

THE GREAT ATTRACTION

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A SERMON
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“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.”
John 12:32.

THE death of our Lord Jesus Christ must have appeared to His apostles to be an unmitigated misfortune. No doubt they conceived that it would be the death of the cause, a heavy blow, and a deep discouragement. Smite the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered. Strike the head, and what shall become of the members? But our Lord instructed His disciples that this which seemed so dreary a circumstance was really the most hopeful of all the points of His history. He assured them that by His death He would totally defeat the powers of darkness. “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” He comforted them yet further by the declaration that His crucifixion, instead of driving men away from His doctrine, would give to that doctrine a peculiar luster and a special charm. The cross of Christ, with all its ignominy and shame, is no hindrance to His heavenly teaching; but is, in fact, a matchless loadstone by which men are attracted to it. There is such a thing as “the offense of the cross,” and that offense has not ceased; but listen to the Master’s words, “I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” The attractive power of the gospel lies mainly in the crucifixion of the gospel’s great teacher.

The text needs, perhaps, to be illustrated by doctrines which lie concealed within itself, and by facts with which it is connected. The prince of darkness had drawn away the sons of men by the fascination of flesh-pleasing errors, flattering delusions, alluring pleasures, glittering pomp, and outward show; by these he drew all men unto him. The devil led men captive at his will, seducing them from bad to worse. He enticed poor foolish man to his own destruction, as fish are taken by the bait, as birds are lured by decoys, and as ships are wrecked by false lights. An enormous whirlpool of evil had for many an age sucked into its vortex multitudes who were sailing upon the sea of life: all over the ocean of society the influence of this monstrous whirlpool of evil was felt, more or less powerfully, so that those who escaped from its horrible depths were, nevertheless, much impeded and diverted in their course, and found it hard to reach the desired haven; even up to the very mouth of the port of peace, the power of this great whirlpool was evidently felt, drawing all men as it could. Now, the Lord Jesus came into the world to produce a counter-attraction, to set in motion a counter-current. Lo, I saw in vision, a mysterious hand reaching out of a mighty all-attracting magnet from the sky, of so marvelous a power that vessels which were being whirled towards their destruction, were many of them suddenly diverted in their course, and drawn at once to the magnet and to safety, while others, which did not feel its power to the same saving extent, and became ultimately victims to evil, were nevertheless slowed in their course for a while, hindered in their desperate course, and prevented from perishing so hastily as they would have done.

Alas, many of them tugged at the oar, or hoisted all sail to escape from the magnet; and so, as they willfully destroyed themselves, they did sad despite to their conscience, and perished the more miserably because they despised the great salvation. Just as evil draws all of us more or less, so Jesus Christ more or less draws all men who hear the gospel. Some men He draws unto Himself by the effectual drawings of His divine grace; these are the “all” here meant—some of all classes, the all for whom he shed His blood; but where His name is preached, even those who do not believe in Him, feel some of the influence which Christianity spreads abroad throughout society: His name leavens the lump; the sweet perfume of His spikenard fills all the house where He is sitting; *bent upon instituting the new and heavenly attraction which should overcome the powers of evil, our Lord Jesus came into this world to be lifted up*

from the earth, not for Himself, but for the sins of others. Down from the heights of glory He descended, moved by disinterested love; not that He had anything to gain, but that He might redeem us from our iniquity, and save us from our fearful perils. On the cross He effected the redemption of His people. Nailed there in ignominy, in pain, desertion and death, He worked out redemption for His chosen. *But men stood at a distance* from their best friend. That is implied in the text. Why should they need to be drawn to Jesus, if they were already near to Him? Some stood so far away from the dying Savior that they made His death the subject of mockery, and even found subjects for jest in His dying groans and pangs. All of us were alienated from God and from Christ, who is God's express image. Our evil hearts had piled great mountains between us and the Lord Jesus Christ. By nature we do not appreciate His love; we do not render to Him the gratitude which He deserves; but we pass by as though it were nothing to us that Jesus should die.

