

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical And Southern Studies

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1 O MY God, what must I do?
Thou alone the way canst show;
Thou canst save me in this hour,
I have neither will nor power:
God if over all thou art,
Greater than my sinful heart,
All thy power on me be shown,
Take away the heart of stone.

2 Take away my darling sin;
Make me willing to be clean;
Make me willing to receive
All thy goodness waits to give:
Force me, Lord, with all to part,
Tear these idols from my heart;
Now thy love almighty show,
Make even me a creature new.

3 Jesus, mighty to renew,
Work in me to will and do;
Turn my nature's rapid tide,
Stem the torrent of my pride,
Stop the whirlwind of my will,
Speak, and bid the sun stand still;
Now thy love almighty show,
Make even me a creature new.

4 Arm of God, thy strength put on,
Bow the heavens, and come down;
All my unbelief o'erthrow,
Lay the aspiring mountain low;
Conquer thy worst foe in me,
Get thyself the victory;
Save the vilest of the race,
Force me to be saved by grace.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

WHO COMES TO CHRIST?

“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

These are the very words of Jesus that speak of the spiritual inability of fallen humanity. There is a need to understand the background of His words. These words cause a violent revulsion to the natural man. Christ Jesus who is the creator of life, the controller of life, and the sustainer of life is the Life. When Jesus said, “I am the bread of life,” He was saying “I (Myself) am the bread of life” (v. 35). To fallen, lost men He is only Joseph’s son. Although Jesus let it be known that He alone totally controlled the satisfaction of spiritual hunger as “the bread of life.”

Jesus said, though they see Me they still will not believe (v. 36). Then He said, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (v. 37). He reminded that He came down from heaven to do the Father’s will (v. 38). Jesus noted that the Father’s will was that all whom the Father gave Him not one would be lost; but He would raise them at the last day (v. 39). He noted that the will of His Father who sent Him was the cause of people believing on Him; and these would have everlasting life and would be raised up at the last day (v. 40).

This revelation of Jesus caused an eruption of murmuring, like a hive of bees that were stirred up (v. 41). These mutterers said He was merely Joseph’s son for we know both the mother and father. How can He say, “I came down from heaven” (v. 42)? They were essentially saying “We will not have this man! He is not our kind of Saviour!” Jesus had given a diagnostic earlier that fit them, “You will not or do not have the will to come to me, that you might have life.... But I know you that you have not the love of God in you” (5:40, 42). Jesus told them to stop their murmuring (6:43). Then Jesus declared to them that they were not in control of such eternal matters for they cannot dictate whether they will or will not believe! The issue is confined to man’s ability, or should we say disability—“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” (v. 44). Mankind has a spiritual inability because the gospel is too spiritual for the fleshly mind of man, too humbling for his pride, too repulsive for his rebellious will, too exalted for his impaired understanding, too holy for his earthly desires, too mysterious for his comprehension. Zacchaeus was drawn, but the rich young ruler went away sad and was not drawn.

The drawing of the Father is divine work. “As to the kind of drawing it is not violent, so as to compel men by external force, but still it is a powerful impulse of the Holy Spirit, which makes men willing, who formerly were unwilling and reluctant. Those are drawn whose

understandings God enlightened, and whose hearts He bends, and forms to the obedience of Christ” [John Calvin]. Philip Doddridge noted:

’Tis done, the great transaction’s done!—
I am the Lord’s and He is mine;
He drew me and I followed on;
Charmed to confess the voice divine.

Man by nature is in bondage to sin and he is spiritually dead (Eph. 2) which necessitates an act of God if he is ever to have spiritual life. God the Holy Spirit regenerates, God the Father draws based on the atonement of God the Son. Preachers of the gospel are unable to facilitate a transforming change in the hearts of those who hear them, but pray with Charles Wesley in his hymn that they be forced to be saved by grace. So, the text does not say, “No man can come unless the preacher draws him, but except the Father draw him.” “Coming to Christ, though described by some people as being the very easiest thing in all the world, is in our text declared to be a thing utterly and entirely impossible to any man, unless the Father shall draw him to Christ.... We doubt not that it will always be offensive to carnal nature, but, nevertheless, the offending of human nature is sometimes the first step towards bringing it to bow itself before God. And if this be the effect of a painful process, we can forget the pain and rejoice in the glorious consequences” [Spurgeon].

“It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father” (vv. 63-65).

C. H. Spurgeon quoted and explained, “‘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.’ You did not expect the Saviour to say just that, did you? He always speaks the truth, even though He has to lay the axe at the root of the tree of self-confidence. He does not seem to be encouraging His hearers, but rather to be repelling them. He was trying to show them the state in which they really were; they had not been drawn to Himself, they were alienated from Him; and they would continue to be at a distance from Him unless God should interpose, and draw them to Him.”