

## The Father's Drawing

Preached by The Rev. John Kennedy at Dingwall

About the author: John Kennedy was born in 1813. He served a charge as a minister of the gospel in the one church he pastored at Dingwall, Scotland until his death at the young age of 34 in 1847. He was of the true Puritan tradition in that he faithfully preached Christ and Him crucified and the necessity of the grace of God to make a sinner willing to repent of his sins and believe upon the Saviour. The majority of his writings are of his sermons, most of which were written down during the last year of his life. However, he was also an out-spoken critic of the methods of evangelism taught and practiced by D.L. Moody. The heavy emphasis upon the need of a sinner to "make a decision" and the use of the novel "inquiry room" and other novel tactics to gain conversions drew no little attention and objection from Kennedy and others. Thus he stood among his forebearers who rather saw the necessity to speak of the sinner's need of regeneration; a new nature, thus focusing upon the need of divine intervention and grace if one is to be saved.

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*"No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day."—John vi. 44*

THESE words were spoken by "Jesus," "the Son of man," and their teaching is therefore gracious; "by the faithful witness," and therefore they are true; by Him who is Himself Jehovah, the Eternal Son, and therefore they are divine.

He did not deliver the doctrine of the text, in His sermon to the congregation which assembled to hear Him beside the Lake of Tiberias, till He had first spoken regarding the necessity, in order to salvation, of coming to Messiah; the excellence of Him to whom they were called to come; the blessedness of those who came; and the warrant to come to Him, as given to all who hear the gospel. He insisted on the necessity of faith at the outset of His discourse, teaching them that what they needed, as sinners having an endless existence, was not "meat which perisheth," but "meat which endureth unto everlasting life," that this enduring meat "the Son of man" alone could give to them, and that this meat was received and enjoyed only by those who believed on Him whom God had sent. He then speaks of the excellence of Him who was sent, as "the bread of God" "which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." This is followed by a description of the blessedness of all who come to Him. "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst"—"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"—"This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." And after insisting on the necessity of faith, on the excellence of Him who is its object, and on the blessedness of all who have come to Messiah, He tells them of the warrant of faith as given in the command of God to believe in His Son. "This is the work of God," He tells His hearers, "that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." This is the one way of securing the favour of God, and the faith by which this is attained He requires us to yield to Him whom He hath sent.

It is in connection with these truths we are required to consider the doctrine of the text. At first sight it would seem as if this part of Christ's sermon had rendered it impossible to derive any encouragement from all the rest of it. It would seem as if it were cruel to tell a man that he

must believe or he is lost for ever, and then to tell him he can't believe. What matters it how excellent Christ is if I cannot come to Him? To speak to me of the blessedness of those who believe, if I am unable to join them, is but to tantalise me. And of what advantage to me is it to have a warrant to come if I cannot make use of it? So some may be disposed to speak regarding such a doctrine, in such a connection, as that of the text. I may have something to say to those who thus regard the doctrine of this passage; but meantime I would only say that no one can quarrel with the doctrine of the text without quarrelling with Christ, for it is His mouth that uttered it, and it was He who preached the truths in connection with which it stands before us here.

In addressing you from this text, I would direct your attention to the spiritual impotence here declared—to the drawing of the Father—and to Christ's perfecting of the salvation of all whom the Father causes to come to Him.

### **I. THE SPIRITUAL IMPOTENCE HERE DECLARED.**

It is inability to come to Christ as He is revealed and offered in the gospel. And this spiritual impotence is universal, for Jesus saith—"No man can come to me." And He very plainly declares every man's inability to come to Him, for the words "can come" can have only one meaning assigned to them, and might be rendered "is able to come." Such is the plain import of Christ's teaching in the first part of this verse, whatever view may be taken of man's impotence, and in whatever way it may be attempted to reconcile this statement with those which insist on his responsibility. Let us take the explicit teaching of Christ so far as it goes, and let not our reception of it as true depend on our being able to reconcile it with all other parts of His teaching. To refuse to receive His teaching as true simply because it is His, is to lapse into rationalism, and to allow our own conceptions of the fitness of things, and not the revelation of His will by God, to determine the form and measure of our faith.

