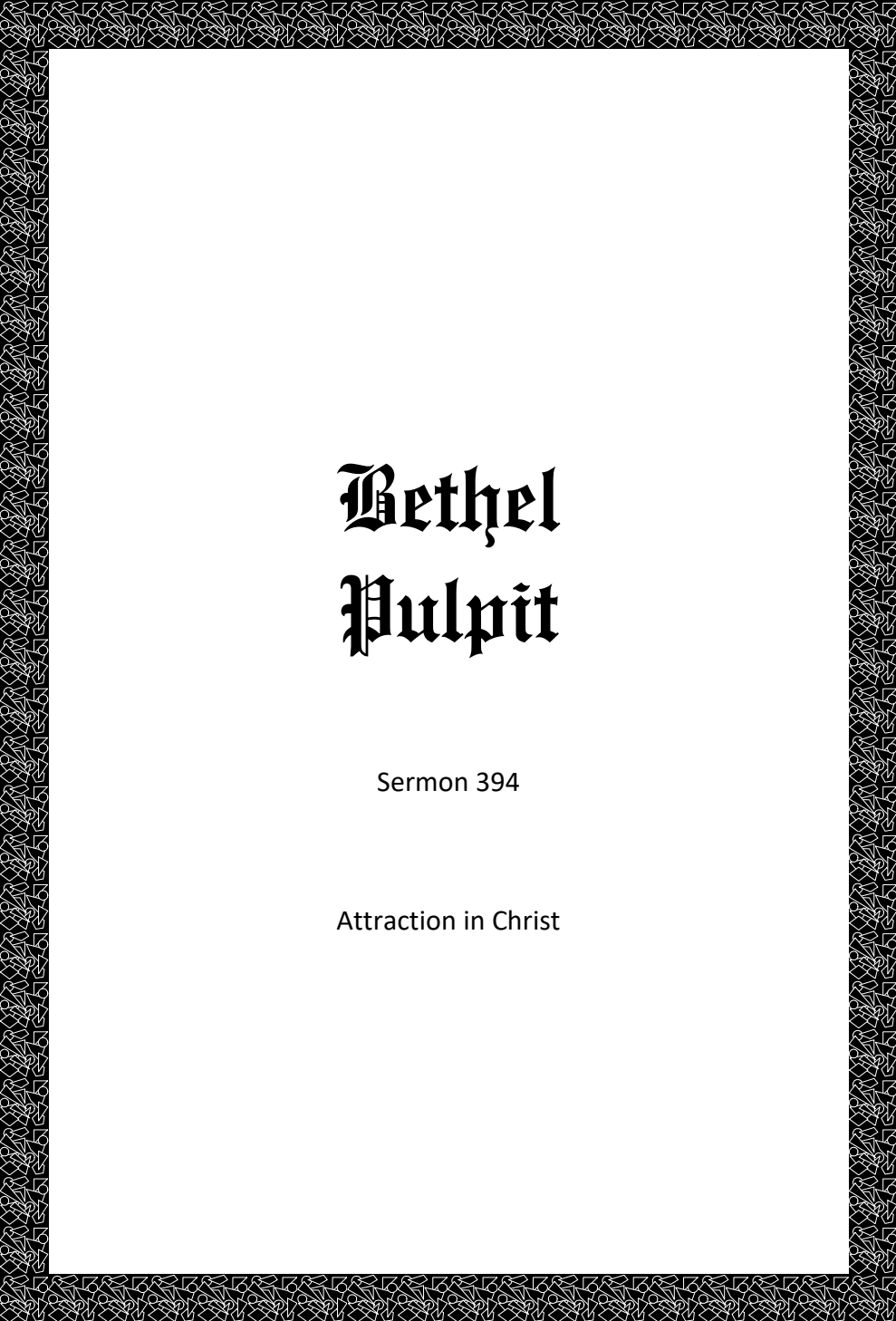




Bethel Pulpit

Sermon 394

Attraction in Christ

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day morning, 8th April, 2018**

Text: *"Draw me, we will run after Thee" (Song 1. 4).*

I wonder how many of you feel when the text is announced from Solomon's Song! I am sure that various people hear the text announced in various ways. Now it is quite a long time since last I spoke to you about Solomon's Song, so just a few introductory remarks.

