

THE DRAWINGS OF DIVINE LOVE

“No man can come to Me, except the Father who sent Me draws him and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore, everyone who has heard, and has learned of the Father, comes unto Me.”

John 6:44, 45

THERE is something here which troubles many seeking souls. They hear the Gospel preached in this manner, “Look and live,” or, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” This comforts them and they say to themselves, “This is a way in which we can run. We delight to be told of salvation by faith in Christ.” By-and-by, they hear a discourse upon our Savior’s Words, “You must be born again,” or they listen to descriptions of the inward experience of a child of God. They are taught that there must be a brokenness of heart before there can be a true binding up. There must be a stripping before there can be a clothing. There must be death before there can be resurrection and then they say to themselves, “This, we fear, is true. But how different it is from the message we heard the other day! Are there two things equally true—salvation by simple faith in Christ—and yet the necessity of a new heart and a right spirit?”

They are equally true, and they ought to be preached with equal clearness, and equal earnestness! But I would say to every seeker, “You will find it very injurious to get worrying yourself with such difficulties as these. As a rule, you had better leave those questions for another day.” Suppose that you were puzzled concerning specific gravity, the weight of a body in water? if you were a drowning man, I would recommend you to waive the consideration of such a subject till you were safely on shore! It is hardly the time, I think, to enter into difficult disquisitions while you are in grave peril. And, in like manner, you may leave many theological questions until, by faith in Christ, you are saved. Then, going into His school, you may ask Him to teach you these other more advanced lessons.

Now, for your help, I desire to say that these two doctrines of Salvation by Faith and the Inward Drawing of the Spirit of God are equally true and, unless they are proclaimed in due proportion, mischief may come from the preaching of either the one, or the other. I think that when the preacher only says, “Believe, believe, believe, believe, believe, believe,” mischief may come of that imperfect declaration, for it is a one-sided form of the Truth of God, and other important Truths of God may be forgotten, and men may get into a superficial habit of imagining that they believe when they hardly know what it is that they believe—and their faith is not the living faith of God’s elect which works by love, purifies the soul and sanctifies the life!

On the other hand, I am quite sure that you may preach the need of inward experience and preach it very thoroughly and continually. But if this other matter of faith is left out, you may preach some of your hearers into despair, many of them into indifference and others of them into a kind of self-righteousness of feelings! I have met with persons who were certainly trusting in their feelings and who went so far as to condemn others because they had not endured the same amount of misery and passed through the same conviction of sin, or indulged in the same agony of despair. Truths of God are preached, we shall not stop to reconcile them—there is no need to do so, especially if they reconcile themselves to you while we preach! If the two doctrines are preached, they will act as a balance, the one to the other, and while men hear our Savior say, “He that believes on Me has everlasting life,” they will not misunderstand what He says if they also hear as the deep bass note of that musical scale the equally Divine utterance, “You must be born again.”

The text gives us good help upon this subject. I do not believe that there are any practical difficulties in the matter at all. I say, practical difficulties, for there are philosophical difficulties. Is there any subject about which there are not philosophical difficulties? Can you not, if you think of anything—be it the most commonplace fact in natural history, very soon surround it with a cloud of obscurity which nobody can remove? A fool can set a stool where a wise man will tumble over it and you can soon raise a difficulty if you want to. Here is one. There is a bullock in the meadow and there is also a sheep in the same pasture. They will both eat grass and on the bullock that grass will turn to hair, and on the sheep it will turn to wool. How come? Can you tell me? No, and I do not want to know. It may be a very interesting point for discussion, but, practically there is no difficulty about it. Those who tan the leather, or those who dye the wool are not hindered in the least degree in their handicraft by the philosophical difficulty I have mentioned! So, there are philosophical difficulties about this matter of simple faith and salvation by it, and of the Spirit's work and the necessity for it, but, practically, there is no difficulty at all, for the man who believes in Christ Jesus is born again! And every man who is born again believes in the Lord Jesus Christ! The two things come together, live together and are perfected together!

However, for the help of some sincere seekers after Christ who may be in perplexity, I will speak about this matter that troubles them. Let me read the text again—"No man can come to Me, except the Father who sent Me draws him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore, everyone who has heard, and has learned of the Father, comes unto Me."

1. Our first observation upon this text is that THE ALL-IMPORTANT MATTER OF FAITH IS A VERY SIMPLE BUSINESS. Twice is it mentioned here, and the only definition of it that is given is coming to Christ—"No man can come to Me." And, again, in the 45 th verse, "Comes unto Me."