Coming to Christ is a willing movement of the heart. He must be so known and regarded by him who comes to Him that He is heartily desired. The soul coming to Christ is willing to accept of Him on the terms according on which He is offered in the gospel, as a Saviour from all sin. And this coming to Christ is an exercise of faith. There is in it a trustful, as well as a wistful, feeling, towards Christ, resulting from receiving as true God's testimony regarding Him, and from discovering, in the light of that testimony, the suitableness, as well as the divine appointment, and personal excellence, of Christ, as a Saviour. It is to come thus to Him that Christ declares every man, without exception, to be unable, without the drawing of the Father.

Such a doctrine as this is not pleasing to "the natural man," and he either openly rejects it; or, while professing to receive it, wickedly abuses it. The old heart's pride, with its strong dislike of being indebted to the grace of God, rises against it. And one's love of ease combines with his pride in securing its rejection; for if one realised that his salvation was dependent on the will of God, he could not be at ease; but when he thinks of it as a matter that is in his own hand, then, he can sleep on imagining that when a convenient season" comes he can secure his salvation. Not such is the feeling of the poor captive, who in his madness barred and bolted the door of his cell thinking it was a palace, but who has been awakened to find himself in bondage, with no power to remove the bars and bolts wherewith he himself shut the door, because he has no strength to reach them, and finds sentinels posted to keep him in his prison. He now feels assured that he cannot escape unless an order for his release is issued by him at whose instance he is confined, and that the only key by which the door can be opened is in his hands. He cannot now sleep quietly in his cell, dreaming of finding escape whenever he inclines to go out. His

sleep is broken and his vain dreamings are at an end.

And there are others who, while professing to receive the doctrine of man's spiritual impotence, at the same time abuse it, and do so also from the desire to be at ease. "No efforts of ours," they say, "are of any avail, therefore we will do nothing, and enjoy our case till the Lord does His work the only work that can avail for good to us." It is as if one who was declared to be dying, and was told that there was only one physician who could cure him, continued quite unmoved, made no effort to secure the attendance of the only one who could treat with success his case, and continued to take the kind of diet by which his sickness was induced. The man who could act so must have been insane; but still more insane is the sinner, who makes his utter dependence, on the sovereign grace of God, a reason for continuing at his ease in sin. But let men reject or abuse this doctrine as they may, it is plainly stated in the text, and let us now proceed to consider the grounds on which, besides the statement before us, it may be based.

1. The sinner is spiritually impotent because he is spiritually dead.

"Dead in trespasses and in sins" is the description given of every one as he is "by nature." Now if there is any exercise that is impossible to a spiritually dead sinner, it is a movement towards God—it is coming to Christ. This was the doctrine of Christ to Nicodemus. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," though Christ, as revealed in the gospel, is "the door," and though it is by faith in Him the kingdom of God is entered; and this is plainly declared in the words which tells us that "as many as received" Christ, even they "that believed on His name" "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This is an abundantly strong confirmation of the doctrine of the text. We have a direct affirmation of it thrice over in the gospel of John within its first six chapters, and frequently elsewhere, and he is mighty in his strength to resist Scripture evidence, who refuses to receive this doctrine as true.

2. Coming to Christ is opposed to all man's "natural" tendencies.

Coming to Christ, implies willingness to be indebted to the grace of God for salvation. That must be expressed in every exercise of faith bearing on the Lord Jesus Christ. But this is quite opposed to the pride of man's heart, which is such that never can it cease to be ambitious of being independent of God. How then can a man come to Christ unless the Father draws him? And coming to Christ is an exercise of faith in the word of God as the only warrant of his hope of salvation. This word, and this word alone, presents to him the object of his faith, gives the only light by which he can be guided to Him, and is the only, cord by which he can take hold of Him when he comes. But nothing is more natural to a man than to think that nothing is real which he cannot see or handle, and that to trust in the word of God as true, is to act the part of a vain dreamer. Specially is this true as to his state of feeling towards "the word of the truth of the gospel." So far as the truth of the word of the law is concerned, he has some warrant in believing in its divine authority, from the operation of his conscience, which testifies on the side of the divine law in its claim and in its curse. But he has no such help in accepting as true "the gospel of the grace of God." The good news is such that he can have no anticipation of it. So new and so wonderful is it, that he feels as if he must be furnished with evidence that will reach him through all his senses ere he can realise it as true. But to him who is coming to Christ no other warrant of faith than the simple word of God, as written in the Bible, is given, and on that he must hang the whole weight of his case as a sinner. How then can he, so resolved to "walk by sight" ever come to Christ "except the Father" "draw him?" And coming unto Christ is coming to Him for salvation from all sin. Every man by nature loves sin, "because the carnal mind is enmity against

God." I cannot be a hater of God without being in love with sin, to which He in His holiness is infinitely opposed. To what he loves the sinner will cleave, and never shall he willingly come to Christ for salvation from it.