It is a beautiful Book, and it is a Book for sinners. It speaks of the wonderful union between our Lord Jesus and His beloved church, between the heavenly Bridegroom and His beloved bride. I know that in these modern days, sceptics will smile at such an interpretation and say, Well, it is just a love song. If so, why is it included in God's holy, infallible Word? But the people of God down the ages have always believed this is the union between Christ and His church. Beloved friends, even before that, in the Old Testament, by the ancient Jews it was always interpreted as being the union, the loving union, between God and His Israel.

In my mind, there is one confirming word which puts everything clear, and that is the forty-fifth Psalm. If you read Psalm 45, you could think you were reading from the Song of Solomon. It is so similar. The thoughts are identical. But then when you turn to the New Testament, you have Psalm 45 quoted (Heb. 1. 8), and we are told clearly, definitely there that this is speaking of Christ.

So we come to this beautiful Book. I am sure many of you will say that there are so many things in it difficult to be understood. Well, there are. But let me put it like this. Sometimes perhaps you are on holiday. You visit a beautiful cathedral, or an ancient building, or a stately home, and what the guide is telling you, most of it you cannot understand, and a lot of the details you are not interested in, but when you come away, you have that sense of the beauty, the magnificence of the building. I wonder if some of you felt like that when we closed our reading this morning (Song chapters 1 and 2): the beauty, the magnificence of the building.

I have always felt – and this may surprise you – that the Song of Solomon is a Book for our young people as well as the older ones, our young ones who are seeking the Lord. Why? Because it speaks so much

of the beauty of the Lord Jesus, and the Lord Jesus as the one thing needful, and the Lord Jesus as satisfying our longings, and the Lord Jesus our desire. All the things a newly-born soul is longing for, seeking for, you find them all here – these longings, these desires for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that we might know Him, that He might come, that we might experience His love.

Now I realise in this beautiful Book there are some points of exceedingly high assurance, things like this – the full assurance of faith: “My Beloved is mine, and I am His.” Now perhaps some of you, when you are reading through, feel some of these things you do not really attain to. O but these prayers, these beautiful prayers of the Song of Solomon! If you have anything real in your heart, then the prayers of Solomon’s Song will touch you, and some of these prayers in Solomon’s Song, you will be praying.

We read this morning, “Tell me” – O tell me – “O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside?” What is it? She sees the Lord Jesus. He is the great and glorious Shepherd. He has a little flock. They are a blessed flock. They are the only blessed flock. But she longs to be one of them. She cannot bear to be left out. She wants to know where He can be found. She wants to go after Him and find Him.

You see these prayers, these longings. Another one: “Thou that dwellest in the gardens” – that is the Lord Jesus again, dwelling in the garden of His church – “the companions hearken to Thy voice: cause me to hear it.” She knows that God’s people hear the Saviour’s voice, but she wants to hear it herself. She cannot be satisfied with anything else. “Cause me to hear it.”

And then of course, this lovely little prayer that I have read to you this morning: “Draw me, we will run after Thee.” She wants to be drawn to the Saviour’s feet. Perhaps some of you know that little old hymn:

“Draw me nearer, nearer blessed Lord,
To the cross where Thou hast died;
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer blessed Lord,
To Thy precious, bleeding side.”

If you want a title for the subject, really it is this: *Attraction in Christ*. She sees an attraction in Christ, but she does not want to be far off. She wants to come where He is. She wants to be drawn. She feels she cannot manage it herself. *Attraction in Christ*. I have always felt, beloved friends, this is one of the best evidences of grace. Satan might give you an imaginary experience, and Satan might give you an imaginary word, but Satan will never make Christ attractive to you. Now you young ones, if you do not feel you can say much, hold that fast: if you see an attraction in the Lord Jesus; there is something there; there is something you need; there is something you want. And may this be your experience:

“His track I see, and I’ll pursue
The narrow way, till Him I view.”