Faith in Christ is simply and truly described as coming to Him. It is not an acrobatic feat—it is simply a coming to Christ. It is not an exercise of profound mental faculties—it is coming to Christ. A child comes to his mother. A blind man comes to his home. Even an animal comes to his master. Coming is a very simple action, indeed. It seems to have only two things about it. One is, to come away from something, and the other is, to come to something.

In coming to Christ Jesus as our Savior, we first come away from all other trusts. We leave all other confidences right behind us and come away from them altogether. My own works? I must come away from all trust in them, to Christ! My own feelings? I must come away from all reliance upon them, to Christ! Ceremonies, forms, rites, yes, even such as God has given, I must come away from all confidence in them and I must come to Jesus, quitting and leaving them all! You cannot come to Jesus and yet hold on to your old trusts. You cannot come to Jesus and yet cling to your old sins. You must come away from righteous self as well as from sinful self. To go to a place, I must go from a place. If you would come to Christ, you must bid, "good-bye," to your old sins and say, "farewell," to your old confidences. Are you ready to sue for a divorce between your soul and sin, between your soul and self-confidence? That is the first essential thing in coming to Christ—leaving all other trusts.

Then the other part of coming is drawing near to Christ to obtain everything we need. When we truly come to Christ, we draw near to Him. We do not any longer neglect Him, we do not look away from Him—on the contrary, we begin to think much of Him, our hopes center in Him and, having thought of Him, and so having come mentally to Him, we trust in Him. We come to Him for what He is. Is He a Savior? We come to Him that He may save us! Does He wash away sin? We come to Him that He may wash away our sin! Does He heal spiritual diseases? We come to Him that He may heal us of our diseases! You know what is meant by coming to such and such a physician. You must, in that same sense, come to Jesus Christ, the Divine Physician, for sin-sick souls.

This expression, coming to Christ, is so simple that I do not know how to make it any plainer. I am afraid that if I were to try to explain it, I might be like Thomas Scott when he wrote his notes to Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. Going round his parish, he found a woman who had The Pilgrim's

Progress with his notes. "My good woman," he asked, "do you understand The Pilgrim's Progress?" "Yes, Scott, I understand The Pilgrim's Progress very well and I hope that, one day, I may be able to understand your explanation of it." I will not attempt to explain any further what coming to Christ is, lest I should not succeed any better than Mr. Scott did! It ought to be clear to everybody that coming from something, and coming to something, or someone, constitute the act of coming. Quit, then, both sin and self by determined resolve, and come to Jesus—rest in Him, take Him to be everything to you—and then believe that you have everlasting life, according to His declaration, "He that believes on Me has everlasting life."

Yet our Savior does, in close connection with this text, give us another illustration of what faith is. Faith is coming to Christ. It is also eating or receiving Christ. A man has a piece of bread in his hand. He does not know where the wheat grew, nor in what mill it was ground, nor in what oven the bread was baked, but he knows that it is bread and that he is hungry. Nature, especially living nature, abhors a vacuum, so the man determines to fill the vacuum within with that piece of bread! What does he do, but eat it? You do not have to teach children how to eat. I said to a little boy this afternoon, "Why don't you put your bread and butter in your ear?" Of course, he knew better than to act like that, so all he did was to laugh at me! And you never yet met with a child who took to putting the bread and butter in his ear—he puts it in his mouth and eats it. So, there really is, if you would but use it, sense enough within you to understand what faith in Christ is. If you were not so ready to confound and confuse yourself, my dear Friend, you might know what faith is!

You tell me that it puzzles you. I think that it is you that puzzles yourself, not faith that puzzles you. When you get bread, you put it into your mouth, you eat it and let it go down into yourself. You may not know much about the processes that are going on within you and you need not want to know. If you do not understand anything about them, the bread will feed you just as well. Now, in that way take the Lord Jesus Christ into you, spiritually, and feed upon Him. Say from your heart, "Lord, I live upon You. I believe You to be God. I believe that You did take our nature. I trust You as the Incarnate God. I believe that You did suffer in the place of guilty men. I believe that You have put away the sin of all those who trust You, and put it away forever so that they can never be condemned. I trust You to be my Savior, altogether and solely my Savior." If you really do that, you are saved.

"How do I know it?" says one. Because Christ says it—is not that enough? "He that believes on Me has everlasting life." "But I have not felt any strange sensations! I have had no wonderful dreams." What? Are you asking for such signs as those? Is not Christ's Word, "He that believes on Me has everlasting life," enough for you? Lord, I believe on You. Therefore, I have everlasting life. Your Word is enough for me!

