

HEAVENLY ATTRACTION AND SPIRITUAL OBEDIENCE

Preached on Thursday Evening, July 7th, 1842, at Zoar Chapel, Great Alie Street, London

"Draw me; we will run after Thee." Sol. Song 1:4

A pestilent doctrine has lately been imported into this country from Germany, that this blessed book—the Song of Solomon—is not of divine inspiration, and that it ought therefore to be expunged from the canonical Scriptures. Now this is the downward progress of error. Men begin first with denying the inward revelation of the Person, work, blood, and love of Christ by the Holy Ghost in the hearts of the elect; and then they proceed to deny the outward revelation of the mind of Christ by the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures of truth; and, by and by, unless the Lord prevent, they will land in sheer infidelity. Such has been the case in Germany, with the churches founded by Luther; and such it is to be feared will be the case in the great mass of the Dissenting churches among us, if we may judge from present appearances. It is the want of divine teaching in the soul, and of an experience corresponding with that described in the Song of Solomon, that leads men to reject the inspiration and divine authority of this blessed book. Having seen no glory of Christ in their own souls, having felt no heavenly beams of His love and grace in their own hearts, having experienced no castings down nor liftings up, similar to those described in the Song of Solomon, their carnal minds see nothing in these beautiful images of a deeply spiritual and experimental nature; and therefore, not being able from a sweet experience to enter into those heavenly mysteries of divine love betwixt Christ and His Church that are set forth in this inspired Song, their polluted imagination turns into carnality all that the Holy Ghost has there revealed of a spiritual nature. "To the pure

all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled" (Tit. 1:15). And thus their unbelieving mind and defiled conscience have combined to reject as uninspired the sweetest expression of the loves of Christ and His Bride that is to be found in the Scriptures.

We must leave these men, however, to the deceits and subtle delusions of the father of lies, from whom this lie came. Deceived by him, on they will go in their downward progress. And it will be our mercy if we can lift up our hearts to the Lord, and thank Him for having taught us otherwise.

Now I think if we look at the Song of Solomon we shall see in it different states and stages of divine experience. I believe we should be wrong if we considered that the Bride—who speaks in my text—was in one uniform state or stage of experience all through the book. But she begins at a certain spot, to which I shall presently call your attention; and the Lord leads her on step by step, fulfilling in her that sweet word, that "the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

What, then, is the spiritual stage in which the church is found in the opening of this book? I will endeavour to explain it as far as I see, or have any experience of it.

The Bride, judging from her words to the Lord in the first verse of this book, had felt a measure of His love shed abroad in her heart. Now this pre-supposes that she had been taught by the blessed Spirit her deep need of Jesus; it pre-supposes that she was deeply acquainted with the guilt of sin, and the corruption of her depraved nature. Nor is this merely pre-supposed, or faintly implied; it is *expressed* in actual words; for she says, "Look not upon me, because I am

black." She here expresses what were the feelings of her heart—that she was altogether black; not partly fair and partly dark, but black altogether. Women in the East never go abroad without a veil, which preserves their complexion; but she had been thrust out, stripped of this protection, as she speaks afterwards: "The keepers of the walls took away my veil from me." And being thrust out into the wilderness, and exposed to the burning sun of temptation, she became "black as the tents of Kedar," which being made of black goat's hair, as well as continually exposed to heat and dust, had not a white thread in them. Being thus blackened, and filled with self-loathing, she says to the daughters of Jerusalem, "Look not upon me, because I am black." And yet, black though she was, she had received into her heart such a measure of the blood and righteousness of her dear Lord, and she had experienced such a sense of His love "shed abroad in her heart by the Holy Ghost," that she could say "she was comely;" and vents the language of her soul towards her Beloved in that abrupt but impassioned language, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for Thy love is better than wine." Now had she never felt any taste of Christ's love, she never would have said, "Thy love is better than wine;" and had she never known any sweet manifestation of it, she never would have used the language, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth." The kiss is the tenderest expression of love; and thus her words imply not only that she knew there was love in the bosom of her Redeemer, but that there had been some manifestation, some expression of that love, which she longed again to experience.