Moreover, since *man does not come of himself*, even when he perceives the gracious errand of the Lord Jesus, our heavenly friend condescends to draw him. The truth of God is latent in the text—that men not only are at a distance, but that they will not come to Christ of themselves. The Lord never does unnecessary work; we would never hear of Christ's drawing us if we could run without drawing; but the fact is that we stand away from Christ, and love the distance; yes, we make the gulf still wider, developing our original hatred to that which is good, by adding the force of habit to our original depravity. Therefore, since men are at a distance and will not come, *the crucified Savior becomes Himself the attraction to men*. He casts out from Himself bands of love and cords of gracious constraint, and binding these around human hearts, He draws them to Himself by an invincible constraint of divine grace. sinners by nature will not come to Jesus, though His charms might even attract the blind, and awaken the dead. They will not melt, though surely such beauties might dissolve the adamant, and kindle affection in rocks of ice. But Jesus has a wondrous power about Him to woo and win the sons of men. As out of His mouth goes a two-edged sword, so out of His heart proceed chains of gold by which He binds thousands of willing captives to Himself. This attraction, according to the text, is to be found operating upon all classes, nations, ranks, and characters of men; it is not to be excluded from remote lands, or dens of infamy nearer home. Here and there kings and princes have believably yielded to its power, while multitudes of the poor have had the gospel preached to them, and have received it in the love of it. I trust there are many of us here; belonging as we do to different grades and classes of society, who can verify the truth of this text, "I, if I am lifted up, will draw *all* men unto Me." The young, the old, the rich, the poor, the intellectual, the learned, and the ignorant, some of all sorts does Jesus draw, and thus He earns to Himself the glory of being the universal attraction, the attraction to which all hearts must yield when He draws effectually by His grace.

Having thus skimmed over the text, and endeavored to bring before you the thoughts which it kindles, we shall now speak upon *what it is in the cross which becomes attractive to men*: and, secondly, we shall have a word to say *concerning the direction in which Christ crucified draws*; and then, thirdly, *with what power He draws*.

I. First, dear friends, WHAT IS THE ATTRACTION OF JESUS CRUCIFIED?

It is asserted by our Savior that when lifted up from the earth, He would draw all men: He intended by this His crucifixion; for John tells us in the 33rd verse, "This He said signifying what death He should die." Let it not be forgotten then that the power of the gospel lies in that which certain persons count to be its weakness and reproach. Christ dying for sinners is the great attraction of Christianity. Certain preachers have missed all in forgetting this. What is Socinianism but an attempt to have Christ without His cross? Those who sat around the cross, and said, "Let Him come down from the cross and we will believe Him," were the true ancestors of modern Unitarians who respect the character of our Lord, and highly esteem Him as a teacher, but reject Him utterly as a substitute, an atonement, and a sacrifice for sin. They fondly dream that if they teach His holy life without His ignominious death, men will be attracted to Him. Such has not proved to be the case. "I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" is true, and shall be true; but Christ merely as a wise teacher, and an eminent example, has not drawn the sons of men, who are too far fallen to be charmed into holiness by a mere exhibition of moral

excellence, however perfect. Men need not so much a portrait of a man in health as medicine to remove their own diseases. It has been thought by some of late, that the proper way to draw men to the gospel is to preach the *future* glory of Christ. This, indeed, is to be preached in its correct place, for every part of divine truth should hold its position in the gospel harmony; but it is all a mistake, and a very great and terrible mistake, too, for men to put the glorified Savior into the place of the crucified Savior. You may preach the millennium; you may extol as much as you will the magnificence of those happy days, when He shall reign from the river even to the ends of the earth; but you will never make men Christians that way. I have heard it said that the Jews will be converted to Christianity by the doctrine of the second coming, since the second advent is to us precisely what they think the first advent should be. But it is not so, beloved, the only effectual attraction lies where the texts puts it, "*I, if I am lifted up.*" The Savior crucified draws the Jew as well as the Gentile: the sons of Israel shall not be converted by the doctrine of a glorified Savior, but by the Man of Sorrows, who was despised and rejected of men—the Messiah, who was cut off, but not for Himself—the sacrifice offered outside the gate.