3. Coming unto Christ is opposed by all the powers of darkness.

"The god of this world," with the great army under his command, is ever busy in endeavouring to keep souls away from Christ. He is ever active in "blinding the eyes of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." This is surely most formidable opposition. Think of the might and malice of such an army, think of the opportunity of successful working the reigning power of sin in the heart affords, and think, too, of the many weapons furnished to the great enemy in the things of "a present evil world," and then surely it must be manifest that the words of Christ are true when He says, "No man can come to Me except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him."

4. It is altogether inconceivable that there can be any coming to Christ without some action on the part of God.

As to the extent of that action, in order to the result of faith, there may be differences of opinion, but as to there being some measure of it, all who pretend to be evangelical must be agreed. If faith be an actual coming unto Christ in desire and trust, must there not at any rate be a revelation by God to the coming one of His Son, and must there not be a reception of him when, he comes? If the giving of the word sufficed as a revelation, why was Christ unknown since first the gospel reached us? And can we reach Him and lean on Him without meeting with such a reception as encourages us to do so? The presence even of our Queen is guarded, and, when there is a reception, those who are introduced expect the Sovereign to take some notice of their presence and obeisance. And are we to be admitted to the King of Glory except according to an authoritative exercise of His will? and if He reveals not Himself to us, as He does not to the world, how possibly can we trust in Him? If we add this reason for divine action being necessary, in order to the coming of a sinner to Christ, to those previously stated, how abundantly true appear the words of Him who said—"No man can come to me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him."

## **II. THE FATHER'S DRAWING.**

"No man can come to me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." These words tell us that what is indispensable, in order to the coming of a sinner to Christ, must come from the Father; that we are to regard the Father in this connection as He by whom Christ was sent; and that the power of the Father is exerted as a drawing power, bringing the soul to Christ.

1. The drawing that brings a sinner to Christ comes from "THE FATHER."

"The Father" is the distinctive name of the First Person of the Godhead. This is His name because of His relation to the Second Person, who is called "The Son" on account of His relation to the First, while the Third is called "The Spirit" because of His relation to the Father and to the Son. He (the Father) is the representative of the Supremacy of the Godhead. He is so without being personally greater than, while essentially one with, the Son and the Spirit. To His sovereign will must, therefore, all salvation be ascribed. "All things are of God," the Father, through the Son and by the Holy Ghost; and to Him, therefore, must ultimately be ascribed the bringing of a sinner to Christ.

How great an event, when viewed in its relation to the Father's action, is the coming of a sinner to Christ! He who wields the authority, and is sovereign Lord of all the resources of Jehovah, alone can secure a meeting between Christ and a sinner! Each act of faith bearing upon Christ is the result of an exercise of His sovereign will, and of the operation of His Almighty power. How infinitely great, therefore, is the coming of a sinner to Christ! How small it seems to the eye which does not rest on the action of the Father! And when a sinner does come, how well warranted is his faith! He is acting according to the call, and because subject to the drawing of the Father. Can anything be more legitimate, therefore, than faith in Christ?

2. But the text requires us to consider the Father, in this connection, as He by whom Christ was sent.

The sending of His Son as His Anointed by the Father is the highest display ever given of His sovereignty; the highest commendation ever given of His love; and is such as must be followed by the drawing unto Messiah of all whom He sent Him to redeem.

(1.) The sending of His Son is the highest display of the Father's sovereignty. This must be before our minds when we think of His drawing a sinner to Christ. How could there be a higher display of His sovereignty than in the mission of His Son "to seek and to save that which is lost?" How could His absolute supremacy more gloriously appear? Under what law, arising necessarily from what He was or out of any antecedents of His action, could He be requiring such action as this? Surely we cannot ascribe it to the operation of any unavoidable constraint that such a one as Jehovah the Son should be sent to obey and die in human nature on the earth. And there could be nothing in the Father's relations to those whom He sent His Son to redeem requiring such a gift in order to their salvation. The mission of the Son abundantly proves that, in the view of God, those whom He sent Him to redeem were death-deserving sinners, and that He, therefore, could be under no obligation to provide deliverance from death for any of them. But "it seemed good in His sight" to purpose the salvation of His chosen, and, in order to the fulfilment of that decree, He sent His Son in order, by "the sacrifice of Himself," to redeem them. It is in pursuance of this scheme of sovereign grace He draws a sinner to Christ, and, in connection with this action, His absolute sovereignty must be recognised and acknowledged.