"Because of the savour of Thy good ointments, Thy name is as ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love Thee." Connected, then, with this love that she had to the Redeemer, and with this experience of its sweetness, as

"shed abroad in her heart by the Holy Ghost," there was an inward sense of the savour of His name. He had drawn near to her holy garments. Their love was a consecrated one; and to her of a sanctifying nature. Though expressed in terms of creature love, it was altogether spiritual and heavenly. The very words of Christ to her, "My *sister*, my spouse" (4:10), show the purity of their affection. And, therefore, having felt the sanctifying, consecrating nature of this love, she speaks of "the savour of His good ointments;" and that "His name was to her as ointment poured forth."

And this brings us to the text—"Draw me; we will run after thee." We have in these words, *first*, a prayer—"Draw me," and *then* we have what she knew in her soul would be the consequence, if that prayer were heard and answered—"We will run after Thee."

I. In the short and simple prayer, "*Draw me*," we shall find, if the Lord shall be pleased to lead us into its contents, much experimental truth contained.

I. We find, *first*, that in it is couched a *deep sense of spiritual necessity*. She would never have asked the Lord to "draw her," unless there had been wrought in her soul a feeling of deep necessity, penniless poverty, thorough bankruptcy, and entire insolvency. But what had reduced her to this penniless condition? Why, guilt laid upon her conscience. And I would ask what else but guilt, pressing upon the conscience, can ever make a man really desire the blood of sprinkling? It seems absurd to me, that a man who has never been cut up by convictions of sin and guilt should want a Saviour. It seems absurd that any should want the application of the atoning blood of Jesus, but he that carries about with him a guilty conscience; or that he should desire to have a sweet revelation of His glorious righteousness—that comely robe—

unless he shivers and shrinks from a sense of his nakedness before the heart-searching presence of Him whose "eyes behold, and whose eyelids try the children of men." Nor can I comprehend how anyone can want to have anything to do with Jesus, unless there has been raised up in his soul, by the blessed Spirit, such a sight and sense of his own baseness, blackness, and vileness, as shall make such a Saviour as is revealed in the Scriptures, a suitable Saviour to him.

2. But again; the word, "*draw me,*" pre-supposes *also a deep sense of helplessness*. Unless the Church, using this expression, was absolutely helpless, as well as absolutely necessitous—unless she were (as the Scripture speaks), "without strength" (Rom. 5:6), she could not call upon her Lord to "draw her;" for there would have been in her some strength to move towards Him, independent of His powerful attraction. Had she a grain of strength left, she need not have called upon the Lord to draw her. Were there in her any power to move a step forward, distinct from the attraction of His Spirit within, it would have been a superfluous word for her to make use of.

The very expression, then, that proceeds from her lips, "Draw me," necessarily implies a sense of her own utter helplessness to move a single step unless she felt the powerful cords of His love and grace in her heart. Now this is a feeling common to all the family of God; they know experimentally, and they know painfully, what it is to be without help and without strength. But why do *they* know it? and why are all others ignorant of the secret? Because the quickened family of God know, each according to his measure, what divine power is; they have at times felt what it is to be "holpen with a little help," and to receive the strength of God into their souls, according to those words,

"In the day when I cried, Thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul" (Ps. 138:3). And having once tasted this strength, all short of this strength is weakness. The Lord says, "No man, having drunk old wine, straitway desireth new; for he saith, The old is better." But what showed this man the difference betwixt old wine and new? It was having drunk it. So it is with respect to the secret of divine strength and natural strength. What shows a man the difference betwixt the two? It is having tasted a measure of divine strength put forth in his soul. And thus the regenerated family of God never can be cheated with that Arminian delusion of creature strength, because the Lord has let down into their hearts such a measure of spiritual life and heavenly light, of sovereign grace and supernatural strength, that, having tasted this gospel wine, they know it from all other; and having once felt it, having been thus initiated into "the secret of the Lord, which is with them that fear Him," when they are destitute of this strength, they feel themselves utterly helpless, utterly weak, and utterly impotent. A man may indeed stand very high in a profession of religion, but if he has not, like Samson, had his locks cut, if he has not been impoverished in his soul, and painfully felt his utter weakness and helplessness, he is not really in the secret as to the difference between natural strength and supernatural. Samson, when his locks were cut, thought he would go out as before, and "he wist not that the Lord was departed from him;" but directly the Philistines came upon him, he learned in a moment that his strength was gone. Thus it is sometimes with God's children; their spiritual locks have been secretly cut, and they perhaps are at the same time unaware that their strength has departed from them; but let some temptation come, let some powerful enemy fall upon them, and they begin to find, with Samson, that all their strength is gone, and dried up as a potsherd. In this deep state of helplessness was the Bride, when she

poured forth this impassioned prayer in the ears of her heavenly Lover, "Draw me."