And why is this supreme attraction of the cross? I answer that by the power of the Holy Spirit many have been drawn to Christ by the disinterested love which His death manifests. Does that man on yonder tree die without the necessity of death; out of pure love—out of pure love to those who hated Him; out of love to the very men who fastened Him to the cruel wood? Had He nothing to gain? Was it charity in all its perfection—nothing but the milk-white lily of love? Was there nothing else but charity that could bind Him to the tree? Nothing! "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be rich." "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die; but God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Many a heart has been so charmed with this, that it has run to Christ, drawn by the silken bonds of His love. Do not some of you feel as if you could love the dear Lover of souls this morning? Do not even my feeble descriptions of His Godlike work entice you? Oh, do you not feel that you must love one who loved so truly when there was no benefit for Him to receive in return? Why, I have thought that if Jesus had never died for *me*, I must yet love Him for having died for others; and if I had no share in the benefits which His passion procured, yet I have sometimes felt as if, out of admiration for "love so amazing, so divine," I must give my heart to Him. Here is one major attraction of the Crucified One.

Others have doubtless been brought to the Savior's feet by delight in *the satisfaction which is rendered to justice by the Redeemer's death*. Many men reason thus with themselves. Conscience is uneasy: offense has been committed against God: now, in the nature of things, under all law that is at all respected, there must be punishment for offenses; but how shall the exercise of the prerogative of mercy be rendered perfectly consistent with the fulfillment of the penalty? Yonder bleeding Savior solves the difficulty. He dies, "The just for the unjust, that He may bring us to God." "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." Many men, finding their conscience rendered perfectly at ease when they have come to lean themselves upon the fact that Christ died for sinners, have been so enamored of that glorious truth of God, that the attraction has bound them to the cross forever. I must confess that this is one of the great considerations which, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, will keep me a Christian, as well as make me more and more in love with my Lord. I see not where else justice can meet with mercy and embrace; I know not where else righteousness and Peace can kiss each other, except on the cross where my Master gave up His life for transgressors. There I see the riddle all solved—fallen man brought back to God, and God, justly incensed at man's offense, able to display His love without in any way tarnishing His unsullied justice, or even diminishing the severity thereof. O my hearers, this is a blessed attraction, indeed: I would to God that it would attract some of you! O that the thought that your sin can thus be justly forgiven—that there is "No condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus," since Christ was condemned in their place, may draw full many of you to Himself!

Many others have been drawn to the gospel by a sense of *the exact suitability of the atonement of Christ to the necessities of their condition*. As the glove fits the hand, so does the crucified Savior suit the necessities of a sinner. Here is exactly what the man needs. He feels himself guilty; he dreads the

punishment of his transgression; his conscience, like an adder, stings him; like a fire ever fed with fresh fuel, it blazes within him; but when he meets with Christ, he meets with peace, and he says within himself, "This is precisely what I require. Thirsty, here is living water; naked, here is a robe of righteousness; vile, here is an open fountain; lost and undone, here is One who came to seek and to save that which was lost." Ah, I beseech my Lord to make all of you feel your condition, and then you will set a high price upon my Lord. Some of you imagine that you are rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; may you feel your deep necessities before God; may you see how spiritual the law of God is, so that it touches your thoughts, and your words, and condemns you as much for these as for outward acts of sin: and when you once feel your sinnership, sweet will the Savior's name be in your ears, and you will be drawn to the cross, because the crucified Savior is all that you need.