Attraction in Christ – to see a beauty, to see a suitability in Him, to feel you must have Him, to feel you cannot do without Him.

Attraction in Christ. Some years ago, there was a godly man in the south of England. Not long before he died, he was abundantly blessed, but afterwards Satan tempted him it was perhaps just imagination. Perhaps some of you know that. But in the end, he was able to hold this fast. He said, “Satan, whatever else, the great point in that blessing was the wonderful attraction that I felt in the Saviour.” He said, “You can’t rob me of that. No-one can rob me of that.”

So this word speaks of being attracted to the Saviour. The verse before: “Because of the savour of Thy good ointments Thy name is as ointment poured forth.” The point is, where there is a sweet savour, a sweet smell, there is something attractive in it. It does not repel; it draws. Of course, the apostle takes this up at some length writing to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 2. 14-16). He says, “We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ.” What, the poor gospel ministers a sweet savour of Christ? Yes, when they seek to preach the glories of the Saviour.

“A sweet savour of Christ.” But there is a separation here. You do not need to be severe to separate. The gospel, if rightly preached, will separate. “To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life.” You know what that means. If you went in a room and there were some beautiful roses, you would be attracted by the sweet perfume, but if there were a dead man lying in that

room, however sweet the perfume was, it would not mean anything at all to him. So it is when Christ is lifted up in the gospel. Those who are still in spiritual darkness and death, there is no attraction; there is no sweet savour. It is just “the savour of death unto death.” O but that living soul, even that little one in Zion – “Cast not away your little hope.” He does feel this: something attractive, something suitable, that sweet savour of Christ, “the savour of life unto life.”

At Haslingden, I had an uncle. He was strange man, but often when he was going out, he would give me a nudge and say, “It does say, They ‘that thought upon His name.’” The only thing he would ever mention was, “How sweet the name of Jesus sounds.” When I took his funeral – and the service actually was in the undertakers’ little chapel – I tried to speak of just those four words: “The name of Jesus,” and the sweet savour of Christ seemed to fill that place. I do not think I have ever known anything similar to it at any funeral anywhere.

But I would hold you – you young ones, you old ones – on this point: this sweet savour of Christ. He says, “Because of the savour of Thy good ointments.” That is the attraction, the name of Jesus. “Thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love Thee.”

“Draw me, we will run after Thee.” Now I think you will find that this is a subject which keeps coming in over and over again, a sinner being drawn to the Saviour. Not just coming – it is coming, of course – but coming because drawn, and being drawn because there is an attraction. Let me mention just one or two places in Scripture. One is this. “The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” – that wonderful, sweet assurance that the prophet Jeremiah was given that he was loved with an everlasting love! But he might say, How do I know it, Lord? Because “with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” – drawn you away from yourself; drawn you away from the world; drawn you from that which never will satisfy you; drawn you to Myself. And if the poor prophet were to say, No, Lord; I cannot believe it, He puts a *yea* at the beginning. Really, it is confirmed with the solemn oath of God. May some of you know it this morning. The old preachers used to talk a lot about the evidences of salvation. They would set forth salvation, then the evidences of salvation. This is it, the glorious truth, “Yea, I have loved

thee with an everlasting love.” You say, What a blessing! The evidence of it: “Therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”

Then you find our Lord Jesus Christ Himself spoke more than once on this. On one occasion He said this: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” There is a three-fold lifting up of the Saviour. He was lifted up on the cross to die, and then He was lifted up by His Father on the resurrection morning, and then He is to be lifted up “on the gospel pole,” as Gadsby and Warburton and Kershaw used to call it – lifted up on the gospel pole in the preaching of the everlasting gospel. “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” And the Lord Jesus said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.”