3. But again; there was something in her conscience more than guilt, and there was something in her soul more than weakness; she had "tasted that the Lord was gracious:" she had received a measure of divine love into her heart. This it was which, mysteriously blending with guilt and helplessness, set her soul on fire; this it was which enkindled her affections, and drew forth the longing desires of her heart. Hart speaks of some:

"Not drawn by love, nor driv'n by fear;"

but the Bride had not merely that which *drove* her (such as guilt and necessity), but she had also that which *drew* her, "the cords of love and the bands of a man;" the puttings forth of the Redeemer's grace in her soul, which He Himself speaks of as "putting in His hand by the hole of the door." Now it is perfectly true that we are *driven* before we are *drawn*, and this is symbolised in Scripture very sweetly by the cities of refuge. The man-slayer was not *drawn* to those cities of refuge by any affection which he had towards them, but he was *driven* to them by the weight of guilt—by being a man of blood. And so the elect of God, under the first teachings of the Spirit, are driven through fear, through guilt, through necessity, to seek a refuge. But when once they have sheltered their souls in the Rock of Ages, and the Lord has received them into His loving arms, and given them some taste that He is gracious, then there is the putting forth of another principle, the working of another movement in their hearts, which is sweetly set forth in this petition of the Bride, "Draw me; we will run after Thee."

His supernatural beauty (for "He is fairer than the children of

men") had smitten her with love; and longing to get near, but crippled and paralysed with guilt and helplessness, all she could say was, "Draw me."

So that if we look at her in her state and stage of experience as here set forth, we shall find these two things working in her soul; two things different in kind, and yet both tending to the same spot. First, a sense of her necessity, her guilt, her helplessness, so that she could not do, could not live without a Saviour; and secondly, the affections of her heart were moved towards Him; so that in her were blended the being driven by necessity and the being drawn by love.

But what should raise up in her soul this earnest and impassioned cry, "Draw me?" Must she not have seen something in the Lord which enkindled her affections? Must she not have had a sight of some supernatural beauty, that drew forth these warm desires after Him? Yea, surely. The Lord had shown her His lovely Person; and a sight of that glorious Person had won all her heart.

But what is this glorious Person? and what is there in this glorious Person that it should so draw forth the affections of the renewed and regenerated soul? This glorious Person is the incarnate God, the only begotten Son of the Father manifest in the flesh, Immanuel, God with us. And it is in the mysterious and indissoluble union of these two natures in one Person that His supernatural beauty consists.

The Deity of the Son of God shines all through the sacred page. It is the grand cardinal point on which all the doctrines of grace turn: and he that is unsound there, is unsound everywhere. The Godhead of Christ does not rest upon a few texts of Scripture, but it shines all through the Scripture; it is the light of the Scripture, and it is the life of the Scripture.

Take away the Deity of Jesus out of the Scripture, and you would do the same thing spiritually as though you blotted the sun out of the sky naturally; the sacred page would be one black darkness. But the Person of Jesus is not Deity only. No man can see God and live; we could not bear to look upon pure Deity. And therefore the Son of God has taken into union with Himself our nature; He has "taken upon Him the seed of Abraham," that "holy thing" which was begotten by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and there united to the second Person of the glorious Trinity, that Godhead and manhood might form one glorious Person, Immanuel, God with us. Now to the eye of faith there is the greatest beauty and glory in Christ's humanity. The enlightened soul views Deity shining through the manhood; and when it sees Jesus "going about doing good," when it hears the words that dropped from His gracious lips, when it views Him by the eye of faith, bleeding, suffering, agonising, and dying, it sees the Godhead in all these acts, upholding and shining through the manhood. And it is this union of the two natures in one glorious Person, that fills the heart that receives it in the faith of it and in the love of it with a measure of pure affection.

