadily rising to high-

things. Let us be patient, and not say impatiently, "all these things are against me," because of trials and hardships and disappointments. "For if God be for us who can be against us?"

3. You have, many of you, been resisting God for years. You may deny this statement, but it is really so. Just as on the one hand God's desires are his draw-ings, and his invitations his attractions, so your indifference is your opposition. For what constitutes opposition? It is really a question of will. Not to will is to will not. If a man weighing two hundred pounds does not will to go up stairs, then he throws just two hundred pounds weight against going. He need not kick or stamp or resist. Inertia is resistance; indifference is opposition. God says: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness I have drawn thee." What is that loving kindness with which he has drawn us? It is not the love of complacency or of amiable indifference. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." Here was the intensest and most concentrated act of human will. It was a love which expressed itself in omnipotent activity and omnipotent suffering. When God gave his Son to die on a tree, he drew us up with the cords of love and the bands of a man, a love stronger than death and cords mightier than the grave. If you do not yield to that love, you throw all the weight of your indifference and your unbelief against it. Therefore I beg you to resist no more. Resist not by resistance; resist not by indifference. For who hath resisted his will and prospered?

THE GREAT JEWISH UPRISING,
OR,
THE CHOVEVEI ZION SOCIETY.

BY REV. SAMUEL SCHOR.

WHEN Jews meet on their great feast days--especially the Passover--they greet each other with the beautiful and touching words, "This year in captivity, next year in Jerusalem." What words could better illustrate the feelings of a down-trodden and persecuted race? But, though the greeting remained the same in those countries where Jews had been emancipated, it lost much of its meaning. They were so comfortably settled in the land of their adoption that they nearly forgot Jerusalem. Indeed, to many Jews, Jerusalem became a dream of the past. They would not wish to go there if they could. Their views are best exemplified by the following anecdote. At a dinner party the conversation happened to turn on the restoration of the Jews. Different views were expressed, and at last they appealed to a wealthy and well-known Jew who was one of the guests. "What is your view?" they asked him; do you believe in the restoration of your own people, and would you favor a return to Palestine?" He gave this characteristic reply: "I certainly see no reason why the Jews should not return; *but I would prefer to be their ambassador in London.*" Thus, while the dominant desire in the hearts of *persecuted* Jews centred in a return to their Fatherland, and their greeting at the Passover gave outward expression to this desire, Jews, settled in more favored countries, outside the reach of the persecutor's hand, were perfectly content to let "well alone." The land of their adoption was their Promised Land, and they had no desire, certainly no intention, of moving Eastward.

About thirteen years ago, the civilized world was startled by the terrible news of the Russian persecutions, which, in their refined cruelty, eclipsed the darkest deeds of the dark ages; and the poor, persecuted

So now I pray Thee, keep my hand in Thine,
And guide it as Thou wilt. I do not ask
To understand the "wherefore" of each line,
Mine is the sweeter, easier, happier task
Just to look up to Thee for every word,
Rest in Thy love, and trust, and know that I am
heard.