That is my first point, faith is a very simple matter.

II. But, secondly, TO THIS FAITH MEN ARE GREATLY DISINCLINED. He who knew most about men says of them, "No man can come to Me, except the Father who sent Me draws him."

Men are grievously disinclined to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Their unwillingness is so great that it amounts to an inability of this sort, that, as there are none so deaf as those that will not hear, and none so blind as those that will not see, so there are none so unable as those who are unwilling! And the Savior thus puts it, "No man can come to Me, except the Father who sent me draws him."

But why are men so unwilling to believe in the Lord Jesus? In Christ's lifetime on earth, their unwillingness arose partly because He was of such lowly origin. They said, "We know Joseph, and Mary, and the brethren of Jesus. How can we believe in Him as the Messiah?" He was so poor, so obscure, He came of a family that was not notable in Israel as far as they knew. Besides, He came out of Nazareth and they asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" He was a Galilean and they could not look up to one who came from that despised region.

In addition to that, all His teaching was opposed to their proud notions. If He had come as an earthly king, to overthrow the Roman power, they might have believed in Him, but, as He was, they regarded Him as a root out of a dry ground. They could see nothing illustrious about the Man of Sorrows, so they would not believe in Him. And numbers of people, to this day, do not receive Christ because faith in Him is not fashionable. True godliness is not held in high repute in the upper circles of society. O simpletons, to lose your souls for the sake of a little worldly grandeur! God save us all from such insanity as that!

The more common reason why men are not saved by faith in Christ is because they do not see any need of a Savior. I know you very well, my dear Mr. Good-Enough, and my dear Friend, Mr. Too-Good! You do not believe that you need saving—you think that you have as much as you ought to have of everything that is good, and even some to give away! Oh, yes, you hope to enter Heaven with all sails up. What will you do when you get there? The redeemed ones are all singing that they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. But you will have to go up in a corner, by yourself, and hold your tongue, because you had not anything that needed to be washed and you were, yourself, perfectly clean! You would not be happy in Heaven, for the very Glory of that blissful place is the Lamb of God and His precious blood is the theme of continual thanksgiving! I pray God to bring you out of your miserable delusion, for it is no better than that. You are not the good man that you think you are—you are stained with sin from head to foot—and unless you are washed in the Divinely-provided bath, even in the atoning blood of Jesus, you will perish in your sin!

But many do not come to Christ and trust Him because they will not receive the doctrine of Substitution. Christ's dying in the sinners' place, the Just for the unjust, to bring them to God, they will not have—they kick at it! I assure you that you will never have rest and peace till you accept that blessed soul-saving doctrine, for other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ the Righteous, and there is no Jesus Christ to trust in except the glorious Substitute who bore our sins in His own body on the tree! Oh, that men would not be so foolish as to reject God's plan of salvation by the vicarious Atonement once offered on Calvary!

Many also refuse the Savior because they are occupied with other things. They cannot come to Christ because their farm, their merchandise, their newly-married wife, or something or other, keeps them back. Oh, how long some of you have been waiting—some of you who have attended the Tabernacle, too, all the time! If anybody had said, 20 years ago, that you would be sitting in your pew an unconverted man, tonight, you were not willing to have believed it! You will probably be sitting in that pew, an unconverted man, in 20 more years' time, I fear—you will either be saved, or you will have gone the way of all flesh! Oh, that the day would come when there shall be no more hesitation, no more postponement, but when you would, from your heart, say, "I must have Christ. I will trust Him!" Say even now what we have often sung—

*"I do believe, I will believe,
That Jesus died for me!
That on the Cross He shed His blood,
From sin to set me free."*

There are many more who do not exercise simple faith in Christ because they do not like the consequences of it. "Why," says one, "if I become a Believer in Christ, I shall have to give up my old ways." You will. "If I become a follower of the Lamb, I cannot go where I now go." Quite right! I am glad you see that. I hope that you are not such a hypocrite as to imagine that you can trust Christ to put away your past sin and then go on living in sin as you have done. That will never do! Christ has opened a hospital for the sick, but it is that He may heal them! He receives sinners, but not that they may remain sinners—it is that He may make saints of them and deliver them from sin! You will never come to Christ as long as you are in love with sin. And you are so much in love with sin that you never will come at all except Omnipotent Grace shall draw you! And so says our Lord Jesus Christ, "No man can come to Me, except the Father who sent Me draws him."