Then again in that wonderful chapter, John chapter 6, on the Bread of life, the Lord Jesus says, “No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him.” Of course, there is a picture of where you and I and the whole human race are in our ruin through sin, incapable of any spiritual act, incapable of coming of ourselves to the Saviour. Yet we feel we must come, we have got to come, and we cannot come, but there is a secret here: “Except the Father which hath sent Me draw him.” O to know these drawings!

Of course, in the chapter, the Lord Jesus is speaking of Himself as the Bread of life. “I am the Bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.” But it is the same point here, and if you follow it through, you can find it in so many places in Scripture. It is this point of drawing. It is this point of attraction. Well, very simply it is this. You have a hungry man, a starving man, and there is a beautiful meal put before him. There is such a drawing to it. It is what he wants. He must have it; he cannot be satisfied without it.

Just to mention one other place, and there the Lord uses a different expression. He says, “Therefore, behold, I will allure her” (Hos. 2. 14). This is God’s ancient people who have been wandering off in backsliding and sin. How are they going to come back? They do not really want to come back at first, and then when they find they must come back, they prove that they cannot. “Therefore, behold, I will allure her.” It is an unusual expression. We have it in one of our hymns: “By sweet alluring

call.” To give you the whole verse: “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness.” There is separation; there is something she has to learn. “I will ... speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.”

Well now, to come especially to this word: “Draw me, we will run after Thee.” Now it is a prayer, but there is an urgency in this prayer, because it speaks of running after the Lord. She is in such earnest to get there. These half-hearted prayers – aren’t we plagued with them! They do not really do us any good. “And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart.” She wants to run after Him. If she has the drawing, she will not just come; she will run after Him. So it is a very personal prayer. Real religion is very personal. This prayer suits you all. It suits me; it suits the young; it suits the old – a prayer that the Lord will graciously draw us, allure us.

The old preachers used to say, “Satan drives, but Christ draws.” Now there is a power in His drawings. Some of you young ones know what a magnet is. You put it in a box, and if there are steel shavings there, O the power of it! It pulls them, and they cling to it. That is the power of Christ drawing. He pulls you, and when He has pulled you, then you cling to Him.

“Draw me, we will run after Thee.” But it is more than just power. It is the drawing of the Saviour’s love. There is a power in the drawing of the Saviour’s love. There is that well-known word: “The love of Christ constraineth us.” I wonder if any of you read today about the godly martyrs who were burnt to death. A few weeks ago, a lady living down in Kent sent me a book, and she had managed to find out the name of every single godly martyr who was burnt at the stake for believing in the Lord Jesus. But the point is, how could they come? Some were young; you read of some being old; you read of some being lame, some being blind. They had their natural feelings, and they were terrified, but they refused to compromise. It was this: the power of the love of Christ. It both drew them and it also held them fast.

When you think of that godly, leading, eminent martyr, John Hooper – the night before he was to be put to death, he lit a candle and put his finger in to see what it was like. It was agony to him. He thought, “What of tomorrow!” You can read the account. He was the most solemn of the old divines. They never saw him smile, but as he was brought out to his martyrdom, his face was wreathed in smiles. There is something real in true religion, and this is one of the main things. There is the constraining power. They were constrained and held fast. It is really this: Lord Jesus, I know Thou dost sweetly draw Thy people to Thyself, sweetly draw them to Thy feet, and it is *me*, Lord. Draw *me*, Lord, and then I will run after Thee.

Now it is a good prayer for a beginner, some of you perhaps just having your eyes opened, just beginning in the things of God. There is so much you do not know, so much you do not understand, but perhaps the only thing is you feel you need a Saviour, but you want to come to Him, you want to find Him. It was the language of Job. He was really in his spirit saying, Lord, draw me and then I can come, then I will run after Thee. “Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat!” Draw me, Lord. Well, I do hope some of you, and you young ones, will be praying that the Lord will graciously draw you to His feet, that you might find a resting place.