Here, then, the Church has a view of the glorious Person of Jesus; and she falls in love with Him. There is that in supernatural beauty which kindles spiritual affection, as there is that in natural beauty which kindles natural affection. When the quickened soul sees supernatural beauty, it immediately falls in love with it. The spiritual affections centre in spiritual beauty. And thus, when the redeemed and regenerated soul sees the glorious Person of Christ, God-man, Immanuel, God with us, and has a taste and sense of His love, the Blessed Spirit thereby kindles in it spiritual affection, and attracts it with these "cords of love and bands of a man."

But was the Church at this moment in the sweet enjoyment of it? When she poured forth this passionate cry, was she being embraced in the arms of love? No, surely; for had she been there she would not have been saying, "Draw me." She was at a distance; she was far off, and could not get nigh. She was sitting in the dark, and not walking in the light. She was mourning in solitary places, and not sitting with her Lord in heavenly places. But yet in the midst of all her darkness and desolation there was the secret kindling of spiritual affection in her heart, which vented itself in that cry, "Draw me." The Blessed Spirit was secretly operating in her heart, and under His divine anointings there was a going forth of her spirit after the Redeemer. Had He not kindled the desire, nor prompted the speech, she could never have uttered the words, "Draw me." We know, from painful experience, that there are times when we dare not ask Christ to draw us, for were our prayer answered (and the living soul shrinks from the hypocrisy of putting up a prayer which it does not wish to be answered) it would draw us away from things that our carnal mind loves better. There are many of God's people, I believe, who are actually afraid of asking for great blessings, because they know that great blessings are attended with great trials, and their carnal minds are in that state of darkness, deadness, and rebellion, that they dare not put up the desire to be brought nearer to Jesus, because they feel there is no suitability betwixt them in their present state and Jesus, as their eyes see and consciences feel Him to be revealed in the Word. "But," say you, "is it possible for a child of God ever to be in that state, that he does not want Christ to draw him?" Where was the Church as described in Hosea 2:5, when she said, "I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink?" She at that time had known the Lord, and had been espoused to Him, for she says lower down, "I will go and return *to my first Husband*, for then was it better with

me than now" (v. 7). So far from wanting to be drawn to the Lord, she was running away from Him after her lovers, and He had "to hedge up her way with thorns, and make a wall, that she should not find her paths." And is not this often our case? There is something in Jesus so holy, and there is in us that which is so unholy, there is something in the Lord so spiritual, and in us so carnal, that so far from desiring to be brought nigh, because in being brought nigh we must be cut off from everything that our idolatrous hearts are set upon, we would rather the Lord would leave us to ourselves than draw us to Himself, since by so doing He would draw us out of that which our flesh so dearly loves. Now suppose a man is so situated that if he cleave close to the Lord he must make great sacrifices; say, for instance, that he is in trade, and if he is to follow very close after the Lord, and have a very tender conscience, and walk as the Lord would have him walk, it would be at a great temporal loss; why, there are times and seasons in that man's experience, though he is a child of God, when he dare not ask the Lord to draw him, because he fears, if the Lord were to do this, it would draw him out of a good business into the workhouse. And so a child of God may sometimes be so entangled in some idolatrous affection, so overtaken with a besetting sin, or so fettered and bound with some darling lust that he dare not ask the Lord to draw him, because he knows that in being brought near to His sacred feet he must be brought out of that which his carnal mind cleaves to.

But the Church, at the time that she was now speaking, was not in that state. The Lord had shed abroad a sacred power over her; He had made her willing to take up the cross, and "follow Him in the regeneration;" He had given her the will, if it were so needful, to cut off a right hand, or to pluck out a right eye; and He so attracted the eyes of her soul to Himself, that He drew her away from her lovers. She was not

now in that backsliding state described, Jer. 2:25, "I have loved strangers, and after them will I go;" but the Lord had attracted and drawn forth all her affections to Himself, so that by the sweet operations of His grace in her soul, and by the blessed influences of His divine love shed abroad in her heart, she was willing to make any sacrifice, so that she might be permitted to come near unto Him, that He might "kiss her with the kisses of His mouth." These two things are very compatible in the same individual. For the spiritual man is usually very much like the scales of a balance, sometimes the carnal mind sadly preponderating, and sometimes the spiritual mind blessedly preponderating; sometimes having an aversion to everything that is holy and spiritual, and sometimes feeling vital godliness to be the very element of his soul.