Further, thousands upon thousands have been effectually drawn to Christ by seeing *how graciously, how readily, how wondrously, how abundantly, He pardons as He hangs upon the tree*. I cannot understand pardon as coming directly from God apart from a Mediator. Jehovah, the judge of all the earth, is too high, too terrible, too glorious in holiness, for sinners to deal with Him absolutely. Our God is a consuming fire. When He descends on Sinai, the mountain smokes and melts as wax. Behold, the whole earth trembles at His presence, the pillars thereof are dissolved! Before Him goes the pestilence; at His feet are coals of fire; as He rides upon the wings of the wind, He scatters from His pavilion of clouds and darkness, hailstones and coals of fire. As for His voice, it is thunder, and the flash of His eyes are lightning. Who can receive pardon from an absolute God? He is great and terrible, and will by no means clear the guilty. But when I see God in Christ, and know that "in Him"—that man who died upon the cross—"dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," I can come to Him without fear, and with holy joy I can seek for and receive perfect pardon; from that bleeding hand I dare expect pardon; I am bold to look for great pardon from so great a Savior suffering so greatly. When I hear Him say to the dying thief, "Today shall you be with Me in paradise," I can hopefully sing—

*"The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away!"*

It becomes easy for the soul to understand how sin can be forgiven when it sees how sin has been avenged in the person of Jesus. O sinners, my Lord Jesus is able to forgive all manner of sins. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." "Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." How blessed to hear these words preached from that unrivalled pulpit, the cross! How sweet to hear the dying lips proclaim abounding mercy! How consoling to hear Him speak of the riches of divine grace who said, "I thirst," and "Lama sabacthani!" Oh, this is to be attracted indeed! This wondrous pardoning power of the crucified Redeemer is one of the master attractions of the cross!

But I must not enlarge. One more particular must suffice. Have not many of us been wonderfully drawn to the gospel by *the intense griefs and agonies of Jesus*? Beloved, when we see men in prosperity, it is natural for us to envy; but it is equally natural for us to pity those who are suffering—and love is in the next degree to pity. So I doubt not that when we have set forth Christ Jesus evidently crucified among you, the gracious Spirit has moved many tender hearts first to pity, and afterwards to *love* the bleeding Lamb. What a melting power there is in Gethsemane! Can you view the bloody drops of sweat, as they fall upon the frozen soil, and not feel that, in some degree, invisible but irresistible cords are drawing you to Jesus? Can you see Him flagellated in Pilate's hall, every thong of the scourge tearing the flesh from His shoulders? Can you see Him as they spit into His lovely face, and mar His blessed visage, and not feel as if you would gladly fall down and kiss His feet, and make yourself forever His servant? And lastly, can you behold Him hanging upon the hill of Golgotha to die—can you mark Him as His soul is there overwhelmed with the wrath of God, with the bitterness of sin, and with a sense of utter desertion—can you sit down and watch Him there and not be attracted to Him? Ah, I wish that

more of you would feel so attracted that you could resist no longer, but would come at once and give yourselves up to Him! You may not feel that you could kiss the King upon His throne, but will you not kiss the King upon His cross? You may revolt from Him when He wields a rod of iron, but will you not touch the silver scepter held in the bloodstained hands which bled for His enemies? O come here, sons and daughters of men, and yield yourself to sorrow's Lord! Daughters of Jerusalem, come here as of old, and weep both for Him and for yourselves; O seek a portion in His sin-atonement, a place in heaven which His resurrection has opened!

Before I leave this point, I must observe, dear friends, that it renders my soul very great comfort to think that the attractive power in my crucified Lord does not lie in the eloquence of those who preach, nor in the logic and power of persuasion of those who proclaim His gospel. Ah, poor fools that we are, when we preach we sometimes think souls must be saved because we are fluent; and at another time, we suppose no good will be done because we spoke in great mental bondage; but, it is not the man who tells the story, nor the style in which he tells it; it is the tale itself which wins, under God the Holy Spirit! There is in the cross *itself* a power. The Holy Spirit rests like a dove upon that blood-stained tree, and through Him saving grace comes streaming down to human hearts. It is not of man, neither by man, for the attractions of Jesus crucified are as a dew from the Lord, which tarries not for man, neither waits for the sons of men.

II. We proceed to inquire in WHAT DIRECTION DOES THE CROSS ATTRACT?

In one word—it attracts towards everything that is good and blessed. No man was ever enticed to evil by a crucified Savior. The emotions which are properly excited in the soul by the doctrine of the atonement must always be towards goodness. The preaching of the cross does no mischief. Its sacred stream bears no man towards the rock of ruin; but its tendencies are everywhere and at all times towards man's best and happiest estate.