The last foothold, on the ground of a covenant of works, that must be abandoned by a sinner is the idea, that he can, to any extent, be independent of God, for the exercise of saving faith, that he has any plea to urge for the gift of faith, and that he can escape from feeling absolutely dependent on the sovereign will of God for that faith in the exercise of which he can come to Christ. But it would be utterly inconsistent with His mission by the Father, with the relation in which, as Mediator, He stood to Him who sent Him, and with His zeal for His Father's glory, as well as with His love to His people, not distinctly and repeatedly to claim this acknowledgment of divine sovereignty in connection with the gift of faith. And He claims it still. And He cannot but claim it; for if sinners are such as the word of God describes them, they must be told the truth regarding themselves, and if the coming of a sinner to Christ is the result of the Father's drawing, this must be declared to the praise of Him "of whom are all things."

(2) Think of the Father as giving, in the mission of His Son, the highest commendation of His sovereign love. A higher there could not be given. And this would appear to us if we by faith realised the divine glory of Him who was sent, His relation, as the "Only Begotten Son," to Him who sent Him, the humiliation to which He, when sent, was subjected, and the designed results of His death to the hell-deserving ones whom He was sent to redeem. The marvellous love thus

expressed in the mission of Christ, is further expressed in the drawing of blood-bought sinners to their Redeemer. This must never be forgotten.

But it may be asked, "In what relation do sinners, who hear the gospel, stand to the Father and to His love?" There are two relations, at any rate, in which they stand to the Father. They are the subjects of His government, and are quite at the disposal of His absolutely sovereign will. Thus they are as rational beings. And as sinners they are in such a relation to Him as "Judge of all" that they are under a sentence of condemnation to eternal death. Let neither of these relations to the Father be ignored by any of us. "But," it may be asked, "how are we, who hear the gospel, related to the Father's love?" Not so, that we have any warrant to conclude, because of what the gospel tells you of His love, that it now, and as you are, embraces you. It speaks to you of that love, it exhibits the glorious proof given of the sovereignty, freeness, and riches of that love, in the mission and death of the Son, as the Christ and "the Lamb of God," but it cannot, by possibility, assure you of being an object of that love till you first come to Christ, and be embraced by it in Him. Aught else would be utterly inconsistent with the mode in which His love was revealed, as well as with the source whence it flows. Love, that could not approach a sinner except through Christ's rent body and shed blood, cannot, apart from Christ-crucified, be approached by a sinner. It cannot come but through divine blood to you, and you must not attempt to come to it except through the same channel. Let there be movements in desire and faith towards it as it is revealed in Christ, but let there be no attempt to embrace it, as a loved one, till first, as a sinner, you embrace "Jesus Christ as He is freely offered to us in the gospel."

The revelation of the Father's love, in the mission of His Son, is not a declaration that all to whom the gospel comes are loved by God. This cannot be; for if so, all who are in a state of nature on the earth must be equally regarded as objects of the Father's love, whether they have heard the gospel or not. And how can we conceive of those as objects of His love to whom He has never told of His love, and who derive no opportunity of benefit from it? But if the revelation of the gospel declares sinners who hear it to be loved by God, must we not ascribe this advantage to the sovereign will of God, and thus from the marshes of Arminianism be constrained to repair for a firm footing to the sure ground of Calvinism? Thus far, at any rate, must the sovereignty of God be acknowledged. The distribution of the gospel is quite as unaccountable, except by referring it to the sovereign good pleasure of God, as is the salvation of some and not of others to whom the gospel has been sent. The mode in which God distributes the gospel is a palpable exhibition of the sovereign grace of the salvation of which the gospel testifies.