The Church, then, in her present state and stage of experience, has turned her back upon her lovers; has forsaken the "broken cisterns that can hold no water," and is so overshadowed with divine operations, and so attracted by the Lord's grace and love in her soul, that she says, "Draw me." As though all her heart was concentrated in those words, as though her very soul was poured forth in them, as though they contained all the workings of her mind, and were the summing up of all her spiritual feelings; as though she would say—"All my desire is summed up in this, all my wishes centre in this one point—'draw me;' I cannot live without Thee, and yet I cannot come nigh Thee; 'Thy love is better than wine,' and yet that love I cannot taste unless Thou art pleased to shed it abroad; I am a poor, vacillating, backsliding, inconsistent, idolatrous wretch, that cannot but sin against Thee, and shall ever sin against Thee, unless Thou art pleased to 'draw me' near to Thy sacred Person, that in coming near to Thee Thy name may be 'as ointment poured forth,' and thus that sweet savour may banish

everything which is not consistent with Thy love." Though perhaps not very often, yet there are times and seasons when the child of God is here. Such or similar feelings come upon him at times when he is lying upon his bed; they steal over him at times when he is sitting in his solitary room, or visit him when he is engaged in his daily business; aye, it may be when he is passing along the crowded streets of this metropolis. "Draw me," in the words themselves, or in their substance and meaning, is sighed forth, as though he would complainingly tell the Lord that he was unable to get near, and yet unable to stay away; unable to realise that which his soul desired, and yet unable to live happily and contentedly without it.

II. "*We will run after Thee.*" That is what the Bride well knew would be the sure consequence of her prayer being heard and answered.

There is no free will here; nothing of the boasted free agency of man—"I will do this, and I will do that." But it is—"Draw me" *first*, put forth Thy divine hand, shed abroad Thy blessed operations, breathe Thy heavenly power into my soul, and *then* "we will run after Thee." Now this is just the state in which the child of God is from time to time. He is not the self-righteous Arminian, who can read, hear and pray, believe, hope and love, as when and how he will: nor is he the presumptuous Antinomian, who, resting in the doctrine of creature helplessness, never wishes to have any obedience wrought in him, but is satisfied with doing nothing whereby God may be glorified, or His people benefited. But he is in this state—unable to do anything, and yet willing to do everything if the Lord would but enable him: unable to move a single step in the way, and yet so dissatisfied with his own slothfulness and inability, that he wishes nothing so much as that the Lord would "work in him to will and to do of His good

pleasure," and make him all that He would have him to be. "*We will run after Thee.*" What does this imply? Why, it implies that there is a "*following on* to know the Lord." The Church does not say, "Draw me, we will *come to Thee,*" but "Draw me, we will *run after Thee.*" And this rather seems to point to an experience that I dare say some of you are acquainted with. Which is this—that when the Lord is pleased to draw the soul by some sweet attraction, He often (so to speak) retires and recedes out of sight, that He may lead us further on, and draw us more away from sense, sight, and reason, and more out of ourselves. We find this set forth in the third chapter, first and second verses, where the Church says—"By night on my bed I sought Him whom my soul loveth; I sought Him, but I found Him not. I will rise now and go about the city, in the streets and in the broadways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth; *I sought Him, but I found Him not.*" Here is the Bride seeking Jesus, and finding Him not; He receding out of sight, retiring (so to speak) away from her anxious pursuit. Now this is what many of the children of God know in soul experience, that the Lord seems to recede from them; and the nearer they try to get to Him, the farther they find themselves from Him, and the more unable they seem to find "Him whom their soul loveth." The Bride then, being conscious of this, says, "*We will run after Thee;*" however long be the way, however dangerous be the road, whatever stumbling-blocks lie in the path, whatever difficulties, anxieties, and perplexities may intervene between me and Thee, only "draw me," only put forth Thy mighty power in bringing me nearer to Thyself with the cords of love, and "*we will run after Thee;*" the way will not be too long, and the path will not be too narrow; with the blessed putting forth of Thy power in the soul, "*we will run after Thee,*" though it be to the very ends of the earth.