Let us observe that the cross of Christ draws men *from despair to hope*. Many have been ready to die of despair, because they have said, "There is no salvation for me." To such as these the first beam of hope has come through a crucified Savior: they have stumbled upon that precious soul-saving text, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses from all sin," and have been set at liberty. That text has opened the gate of heaven to many hundreds, and I do not doubt it will to thousands more. They have seen how Jesus' suffering put aside the necessity of our suffering for sin; and peace at once has bedewed the soul. It is no mean thing to draw men away from despair, for despair is the root of many sins. When a man says, "There is no hope," then he hunts after sin like an eager hound after his game. To teach a man that there is hope—that there is hope for him—is to give him a fair breeze heavenward. This, Jesus crucified presents this to anxious souls.

It attracts men, in the next place, *from fear to faith*. They have been accustomed to think of God with trembling, and to be constantly alarmed at His presence. Sin has become a burden, but they have not known how to be delivered from it, and have feared that they must bear it forever: but the Savior lifted up upon the cross inspires faith. We think of Him, and as we think we believe. We meditate, and as we meditate we trust. Confidence comes in by the way of Calvary. The means of creating faith, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is the cross itself. God works faith in us, but it is through His dying Son. That was a terrible scene in Edinburgh when those lofty houses were filled with occupants who were unable to escape from the smothering smoke, and from the spreading fire. Suppose a fire escape could have been brought to the rescue, yet there is one thing the fire escape could not have done. If these poor creatures had been too faint and stifled to get out of the windows, it could not have lifted them onto itself; and yet that would have been one of the things required for their rescue. But this the gospel of Jesus does. It not only comes to men and says, "Now I will save you, if you will get into Me," but it takes hold of a man and puts him into itself; for Jesus Christ attracts men to Himself—not only comes near enough to them for them to grasp Him, but, as the magnet does with the iron, so Jesus lays hold on sinners' hearts.

Jesus crucified conducts the man *from dread to love*. Before God he stood shivering like a slave, crying, "How shall I escape from His presence? O that I had the wings of the morning, that I might fly even

to the uttermost parts of the sea, or dive beneath hell's darkest wave, that I might hide from the yet more terrible hell of the glance of God's fiery eyes!" But when he sees God reconciled in Jesus, then the sinner sings—

*"Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find;
The Holy, just, and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind.
But if Immanuel's face appears,
My hope, my joy begins;
His name forbids my slavish fear,
His grace removes my sins."*

In this way the soul is led to love God. "We love Him because He first loved us."

Then the attractions of the cross bring us up *from sin to obedience*. When we are washed in the precious blood, we feel grateful to our Lord Jesus, and we cannot live to sin. We are dead to it. We cannot any longer take pleasure in that which cost Him His life. It is impossible for us to count that sweet which we know was bitterness to Him. "What will You have me to do?" becomes the question. We submit ourselves with our whole heart to His gracious sway, and to run in the way of His commandments becomes our soul's delight.

Thus we are led constantly also by the cross *from self to Jesus*. Nothing will kill self like a sight of the crucified. Lift up the Savior and down self must go. High thoughts of Christ are always attended by low thoughts of self and *vice versa*. Think much of yourself, you will think little of the Savior; but a very low esteem of our own merit brings a very high esteem of the merits of Christ; and it is a blessed thing when self is wholly beaten down. It is a victory which altogether is not won by us, I fear, till we lay down our bodies; but if anything can hang up King Self upon the tree until the evening, it is a sight of the tree upon which the Savior bled.

