



Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die. (John 12:31-3)

In days before gyroscopes, the most important part of a ship, and the smallest, was the magnetic compass. It was not dependent upon a clear sky for celestial navigation at night, and worked during the daylight hours as well. It served the ship and her crew as the hidden conscience of man, informed by the Holy Ghost, serves to warn of wicked inclinations.

Like the human conscience, the magnetic compass is capable of distractions from outside sources. For example, when threatening storms arise on the high seas, the compass may momentarily fluctuate from magnetic north, but it will yet come back to the proper reading and settle to the proper heading. The same is true of the Christian conscience. There are times when great troubles arise, and the solution to settle those troubles in some ungodly way, may pass through the mind of the believer; but the Holy Ghost intensifies its mysterious appeal to conscience and the temptation subsides. There are times when other vessels, heavy laden with metallic products, may pass nearby causing the magnetic compass to be drawn from its proper reading. But, once the passing influence has past, it will return to steady. Life is full of ungodly temptations, and even good people will sometimes have their heads turned by those temptations, but if they hold steady to the bow, those temptations recede upon the waters of life and our course is sure and steady in life.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the first Great Magnet to our souls. He draws men and women to Him as a magnet draws heavy metal. The drawing power of that Great Magnet is completely irresistible. Like a physical magnet that draws only those metals that are similar to its own composition, our Lord draws those whom He has chosen as His Elect to Him. A magnet of iron will not draw aluminum or lead or gold. It must be metal of a similar nature. But there is another characteristic of the magnet that must be taken under counsel here - that is the transfer of magnetism that occurs when iron remains in prolonged contact with the mother magnet. If an iron spike comes into contact (and is drawn to it) with a magnet, and remains in contact or proximity for a time, that iron will then take on the magnetic nature of the mother magnet.

The same is true of the person who is drawn to Christ. As the new believer follows closely in the footsteps of Jesus, he begins to assume the nature of the Great Magnet which he follows. The atomic ionization in the heart of the Christian becomes aligned (like iron atoms) with those of the Lord. It becomes less challenging now to

continue in the Way of Christ. Please consider another means by which an iron rod may become a magnet:

A magnet has a north pole and a south pole. North and south will attract, but "like" poles will repel each other. Magnetism is created when electrons "spin" in the same direction. In some substances this occurs naturally, but in most substances it does not. Items can be magnetized by striking them abruptly so that all the electrons "spin" in the same direction. If we align an iron rod with magnetic north, and dip the tip whatever number of degrees of the earth's parallel of our location (toward the North Pole), and strike the iron abruptly, it will become magnetized. Though the physical makeup of the iron is unchanged, it has assumed a new nature - much like the counsel of Jesus to Nicodemus about being "*Ye must be born again.*" Our natures are changed abruptly when we come to Christ (as we are drawn). If we resist too long, we may be abruptly stricken with circumstances that make further resistance to Christ impossible.

A Word of Caution

When we have taken on the nature of Christ (as an iron rod the nature of the magnet), we, too, have a north and south pole. As long as we are aligned with the will of God, we are drawn ever more closely to His side; but like two magnetic bars, if we turn from Him, our natures will repel us further from Him. When we approach Him, He moves further out of reach. When He approaches us, we withdraw further from Him. The only means of correcting our backsliding natures is to make a complete turn around so that our poles are now aligned for attraction and not repulsion. As Christians, we still may harbor hidden and cherished sins in some unopened chamber of our hearts. Sins are like weeds - they never shrink, but grow larger and proliferate. When we give counsel to the temptations arising from those 'weeds,' we are then at odds with Christ and His nature and are repelled from Him like magnets having both negative poles facing.

After God had brought the Children of Israel out of Egypt with miracles and signs, the grumbled every step of the way about the food, the weariness of the journey, the heat, the luxuries left behind in Egypt, etc. But sins, though they have the possibility of being forgiven (if repented of) leave scars and pain. Look at the following account of the sinfulness of Israel in the Wilderness: *4 And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. 5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. 6 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. 7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. 8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. 9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.* (Num 21:4-9)

When I was a young lad, it was difficult for me to connect the dots in the above account. But God uses every instance, even our sins, to open our eyes to our great need of a Redeemer. The fiery serpents were the punishment for their sins. The wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23); therefore, the bite of the fiery serpent would kill its victim - unless God would provide a remedy. The sin of Adam brought pain and suffering to all of Creation, and we suffer in this life even with hearts redeemed. However, the death penalty has a solution. Just as those bitten by the fiery serpent would live if they would look to the brazen serpent nailed by Moses to the pole, so would all who are bitten by

the serpent's poison of Eden live if they look to Jesus Christ, and Him CRUCIFIED. He was lifted up for you and me. He draws us to Himself if we have the metal to be drawn, and our basic nature is changed in an instant. *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* This he said, signifying what death he should die.

The drawing power of the Lord must meet with like metal, and the metal must draw near to assume that nature that pursues righteousness.

Once I understood the symbolism of Jesus' remarks, all made perfect sense to me. He took upon Himself the sins of the world just as the serpent's bite brought death to all its victims. But being lifted up on the cross as the emblematic brazen serpent was lifted up in the Wilderness, all have a remedy from eternal death if they will but look to the cross. By His crucifixion, Jesus paid the sin-debt that we should have paid. It was you and I who should have been nailed to that rugged old cross at Calvary. And in a certain sense, we do share that cross to the sins of self. We are in Christ and have become new creatures; however, we have a cross to bear daily. If we follow Christ in pleasant and verdant pastures, should we not follow Him as well on the Via Delorosa - or the road to Calvary? Though we are not worthy to die in remission of our sins, we are able to die to self and live for others - even some of unlikeable nature. We were all of unlikeable nature before we came to Christ.

So Christ is the first Great Magnet. He draws His own to Himself as the fishers draw the great nets of fish to shore. As we become little magnets of the Lord, should our lives, too, not draw others to Him?