But the soul, in thus running after Jesus, has some

anxiously-desired objects to attain. What are these objects?

1. Why, when she is guilty, and sin lies as a heavy burden upon her conscience, she runs after Him that *she may obtain a sight of that blood of sprinkling* "which speaketh better things than that of Abel." Some people think that if they once have received pardon, they need have no renewal of it as long as they live. Hart was not of that opinion when he wrote,

"Begging mercy every hour."

He wanted pardon to be continually applied to his soul; as fresh guilt arose, he wanted fresh mercy to be manifested. And I believe such is the experience of every soul that knows anything of the Lord. It cannot be satisfied with having received mercy once; it must have mercy again and again; and the more mercy it tastes, the more it will be seeking fresh and fresh manifestations of it.

2. But to obtain a sense of mercy was not the only object that the Bride sought to obtain in running this heavenly race. She sought also to "*attain to righteousness*" (Rom. 9:30). She was "black," and therefore needed that "righteousness of God, which is unto all and upon all them that believe;" and she knew that she must run after Jesus, and get near to Him, that she might be clothed with this blessed garment of imputed righteousness.

3. She wanted also *strength*. She had no strength to resist sin, no strength to mortify the members which are upon the earth, and "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts;" she wanted power to be delivered from the spirit of the world, to put off the old man and to put on the new, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit; and therefore she would "run after Him," that she might receive strength out of His

fulness.

4. But she would "run after Him," not merely to receive pardon, righteousness, and strength, but above all that she might be favoured with *some sweet visitations of His gracious presence*. For that is what the Lord's people chiefly want to feel. If they could have pardon and righteousness and strength without Christ's presence, it would not be true pardon, true righteousness, nor true strength. It is the manifestation of these things as accompanied by the presence of Christ, it is the receiving of them from His own hands, it is the hearing of them from His own gracious lips, it is the sweet enjoyment of them by His own positive and inward testimony, that makes pardon to be pardon, righteousness to be righteousness, and strength to be strength. They are otherwise but so many doctrines that stand in the letter of the word, but are not blessed realities received into the heart and conscience from the lips and mouth of Jesus; and therefore she would "run after Him," that she might taste His presence, as the grand crowning blessing, and enjoy the Giver as well as His gifts.

5. And this leads us to observe that she would also "run after Him" that *she might enjoy communion with Him*. His gifts, His graces, even His very presence would not satisfy her, unless there were something mutual, some heavenly fellowship and divine intercourse, some exchange of loves. Love is not satisfied with mere presence. Some intercommunion is needed, some exchange of the pure affections of the heart, some melting into and union with the same spirit. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." "And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3)

6. And she besought Him to "draw her" that she might also

"run after Him" *in a way of practical obedience*. Her desire was to fulfil His precepts, and to tread in His footsteps; that His holy image might be stamped upon her, and that she might walk in conformity to the example which He has left that we should follow His steps. But she had no power to obey; she could not perform one precept, she could not take up one cross, she could not lift her soul up out of that state of helplessness in which she was now lying, nor could she run a single step forward in the path of simple and spiritual obedience, unless He was pleased to "draw her" that she might "run after Him," and so walk in the strait and narrow path that He walked in before her. To obey in the letter is easy, but obedience in the letter is like everything else in the letter—it is "of the earth, earthy;" it is sensual and natural; it cannot therefore profit the soul. But what the soul that is really taught of God desires, is to walk in the path of experimental obedience, that its motives may be spiritual and its practice spiritual; its words spiritual and its works spiritual; and that the mind and will of God may be so revealed in the soul that its way and walk may be experimental and spiritual from first to last. It may satisfy the blind Pharisee to tread a mill-horse round of legal duties; it may content the dead Calvinist to walk a similar round of mere doctrines; but the living soul must have doctrine, promise, precept—in a word, everything that it calls or counts *religion*, to be spiritual and experimental from first to last. Nor can such a one realise one doctrine which is not brought by the blessed Spirit into his heart; nor can he enjoy one promise which is not made sweet to his soul by an internal application of it by the Spirit; nor can he take a single step in the path of practical, spiritual obedience, unless the Spirit of God "work in him both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