Finally the uplifted Redeemer draws us away *from earth to heaven*. Earth holds us fast: we cannot escape from its hold; but we feel a heavenward drawing. It is Jesus Christ who is drawing us; that same Christ who has gone up to the throne after having trod the winepress. He daily attracts us upward to Himself. Do you not feel His drawing? Oh, I think you do! When the boy's kite goes up very high into the air, and gets into the clouds, he cannot see it. Yet he declares, "It is there." Why? "Why," he asks, "I can feel its pull." And we know the Lord Jesus Christ is there—He who was crucified, for we can feel Him pull; we can feel Him draw. O that we could give ourselves wholly up to Him, and mount towards Him! I trust we have experienced some of that mounting, for He has "raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places" in Him. We know what the resurrection-life means. We do not forever grovel in worldly cares and carnal thoughts, but sometimes at least we get up into the higher atmosphere, and have near and dear communion with the Well-beloved. O Savior, draw us more and more!

We return to inquire with what order of power does the Savior lifted up draw men? What are the characteristics and qualities of this power? In brief, first of all, the power with which Christ draws us is, according to the text, a very *gentle* power. "I, if I am lifted up, will *draw* all men." Drawing is very different from *driving*. The way by which Jesus leads His followers is by soft, gentle influences. "I will *draw* men." The law of God is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ; and the preaching of the terrors of the law are very useful in their way; but whenever a sinner really comes to Christ, the last action is never a drive—it is always a draw. The dove may have been driven part of the way to the ark by the wind, but the last act of getting into the ark was when Noah put out his hand and pulled the dove into the ark. The real act which brings us into connection with Christ is always a drawing act—an act of gentleness. Every converted man may say, when he is converted, "Your Gentleness has made me great." The heathen pictures one of their goddesses in her chariot drawn by doves. Surely it is by doves that we are drawn in the chariot of the gospel, towards the Lord Jesus! How very gentle, though all but omnipotent, is the influence of the sun upon the earth and all the planets! How they constantly revolve around and follow him in his wondrous march—yet you never feel that he draws! If you harness a horse to your chariot, he tugs and pulls by fits and starts; but the father of lights draws all the ponderous planets along their appointed

ways, and yet there is not enough of a jar to shake an aphid from a rosebud. So there is no noise in the loving drawing of the Savior. Much of the fanaticism which comes with religious excitements is not of God. The genuine dew of heaven falls calmly—

*“As in soft silence vernal showers
Fall to refresh the fields and flowers,
So in sweet silence from above
Drops the sweet influence of His love.”*

Christ’s drawings are gentle.

In the next place, observe that Christ’s drawings are *gracious*; for is it not of grace that He should draw at all? If any of you were about to give away bread to the poor, and they would not come for it, I think you would say, “Let them go without it.” You would not attempt to bring them to the feast. No, you would say, “It is good enough on my part to be ready to help them; but if they will not come, then let their starving be upon their own heads.” But see what Jesus does! He does not throw a life belt to poor drowning men. Yes, He does; but He does more, for this life belt has the wonderful quality of attracting the man unto itself; so, that though at first he might be unwilling to be rescued, this mystic life belt changes his will so that he is willing to be saved.

But, next, Jesus draws with a *widespread power*. “I will draw *all men* unto Me.” Not *every man*. Every man is not effectually drawn, for millions of men never heard the name of Jesus Christ at all; but *men of all sorts*—“all men,” that is, Jews and Gentiles. It is an “all” signifying all sorts of men. And what a wonderful thing it is that the cross of Christ does draw all men! Many thought it never could draw the “roughs,” the harlots, the street Arabs; but there have been found for Christ some of His mightiest trophies among the lowest of the low. Nor should we think that the cross cannot attract the rich, and that it is of little use putting the gospel before the fashionable classes. Ah, do not tell us this! There is a boundless power in the cross of Christ. If we preach it to kings and princes, we need not be ashamed. If we could have a parliament of men who were as bad as devils, as proud as Pharaoh, and as furious as Saul of Tarsus, if we preached Christ crucified to them, it would not be in vain! This attraction has, in the fourth place, an *effectual power*, for Jesus Christ in His own elect ones draws most effectually. I said, very gently, but none the less mightily because of the gentleness. The swallows fly across the sea to distant lands. Did you ever feel the influence which attracts them? It is not perceptible by the most delicate of instruments, and yet how effectual it is. They cannot lag behind when the time has come. See how they twitter over the gables of our houses, and leave those neatly built habitations beneath our eaves. Many a weary mile lies the goal of their pilgrimage across the sea; but there they go: a mysterious influence draws them; and He who thus draws the swallow to other lands, and guides it in its flight, draws men to the cross so that they never rest till they have left their haunts of sin, and come to live where Jesus Christ distributes peace.