And there is a lot in this: “We will run after *Thee*,” because by nature we run after all kinds of things. We run after the world; we run after our pleasures; we run after our comforts; we could go on. We could make a list going up to the ceiling of all these things we run after. There is not much running after Christ. O but the difference – that being killed to the world, that being made alive to God! There is only one thing here. She must have Him, and so must you.

“I must have Christ as All in all,
Or sink in ruin, guilt, and thrall.”

“Draw me, we will run after Thee.” There is something real in this prayer; there is something simple in this prayer. There is something vital in this prayer. It is a sinner in his helplessness, a sinner in his need, but it is a sinner seeing something in the Saviour. What a sermon could be preached on: Who is this glorious *Thee*? “We will run after *Thee*” – the

Son of God, the One who went to Calvary and suffered, bled and died, the One who rose again, the One in heaven who ever lives, ever intercedes, the One who loves with an everlasting love. Well, later, when she goes on she says He is “the Chiefest among ten thousand.” “He is altogether lovely.”

“Draw me, we will run after Thee.” Now then, this is not just a prayer at the beginning or for a young person. What about you older ones? Sometimes you feel so backward in the things of God. You do not feel close; you feel far off. But you cannot be satisfied with that far-off condition. O you say, Draw me, Lord; draw me to Thyself. You look back. Things are not as they used to be. “Oh that I were as in months past!” You feel the darkness, and the deadness, and the barrenness, and the guilt, and the sin, and you cannot escape from it; you cannot get out of it. But this is the sinner’s only sure and safe retreat: the blood-sprinkled mercy seat, the throne of grace. There is something vital here, something urgent. I cannot be satisfied with an empty profession. I cannot be satisfied with just drifting along. O to be made nigh by the precious blood of Christ. Draw me, Lord. What a lovely word that is: “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” That old hymn:

“To sing that love, so full, so rich, so free,
Which brings a guilty sinner such as me,
Nigh unto God.”

“Draw me, we will run after Thee.” There is a point concerning prayer. I hope you all pray. I would not be surprised if all of you at times find difficulty, because Satan will oppose you in it. But when your prayers are languishing, and your thoughts are wandering, Draw me, O Lord, in that path of prayer. If the Lord draws, if the Lord constrains, then you can run after Him. Your thoughts will run; your affections will run; and you will truly pray.

“Draw me, we will run after Thee.” Sometimes it is this. There is a pathway before you and you know you have to go that way, but it is not easy, and you shrink from it. So how can you go? Well, “Draw me.” May I know it is Thee, Lord, Thy presence, Thy power, Thy love with me, helping me, pulling me, drawing me, and then I can go.

“Draw me, we will run after Thee.” You notice one thing here. It changes from the *me* to the *we*. She does not say, Draw me, *I*. It is, “Draw me, *we*.” You know what it is. Like the spokes of a wheel, as they get nearer to the centre, they all get nearer to one another. It is really this: if the Saviour draws you to Himself, you will not be the only one who is coming. You will not be the first; you will not be the last. You will find a few more who are asking “the way to Zion with their faces thitherward.”

“Draw me, we will run after Thee.” It is that loving obedience. It is that going after the Saviour. It is not being satisfied till you find Him. The psalmist takes it up. He says, “I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart.” So there is a prayer for you to take home, and may the Holy Spirit enable you to pray it:

“Draw us, O Lord, and we will run,
In sweet obedience to Thy Son.”

“Draw me, we will run after Thee.”

* * *

Draw my soul to Thee, my Lord;
Make me love Thy precious Word!
Bid me seek Thy smiling face;
Willing to be saved by grace.

Dearest Jesus, bid me come;
Let me find Thyself my home;
Thou the Refuge of my soul,
Where I may my troubles roll.

Lord, Thy powerful work begun,
Thou wilt never leave undone;
Teach me to confide in Thee;
Thy salvation’s wholly free.

J. Adams