There was, then, raised up in the heart of the Bride this

simple, this single, this sincere desire to follow Jesus "whithersoever He goeth;" and that is the mark of a true follower of the Lamb. Through the flood, through the fire, through the wilderness, through the darkness, through temptation, through tribulation, through conflict, through exercises—whithersoever the Lamb leads, His people follow. He is their Head, He is their Guide, He is their Lord, He is their Husband, He is their King; and Him they follow, Him they run after, and in His footsteps they desire to walk. Thus the Bride, under the blessed operations of the Holy Ghost, says, "Draw me, *we will run after Thee.*"

Had she not been under the blessed operations of the Spirit, this would have been in her the language of presumption. Had she said boldly that she *would* "run after Him," had she not preceded that by the sweet supplication—"Draw me," it would have been in her but the expression of vain confidence. It would have resembled his speech, who said to Jesus, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest," but whose fleshly zeal the Lord soon suppressed, when He told him that "foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head" (Lu. 9:57, 58). But her whole soul being on fire, her affections drawn forth, and her heart sweetly touched by the Spirit of God, she was able to run in the path which He should point out, however distressing or however dark that path might be to nature, sense, reason, flesh and blood.

This, then, implies a willingness to make sacrifices; for he that will follow Jesus must take up his cross and deny himself, or he cannot be His disciple (Lu. 14:27). It implies a resolution to follow the Lord, whatsoever come to pass; it carries with it the solemn determination of the soul, when under these sweet operations, to do the Lord's bidding, and, in whatever path He may precede, in that implicitly and

submissively to follow. Such a resolution, then, is not a thing that a man may take up and lay down just as he pleases; it is not a mere doctrine in God's Word, which one may see there, and, as such, may approve of as true. But it is having a certain experience produced in the heart; it is being brought by the Holy Ghost Himself into a certain state and stage of the divine life; and it is having these things wrought with that efficacious power in the soul, of which we read (Ps. 110:3), "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power."

This, as it appears to me, was the state and stage of the Bride in soul experience, when she poured forth these words so sweetly expressive of the warm desires of her heart.

How many of us can take these words now into our lips, or have ever been able at any one time of our life to use such an expression? Which of us has ever been so blessedly lifted up into the knowledge of Christ and of His glorious Person, and has had such a sight of Him by living faith, that these words would sum up in them the whole desire of the heart, "Draw me?"—away from relations, away from friends, away from what flesh loves and clings to most closely, away from everything that my carnal heart is bound up in and fettered down by. Which of us has ever been made willing to give up and forsake all, and follow Jesus simply and singly in the path that He shall point out?—and all from spiritual love to His Person, all from a principle of pure affection; not merely from a desire to get to heaven at the last, not influenced by a self-righteous principle, as if by these things we shall merit salvation, but from a simple, sincere, single breathing forth of love and affection to Jesus, as being altogether suitable, and "altogether lovely."

Surely, then, there must have been some love sips before the soul could really say, "Draw me?" There must have been

some sight and sense of the preciousness and loveliness of Jesus, before ever it could cry, "Draw me," from the depth of a sincere heart. For the sincere soul is afraid to utter a petition it does not feel; it fears to approach the holy Jehovah, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and insult Him with mock petitions and words that it does not feel. He, therefore, that can enter into the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of this—"Draw me," must have had something let down into his soul from Jesus previously, which has kindled affection, and drawn forth the sincere and fervent spiritual desires of the heart. When you lie, perhaps, upon your bed, and in an agony of intercession are crying, "Draw me," there must be that in your soul which longs after a manifestation of the love and presence of Christ. When, as you are engaged in your various occupations, there is a secret putting up of a cry in your souls, "Draw me," there must be in you some new principle, there must exist a spiritual nature within, which can really desire such a thing as to be drawn. It is not in some of you the mere uttering of words without any feeling, but it is the solemn intercourse of a living soul with a heart-searching God; it is some solemn transaction between God and conscience, when no eye is present to see, nor ear open to hear. And I believe that no man can really cry from the very depth of his soul, "Draw me," and pour this forth time after time in fervent intercession to the Lord, who has not had a glimpse by faith of the glorious Person of Christ—who has not realised some measure of Jesus' grace, love, and blood. I grant it may have been a small measure, and that dim and transient; but there must have been some discovery of Jesus, as suited to his helpless and hopeless condition. And it is the mysterious working together of his misery and Jesus' mercy, of his weakness and Jesus' strength, of his guilt and Jesus' blood, of his death and darkness and Jesus' life and light, of his baseness and blackness and Jesus' everlasting