I will add, for the comfort of some who are here, that Jesus Christ draws today with a *present power*. “I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” That means that He is drawing them NOW! He does not say that He *will* sometimes, but He draws *now*. Oh, I know not whom He may be drawing, but I do trust He is drawing some of you! Here I stand with the gospel to preach to you, like one with a magnet in his hand. Now, do I know who are God’s elect? I do not, but I shall soon find out. Are you not like a great heap of steel filings and ashes mixed together? I cannot separate you, neither need I put the filings on this side and ashes on the other; I have only to thrust in the magnet and the division will be effectually made. Jesus crucified is the great discriminator; His atonement is the great detector of God’s elect. The gospel reveals the eternal purpose. If God intends to save you, you will fly to His dear Son. If you are left to perish, it will be because of your own willfulness in neglecting the Savior and turning your back upon the fountain which cleanses from all sin. Jesus draws today, and Jesus *will draw* still. Happy days are coming when He will draw more mightily, when they shall run to Him: even multitudes that knew Him not shall run to Him, because of the holy one of Israel who has magnified Him. “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” Dear Savior, this morning—

*“Draw reluctant hearts,
To You let sinners fly,*

*And taste the bliss Your love imparts,
And drink and never die.”*

The lessons to be drawn from the whole we will give you in two or three words.

First, *to believers* working for Christ; learn from the text that if you would win souls, you must draw them rather than drive them. Very few people are bullied into heaven. The way to bring men to Jesus Christ is not by rough words, and dark looks, and continually warning them, but rather by gentle invitations; tenderly as a nurse with her child must we seek to win souls. In the second place, if we would win souls, Jesus Christ must be our great attraction. In the class in the Sunday school, visiting from house to house, or elsewhere, we must keep close to the text, and the text must be the cross. I must confess there is a very great sweetness to my soul in preaching about Christ. I hope it is never a weariness to preach any part of divine truth. But oh, it is delight itself to preach up the Master: then we have to deal with the kernel of the matter. When we preach Jesus Christ, oh, then we are not putting out the plates, and the knives and the forks, for the feast—we are handing out the bread itself! Now we are not, as it were, working in the field at the hedging and the ditching, and the sowing, but we are gathering the golden sheaves, and bringing the harvest home. If we want a hundredfold harvest, we must sow seed which was steeped in the blood of Cavalry; and, dear friends, if you want to be drawn nearer to Christ yourselves, do not go to Moses to help you, but get to Christ. Go to Christ to get to Christ. “I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men”—where?—“*unto Me.*” Jesus draws to Himself! Remember, you have never experienced the fullness of the drawing unless you are *drawn to Christ*. If you are only drawn to holiness, or drawn to a church, or to good experiences, you have not obtained the fullness and soul of the matter. You must be drawn to Christ—right away from ordinances and everything else, till you get into His bosom. Then you will have found the *summum bonum*, then you will have reached that which Christ would have you obtain—that for which He died that you might obtain when He, on the cross was lifted up—that He might draw you *unto Himself*.

And now, *sinner*, if you would come to Jesus, let the text whisper a comfortable word in your ear. *He* must draw you! Think much upon His death. Turn this afternoon to those chapters in the evangelists where His death is recorded. Picture that dying Savior to yourself, and ask yourself, “Is this anything to me? Have I a share in it?” Then cover your face with your hands, and kneel down and cry, “O God, be merciful to me a sinner! Wash me in the precious blood.” Before long you shall feel that the precious Christ has drawn you to Himself, and that you are saved! The Lord bless you for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOHN 12:1-36.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST!

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