But any sinner who is required to acknowledge the Father's sovereignty is entitled to contemplate the Father's love. O what a privilege it is to be told that the drawing of a sinner to Christ is in the hands of Him who commended His love in the mission of His Son. He to whom you are shut up in your impotence to believe, as the only One who can help you, is He who so loved the world as to give His Son to make atonement for sin by "the blood of His cross." That is one grand association with the Father. "Yes," you say, "but what encouragement can I derive from thinking of the Father's love, unless I may think of it as love to myself?" At any rate, you may think of it as love to sinners, while you regard it as sovereign love to each one of all who are its objects. Being love to sinners you may appeal to it as the fountain of all saving grace. Friend, your difficulty arises from your thinking so much of yourself, that you are disposed to regard yourself as an ill-used man, if God does not, without any regard to His holiness, and to the honour of His Christ, come to tell you where you are, and as you are, that you are an object of His love. You would surely act more wisely if you took, before the Father, your place as a sinner, at the disposal of His sovereign will, and appealed to His love as love that was expressed in sending His Son, as "the Son of man," "to seek and to save that which was lost."

(3.) To the Son, whom the Father sent, is due by Him who sent Him the drawing of sinners unto Him. He owes Him this fulfilment of His promise given to Him when He covenanted with Him as to the salvation of His chosen, and in reward of "the travail of His soul" in their behalf. The fulfilment of that promise, and the giving of that reward, are absolutely certain. This furnishes ground of rejoicing to all who love Christ and who love souls, for there is security for Christ being satisfied, and, for all His redeemed being saved.

But the Father's way of fulfilling His promise to the Son was to invest Him as the Covenant Head with all authority, and to anoint Him with the fulness of the Holy Ghost, in order that the power of the Mediator might be a security for His obtaining His reward. It is on this account you hear Christ saying that He Himself "will draw all men unto" Him. You may then think of the sovereign love and supreme authority of the Father as evidenced in making Christ the author as well as the object of faith. And if the Father calls you to come to His Christ, in whom all fulness of saving grace is to be found, may you not come for faith to Him when you cannot come with faith, and ask Him, as the Father's Anointed One, to do for you all that is required to your coming to Him, as well as to save you with an everlasting salvation when you come. Take Christ as a faith-giver, in the presence of the Father who appointed Him to be so, and if you do not, then you are utterly excuseless if you perish in your unbelief.

### 3. The Father's drawing.

This is, and must be gracious, attracting, and effectual. Gracious, infinitely gracious, it must be, as it bears on a mean, guilty, loathsome, hostile sinner. Gracious, beyond all conception, must be the drawing which brings into a relation of everlasting union that sinner to His glorious Son. Gracious enough to be matter of eternal wonder and praise is this action of the Father, resulting as it infallibly does in the everlasting salvation of the sinner on whom it takes effect. And it is drawing by attraction. He who comes is "made willing" in a day of power. It pleases God to bring, by His quickening spirit, the dead soul alive, and to reveal His Son in Him, and by His excellence and love to draw the soul, now spiritually alive, to His Christ. There is no dragging though there is drawing. It is attraction, not compulsion, that overcomes the sinner, into submission, and wins his acquiescence in the terms of the gospel. This drawing is and must be effectual. No power can successfully resist the drawing of the Father. The three Persons of the Godhead act, each His part, in bringing the soul to Christ, and what possible combination of influences can withstand action of which this is true? The wildest rebel He can subdue, the most ignorant He can enlighten, the most hostile He can make friendly, the most oppressed He can deliver, the man who has been longest "dead in trespasses and sins" He can quicken "together with Christ," and the most timid He can "persuade and enable" "to embrace Jesus Christ as He is freely offered to us in the gospel."

### **III. CHRIST'S PROMISE OF COMPLETING THE SALVATION OF ALL WHOM THE FATHER DRAWS TO HIM**

— "And I will raise him up at the last day."

This is the third time this promise was given by Christ in His discourse. It is a promise bearing on all who come to Him, whenever and whatever they may be. It specifies only the crowning act of salvation—it is a promise that He shall "bring forth the headstone of the building, with shoutings, crying grace, grace, with it"—but surely this implies a promise of doing all that is required in order to prepare for this. "The headstone" cannot be brought forth, till

every stone is laid in the wall on the foundation—till the building is ready for the headstone. Christ, by these words, engages to see to it that all sanctifying grace is given, that He shall instruct and guide, and preserve and comfort to the end all whom the Father draws to Him; that He shall receive their souls at death, when He has purged away all their corruption, to their place in the "Father's house," and that however long their bodies may lie asleep in the grave, He will at the last day quicken and transform them, so that, perfectly like Himself, they may be prepared for being for ever with Him.