righteousness—it is a living sight and sense of these two opposites, and a meeting together of them in the same bosom, that makes him cry, "Draw me."

The words then imply a felt and spiritual knowledge that there is everything in the creature which is vile and filthy, and everything in the Saviour which is beautiful and lovely; that everything in man is weakness and helplessness, and everything in the Lord is suitable to such an emptied, exercised, and poverty-stricken soul. No Arminian and no Antinomian could use these words with sincerity; for the Arminian could not say, "Draw me," when he could run of himself; and the Antinomian could not say, "We will run after Thee," when he is not willing to move a single step forward in practical obedience. None but a living soul can really use both clauses in sincerity and godly simplicity. For such only is so sensible of his own helplessness as to feel his need to be drawn, such only has had a sight of Jesus' beauty, which kindles the desire to be drawn, such only is willing to walk in the path of self-denying obedience, and "mortify the deeds of the body."

If ever then the Lord has raised up this cry in our hearts, there must be divine life there; there must be spiritual feeling, there must be faith, there must be hope, there must be love, there must be the Holy Ghost there. I do not say—if ever we have used the words; but I say—if ever we have had the feelings that I have been describing. And if you have these feelings, and are able in secret to vent them before the Lord, I want to know (and I appeal to the conscience of those who are exercised with distressing doubts and fears whether the Lord has ever been gracious to them), where did these things come from? Did they come from the devil? Would he put it in the heart to cry, "Draw me?" Did they come from the flesh? Has the flesh any love to God? Is not "the carnal mind

enmity against God?" Then whence did it come? Why, from "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." They came from Him as a good and perfect gift, as a blessed communication of divine life, as a pledge of eternal happiness, as a drop from that blessed fountain at which the redeemed will through all eternity slake their happy souls.

Have you then—can you, join with the Bride, and say, "Draw me? at whatever risk, whatever sacrifice; I cannot live without Thee, I cannot die without Thee; whatever it costs, 'draw me,' that I may 'run after Thee,' and receive Thee into my heart as my Lord and my God." If ever that desire has been kindled, and that prayer raised up in your soul, "Draw me, we will run after Thee," it must have been the work of the Holy Ghost in your hearts, to raise up those feelings, and to give you that living faith in the Son of God. And "he that believeth shall be saved." Whatever doubts, whatever fears, whatever temptations, whatever exercises beset the path, "he that believeth shall be saved." He that has had given him one grain of spiritual faith in Christ's glorious Person, who has had one sight of His atoning blood, one sip of divine love shed abroad in his heart, is sure to go to glory; he is saved with an everlasting salvation in his covenant Head. The Lord that has kindled these strong desires after Himself in his soul, will surely fulfil them. As we find He did in the case of the Bride! He said to her after a little time, "Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land" (2:11, 12).

Some of you perhaps may be surprised to see me here this evening. As I had to pass through Town, I felt an inclination to see my friends at Zoar, and speak to them, though it were

but once, in the name of the Lord. I assure you, my friends, that it has been a disappointment to me that I am not able to come among you as usual this year; and nothing but the state of my health would have prevented me. Could I have come in a quiet way, without that anxiety, that excitement, that labour, which always accompanies my preaching here, I would have come amongst you as heretofore; but my constitution is not able to stand the great mental and bodily exertion that always falls upon me in coming to preach in London; and for that reason, and for no other, I have been obliged for this year to decline my annual visit. But I would not pass through Town without standing up here this evening to show that I bear you in my heart, and that I would willingly, had circumstances permitted, come as usual, and spoken to you in the name of the Lord.