

HOW MEN COME TO CHRIST

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

*“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 6:44*

How then does the Father draw men? Arminian¹ preachers generally say that God draws men by the preaching of the gospel. Very true; the preaching of the gospel is the instrument of drawing men, but there must be something more than this. Let me ask to whom did Christ address these words? Why, to the people of Capernaum, where He had often preached, where He had uttered mournfully and plaintively the woes of the Law and the invitations of the gospel. In that city He had done many mighty works and worked many miracles. In fact, such teaching and such miraculous attestation had He given them, that He declared that Tyre and Sidon would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes if they had been blessed with such privileges (Mat 11:21).

Now, if the preaching of Christ Himself did not avail to the enabling these men to come to Christ, it cannot be possible that all that was intended by the drawing of the Father was simply preaching. No, brethren, you must note again, He does not say no man can come except the minister draw him, but except the Father draw him. Now there is such a thing as being drawn by the gospel, and drawn by the minister, without being drawn by God. Clearly, it is a divine drawing that is meant, a drawing by the Most High God—the First Person of the most glorious Trinity sending out the Third Person the Holy Spirit, to induce men to come to Christ.

Another person turns around and says with a sneer, “Then do you think that Christ drags men to Himself, seeing that they are unwilling?” I remember meeting once with a man who said to me, “Sir, you preach that Christ takes people by the hair of their heads and drags them to Himself.” I asked him whether he could refer to the date of the sermon wherein I preached that extra-ordinary doctrine, for if he could, I should be very much obliged. However, he could not. But said I, while Christ does not drag people to Himself by the hair of their heads, I believe that He draws them by the heart quite as powerfully as your caricature would suggest.

Mark that in the Father’s drawing there is no compulsion whatever; Christ never compelled any man to come to Him against his will. If a man be unwilling to be saved, Christ does not save him against his will. How, then, does the Holy Spirit draw him?

¹ **Arminian** – one who follows Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), Dutch theologian. He rejected the Reformers’ understanding of God’s sovereignty, teaching instead that God’s salvation was based on His foreknowledge of a sinner’s accepting or rejecting Christ by his own free will.

Why, *by making him willing*. It is true He does not use “moral suasion”; He knows a nearer method of reaching the heart. He goes to the secret fountain of the heart, and He knows how, by some mysterious operation, to turn the will in an opposite direction, so that, as Ralph Erskine (1685-1752) paradoxically puts it, the man is saved “with full consent against his will”; that is, against his old will he is saved.

But he is saved with full consent, for he is made willing in the day of God’s power. Do not imagine that any man will go to heaven kicking and struggling all the way against the Hand that draws him. Do not conceive that any man will be plunged in the bath of a Saviour’s blood while he is striving to run away from the Saviour. Oh, no! It is quite true that first of all man is unwilling to be saved. When the Holy Spirit hath put His influence into the heart, the test is fulfilled: “Draw me and I will run after thee” (Song 1:4). We follow on while He draws us, glad to obey the Voice which once we had despised.

But the gist of the matter lies in the turning of the will. How that is done no flesh knoweth; it is one of those mysteries that is clearly perceived as a fact, but the cause of which no tongue can tell, and no heart can guess. The apparent way, however, in which the Holy Spirit operates, we can tell you. The first thing the Holy Spirit does when He comes into a man’s heart is this: He finds him with a very good opinion of himself.

“Why,” says the man, “I don’t want to come to Christ. I have as good a righteousness as anybody can desire. I feel I can walk into heaven on my own rights.” The Holy Spirit lays bare his heart, lets him see the loathsome cancer that is there eating away his life, uncovers to him all the blackness and defilement of that sink of hell, the human heart, and then the man stands aghast. “I never thought I was like this. Oh! Those sins I thought were little, have swelled out to an immense stature. What I thought was a molehill has grown into a mountain; it was but the hyssop on the wall before, but now it has become a cedar of Lebanon. Oh,” saith the man within himself, “I will try and reform; I will do good deeds enough to wash these black deeds out.”

Then comes the Holy Spirit and shows him that he cannot do this, takes away all his fancied power and strength, so that the man falls down on his knees in agony, and cries, “Oh! Once I thought I could save myself by my good works, but now I find that,

*‘Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no respite know,
All for sin could not atone,
Thou must save and Thou alone.’ ”*

Then the heart sinks, and the man is ready to despair. “And,” saith he, “I never can be saved. Nothing can save me.” Then comes the Holy Spirit and shows the sinner the cross of Christ, gives him eyes anointed with heavenly eye-salve, and says, “Look to yonder cross; that Man died to save sinners. You feel that you are a sinner; He died to save you.” And He enables the heart to believe, and to come to Christ. And when it comes to Christ, by this sweet drawing of the Spirit, it finds “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, which keeps his heart and mind through Christ Jesus” (Phi 4:7).

Now you will plainly perceive that all this may be done without any compulsion. Man is as much drawn willingly as if he were not drawn at all. And he comes to Christ with full consent, with as full a consent as if no secret influence had ever been exercised in his heart. But that influence must be exercised, or else there never has been and there never will be, any man who either can or will come to the Lord Jesus Christ.

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