O what a promise this is? It is infinitely rich. There is nothing wanting to it that can be required by a soul from the first moment of faith in Christ till he enters everlasting glory. And it is as true as it is rich. Sometimes among men we find those who make promises which they never intend to fulfil. A small promise, if true, would be better than all the large promises which these may offer as a ground of hope. But in Christ's promise there is the bounty of infinite love with the certainty of infallible truth. And this is His promise to all who come to Him, and an interest in all the grace of this unfailing promise shall be yours, if, as a sinner, you come to Him as He is revealed and offered to you in the gospel.

This promise is one of those with which we repeatedly meet in the word of God, in which the grace of all the promises is gathered up, and nothing besides is left to be asked beyond their fulfilment. On this, believer, you have to be drawing during all your life in the wilderness. The promised grace is all in Him in whom "the promises of God are yea and amen." From His mouth comes the promise, and in Him is stored the grace. And by such a word as this He makes you free to make use of all He is, and has, and has done and suffered. He gives Himself over, to the faith which He has begotten, in order to the plenishing of the sinner whom He loved. And He does even more than this, for He not only assures those who have come, that He shall be unto them according to the measure of their faith, but that He shall see to their having the faith, as well as the supply which is secured through faith. O what rest would be yours and mine, if we implicitly trusted in Him, and left our whole case in His hands!

### **APPLICATION.**

1. We have in this text what is a marked feature of Christ's teaching all throughout the traces He traces up all salvation to the sovereign love of the Father who sent Him.

It is this which is so marked in the words, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." And He thus ascribes all the praise of salvation to the Father's sovereign love while He declares "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father." If He who was the Son, essentially one with, and personally equal to, the Father, was thus careful to refer all salvation to the sovereign good pleasure of the Father, as "Lord of heaven and earth," surely all who follow Him as preachers must be careful to do the same, even when, like the Master, they are addressing mixed multitudes.

2. We may learn from this text that a doctrine, because distasteful to hearers, or because liable to be abused by them, ought not to be withheld.

If it is part of "the whole counsel of God" it must be preached, however offensive it may be regarded, and to whatever extent abused. "The chief end" of the preacher ought to be to glorify God by exhibiting Him as He has revealed Himself. This must be done whatever may be the

issue. There must be no new aspect of His character presented to men—nothing but His name as He Himself has revealed it—no representation of His scheme of redemption that does not accord with His mind in the word, no modification of the bearings of doctrine to suit them to the taste of unrenewed men, nothing that "thus saith the Lord" does not cover. In combination with the zeal which makes one careful to keep the glory of God, as the great end of his preaching, in view, there ought to be, as there was in the Master, yearning pity towards the sinners to whom Christ is preached. Carefulness to be exact in stating doctrine, according to a system, there may be where there is no due reference to the word of God; but there can be no pity like Christ's in the heart of anyone who is not anxious in his preaching to conserve the honour of the divine name, while guided solely by the light of the divine word. Cold dogmatism or blind earnestness are not the only alternatives in preaching. The true preacher is he who is like Christ in glorifying Him who sent Him by ascribing all salvation to His sovereign will as "Lord of heaven and earth," and who is like Him also in His pity, as expressed in His weeping over doomed Jerusalem.

3. In the light of this text we may see how desirable coming to Christ is.

Look at it as the fruit of the Father's love, and as the result of the Father's drawing, and how great does faith in Christ appear to be! And then think of it as the means of securing an interest in a perfect salvation, and how gracious and rich a boon the gift of faith, as a gift from God, appears! Does it so appear to you? Has this drawn forth your desire in prayer to God for the precious gift of faith? Has it made you anxious to "win Christ and be found in Him?" Or have you chosen as the objects of your desire only such things as first cheat, and then utterly destroy, the soul.