There are many others who cannot trust in Christ and cannot come to Him because they wish for certain feelings or emotions. You want to experience amazing changes that you may know that God is at work in your soul, do you? Well, I do not wonder at that desire, but please notice what is said in the 46th verse, "Not that any man has seen the Father." The work of God in the heart is not seen by the soul until, first of all, the soul sees Jesus Christ! You must not think that you can deal with an absolute God. Apart from Christ, you cannot approach God, and God operating upon your heart, without faith in Christ, will not be the ground of any comfort to you. Whatever God may be doing in you, or may not be doing in you, is not the thing that you are to look to as the foundation of your hope! Your trust is to be in Christ's work on the Cross, and in nothing else! You shall see plenty of evidences, miracles and signs, by-and-by, but, to begin with, the Gospel for you is, "Believe, believe, believe." "I could believe if ." **Oh, yes! I see, the ground of your confidence is that, "if," not God's Word. "Oh, Sir, but I could trust God's Word if I ."** Ah, that is the same thing, over again!

You see, it is not God's Word that you trust—it is that rotten, "if," to which you cling! Now, away with it, away with it, I pray you! Either call God a liar, or else believe Him. It must be one of the two! But do not pretend that you would believe Him under certain conditions that you would like to impose. If a man said to me that he would believe me under certain conditions, I would understand at once that he did not really believe me at all. That, in fact, he could not believe me, but he would believe somebody else, and perhaps trust me under cover of that other person. That would not be faith in me at all and, I pray you, deal not with the Lord in such a fashion!

So, you see, dear Friends, my text plainly teaches us that men are greatly disinclined to come to Jesus.

III. Therefore, THE OPERATIONS OF GOD ON THE SOUL ALL RUN IN THE WAY OF LEADING MEN TO COME TO JESUS. That is clear if you read the text, "No man can come to Me, except the Father who sent Me draws him."

You see, first, the Father inclines us to come to Christ. "It is written in the Prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by clear that the drift of the Divine operations in the heart of man is towards Christ. The Lord draws us, but all His drawings are towards Christ. If you think that you have experienced the work of the Holy Spirit in your heart, and yet it does not draw you towards Christ, you have made a mistake. The Spirit always draws away from self and away from sin, to Jesus Christ, alone! If you are drawn that way, it is the Lord who draws you, for all His drawings are in that direction.

Then, next, the drift of all God's teachings is this way. Whatever the Spirit of God teaches a man, the end and objective of that teaching is to get him away from self and draw him to Christ. All the teachings of affliction are intended to make us sick of self and fond of Christ. All the true teachings of the Christian ministry aim at putting down self and exalting Christ!

All the drawings and all the teachings, then, that come from God, are towards Christ. By this test you may try everything that professes to be a Divine operation. If any man says, "I am the subject of the work of the Spirit of God," and he does not exalt Christ, tell him that he is not the subject of the Spirit's work at all. If he comes to you with some fine idea about himself, making out that he is some great one, say to yourself, "It is no part of the work of the Spirit to set up any man as a great one. His work is to take of the things of Christ and show them to us." The Holy Spirit addicts Himself to the glorifying of Christ, so He withers our false hopes and gives us true hopes! He does this in order that Christ may be lifted up and that we may be drawn to Him.

I believe that this is the test of all kinds of preaching. Does a man come with a Divine message to my soul? I will try him by this test. Does he lift up Christ? Does he draw me to trust in Christ? Does he draw me to love Christ? Does he draw me to be like Christ? Well and good! I will hear some more of what that man says, but if, Sunday after Sunday, I have to say, "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him," I say, "Good-bye, Sir, other people may listen to you, but you are not the man that I want to hear." I must have Christ, Christ, Christ, Christ, Christ first, last, Alpha, Omega, beginning, middle, end and all through, or else I cannot believe that the teaching is of God, for the Father draws to Christ and teaches concerning Christ.

Further, He makes us to hear and to learn that we may come to Christ. Come, then, my dear Hearers! I think that I have now brought you a little into the Light of God. You say that you must be the subject of a Divine operation. Are you looking to Christ? Then you have had that Divine operation performed upon you, for it makes you look to Christ, alone! "Is believing an easy thing?" asks one. It is the easiest thing in the world! It is as easy as coming, or as eating. "Well, but why is it so difficult for me?" Probably it is difficult because it is so easy. I believe that faith is a hard thing to many because it is not a hard thing. It is just like Naaman's washing in the Jordan—if the Prophet had bid him do some great thing, some difficult thing, he would have done it. But when he said nothing but, "Wash, and be clean," Naaman felt that he was too great to go to the River Jordan and too clean to go and wash. He is a nobleman and a gentleman—is he to go and wash like any pig?