4. What debtors to God are all who have come to Christ!

They are under debt for their coming, and when they come they incur debt to grace as great as a perfect and everlasting salvation! They are under debt to the Father for drawing them to Christ, and they are under debt to Christ for the "righteousness and strength" which they found in Him, and they are debtors to the Holy Ghost for fulfilling in them "the good pleasure" of God. O, friends, seek to see and feel and acknowledge more and more the obligation under which you lie to "the God of all grace," that you may be kept more lowly, more thankful, more zealous, more faithful, as your days in the wilderness are passing away. And remember that it is only by incurring fresh debt that you can attain to fresh growth—debt to Christ, "without whom you can do nothing," debt to the Father for turning you to Him "in whom it pleased" Him "that all fulness should dwell," for during all your life you must know that "no man," spiritually dead or spiritually alive, "can come to" Christ "except" as the Father draws him; debt to the Holy Ghost, without whose gracious operation you cannot receive according to the Father's giving, and to the right and pleading of the Son. To be a debtor for salvation through faith your old covenant spirit deems to be a hard thing, but it still more vehemently rebels against your being a constant debtor for faith to God. You sometimes think you could bravely get on if you could only be master of your faith, and go to the storehouse when you please. But to be dependent on the Father's drawing, for each act of faith, during all your life on earth, leaves to self no ground of glorying. And this is the arrangement that is best for you, and it is so just because it is mortifying to your pride of heart. You never feed except when self is starved.

5. The text forbids any one to imagine that he came to Christ if he has not been taught that he could never come unless the Father drew him.

This is a lesson which Christ insisted on being learned when He dealt in secret with an

inquirer such as Nicodemus was, and then He preached to a multitude beside the Lake of Tiberias. You, therefore, cannot be in His school if you are allowed to skip this lesson over. It cannot save you from being deceived that you do not like the doctrine, because you prefer a view of your relation to God which would spare you the self-mortification which it inflicts. It is not what suits your taste, but what suits your state you need to be told to you; and if it be true that such is your actual condition, that you cannot come to Christ unless the Father draw you, what but evil can result from your shutting out that truth from your soul? But you will be disposed to say, "If I believed that to be true, I could have no hope." Certainly not in yourself, but that is just the reason why you are called to believe it.

Another may say, "If I believed that, I would fold my hands and cease from all effort." And if you did, what a strange reason you would assign for being listless! your being so lost that you could not escape from destruction without being drawn to Christ by the Father! This is to be your opiate, is it? If so, it is the most extraordinary inducement to sleep that was ever heard of. Another asks, "How can this spiritual impotence to believe consist with my being accountable to God for my unbelief?" That is an old question, to which no new answer can be given. Both things are consistent in the view of God, and let that suffice. It is high time for you to know that depravity of heart cannot excuse iniquity of conduct, for your guilt occasioned your depravity, and the state of your heart cannot, therefore, excuse the guilt of your actions.

6. There is encouragement in the text to all who fain would reach Christ, and who find that nothing but the Father's drawing can bring them to Him.

Friends, if a sense of the power of unbelief is your burden, while a sense of the guilt of it is your shame—if the one makes you bow, while the other makes you blush—this flows from some revelation of Christ by the Father. But having given this, He will give more. And is it not well for you that it is the Father, as representing the authority, grace, and power of the Godhead, whose work it is to draw? There can be no gift too great for His love, no work too hard for His power, and whatever it pleaseth Him that He hath the right to do. And when your hope of help is faint, look to Him through the given Son. Remember that "all that the Father hath is" His, and that if you may claim Him as the gift of God, you will find in Him, as the provision of the Father's love, enough to meet you in your impotence, and a warrant to cleave to Him as you ask Him to help you in your time of need.

7. Are any of you afraid of not being drawn to Christ?

If so, do not smother that fear; do not let it press you to despair; be sure to tell it to God; and give "no sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids" till you are drawn by the Father to Christ. I say to none of you "Be not afraid of not coming," for it is an awful thing not to come, and certain you are not to come if the Father withholds from you His grace. Nor can I tell you that you have any claim on God, or that you can offer any prayer, so long as you are "dead in sins," and apart from Christ, that is not "an abomination in the sight of the Lord." But neither can I refrain from bidding you to pray, as even Simon Magus was commanded, though he was "in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity." And if you realise that you are called by God to come, and that the authority of that call shuts you up to Christ, and are, at the same time, conscious of your impotence to come, while you know yourselves to be without any right to expect that the Father will draw you, and to be at the disposal of Him who "will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and who hardeneth whom He will," do not despair, but hold on and still cry, for you are less likely to perish than when you were at your ease; and as you are beginning to feel the straitness of the gate, through which alone the way of life is entered, there

is some reason to hope that you are going through; and, if your soul is agonising to enter, who knoweth but you are passing through the throes of that new birth, because of which alone one can, by coming to Christ, enter the kingdom of God.