Yes, he is, and only so can he be cleansed, for his leprosy makes him as foul as any swine could be and he must, therefore, wash if he would be clean! You, though you are the queen of morality, must trust in Christ just as a harlot must trust in Christ! And you, young man, though you are, in all things, noble and excellent, you must come and believe in Christ just as a thief must do, or else you can never come where that dying thief, is, who passed with Christ into Paradise! There is but one door—will you bow your head and enter? There is only one way of salvation—will you run along it? If not, if you will put your goodness before Christ, it shall become as bad as a crime or infamy, itself! God grant that the operations of the Holy Spirit may lead you up to simple faith in Jesus!

IV. So, then, I finish with this fourth point. IF WE HAVE COME TO JESUS, WE NEED NOT QUESTION OUR SAFETY. Christ says, "He that believes on Me has everlasting life." He who has come to Jesus is saved! You need not question your safety, for you could not have come to Christ without having been drawn to Him. "No man can come to Me, except the Father who sent Me draws him." You could not have come if you had not been drawn! Well, then, if you have come, you have been drawn, and if the Father has drawn you, you have come the right way! It all lies in a nutshell. If I have come to Jesus and have put my trust in Him—my nature is, in itself, so averse to this way of salvation that, if I have really and from my heart accepted it—there must have been upon my heart an operation from God to bring me into this condition! That operation could not have been badly performed, for God never works amiss or ineffectually. I am, therefore, in the very fact of being brought to Christ, assured that God has been at work with me!

"Oh!" I have sometimes heard poor souls say, "I came to Christ, but I am afraid that I have come the wrong way." You cannot come the wrong way. "Oh, but I heard of one who came to Christ so quickly!" Yes, and I have heard of one who came to Him very slowly. But as he came, it did not so much matter how he came! When the whole world was drowned, a pair of greyhounds found shelter in the ark. I do not suppose they started very early. But there was a pair of snails that went in with them—I wonder how soon they started? They certainly must have started a long while before the ark door was opened or the ark prepared. Come along, then, you poor crawling snails, come along! If some of you have the greyhound's speed, come along, bound and leap to Christ—the quicker the better! But if you are a man of slow action, remember that the snails in the ark were not drowned. Though they were slow in coming in, there they were, as safely preserved as the rest of the living creatures that were with Noah. "Well" says one, "I feel as if I could only creep to Christ with broken legs and an aching back." Then creep to Christ, only come to Him! Come anyway—leaping or limping. If you shall come, He has said, "Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out," and that includes any coming in all the world if it is but a coming to Him. If you trust Him, you are saved! That Truth of God ought, I think, to give some consolation to any who are troubled about their faith and about the inner life of the soul.

Yet again, remember that all teaching that is absolutely necessary to salvation concerns Christ. "Therefore, everyone who has heard, and has learned of the Father, comes unto Me." If there were any right teachings that would lead you beyond Christ—I do not know any, but if there were such—you can do without them. The only teachings that you need are those that lead you to Christ. Let this comfort anyone who says, "I understand no theology. I am only a beginner in the study of the Word. I could not even explain the plan of salvation to another person, but I am trusting in Christ." Well, rest satisfied with that glorious fact!

To close, the best sentence in the whole text, to my mind, is that with which the 44 TH verse finishes, "I will raise him up at the last day." Is not that glorious? The Savior does not merely say that he that believes is drawn to Him by the Father and that he is now saved, but He says, "I will raise him up at the last day." It is as good as saying, "I will take that man's case into My own hands." He does not mention all the intervening circumstance, but He finishes up with the last victory, "I will raise him up at the last day." "This man is a sinner, Lord." "I will forgive him." "He has a black heart." "I will change it." "He will be very fickle." "I will keep him." "He will be much tempted." "I will pray for him." "He will have many afflictions." "I will sustain him." "But Lord, he will die." "I will be with him." "But he will be buried, Lord, and laid among the worms, dust to dust." "I will raise him up at the last day."

It is as good as saying, "I will go through with the business for the whole of the man," for if He takes care of the poor body, and raises it up, depend upon it that He will take care of the soul that shall be forever with Him! If this rag of a robe that I wear is yet so dear to Him that He will not leave it in the grave, then the man within the robe will be all right! Christ will take care of him, depend upon that! He who will preserve the casket will not lose the jewel. "I will raise him up at the last day."

The Lord bring every one of you to trust in this mighty Savior, for His great name's sake! Amen.