

All that the father giveth me

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[0 : 00] All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. There are many in the professing church who maintain that the one thing man can do in the exercise of his own liberty is to believe in Christ.

And that that is the one contribution that man himself must make to set the forces of salvation in operation.

Now, as you very well know, that is a very common way of presenting the claim of the gospel, the claim of the gospel for faith, and for what in many cases is called decision.

In that attitude of mind, there is a complete failure to assess human depravity.

The mind of the flesh is enmity against God, and therefore recoils with enmity against every revelation of God, or at every manifestation of the glory of God, as that revelation or that manifestation of glory makes its demand of us.

[1 : 51] Christ himself is the supreme manifestation of the glory of God, because he is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his being.

Christ himself, and therefore, he is the image of the invisible God, and hence it is precisely at the point of the manifestation of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, that the enmity of the human heart is most violent.

The judgment to believe in Christ is the one thing the natural man will not do and cannot do.

Paul, of course, expressed it in his old way when he said the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, that we preach Christ crucified, and to the Jews a stumbling block.

And unto the Greeks foolishness. Now it is to this truth that our Lord bears sustained witness in this very chapter from which part has been read.

[3 : 15] No man can come unto me except the Father who hath sent me drawing. No man can come unto me except it were given unto him of my Father.

And that is the testimony of him who knows the Father, and who also knows what is in man. Jesus' witness is therefore to the effect, unmistakably to the effect, that it is a psychological and moral and spiritual impossibility for a man to come unto him.

In the commitment of faith, except by free gift from the Father, in his secret and efficacious drawing. No one can say Jesus is Lord. But by the Holy Spirit is the Pauline way of saying the very same thing.

Oh, we might well say then, what hope is there for men? What gospel can there be for men if the message proclaims man's impotence and helplessness?

[4 : 39] Why should there be any appeal for faith if man of himself cannot exercise that faith? That is the inference that is drawn by many people from this doctrine respecting total depravity and the enmity of the human heart as enmity against God, and therefore enmity against God at the supreme point of manifestation.

But blessed be God, there is a gospel, and it is the gospel, the only gospel, and it is such because it does not ignore the facts, and it meets the need of our desperation.

That is the only gospel there is. It is the gospel enunciated in our text, and it is the gospel of a divine guarantee.

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. Now there are three elements in this guarantee.

First of all, there is the giving on the part of the Father. Second, there is the coming on the part of men. And third, there is the receiving on the part of Christ.

[6 : 14] And it is perfectly obvious that these are the three elements of the text. So first of all, we have giving on the part of the Father.

All that the Father giveth me. And we have to ask this question, what does this mean? To what is our Lord here referring?

As the giving on the part of the Father to him. Now it is true that a great multitude were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.

That they were chosen to be holy and without blame. That in love they were predestinated unto adoption. And many people have taken this particular text as referring to giving on the part of the Father to the Son in the eternal counsel of his love and grace.

But that does not appear to be the action of the Father referred to by our Lord in this text. In this context, Jesus is speaking of the efficacious drawing on the part of the Father.

[7 : 41] No man can come unto me except it were given unto him of my Father. Except the Father who hath sent me draw him.

And in this gospel elsewhere, when Jesus speaks of those given to him by the Father, he speaks of them as those given to him out of the world.

As those who had kept his word. And as those who had known that all things given to him were from the Father. I'm referring particularly to John 17 verses 6 and 7.

And consequently, the contextual considerations, the more immediate contextual considerations, and the broader contextual considerations in this gospel constrain the conclusion that the giving on the Father's part is the giving that occurs in the actual operations of grace.

And therefore, the donation to the Son that occurs simultaneously with the coming on the part of men and receiving on the part of Christ.

[9 : 07] Now, when we think of the actual operations of grace, we generally think of these as the work of the Holy Spirit.

And that is right, perfectly proper, to recognize the place that the Holy Spirit occupies in the economy of salvation and the functions which are preeminently and peculiarly his, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

But, we are not assessing the manifoldness of God's grace if we do not also recognize the actions of God the Father in the effectual operations of his grace.

It is with the action of God the Father that the application of redemption begins. God the Father draws men.

He places holy constraint upon them. He calls them into the fellowship of his Son. And in accordance with the thought of the text, he presents them to Christ as trophies of the redemption Christ himself has won.

[10 : 48] That, I take, it is the kernel truth in the first part of this text. All that the Father giveth me. We are sometimes amazed at the conversion of certain people.

They seem to be the most unlikely people to be savingly affected by the gospel. The most unlikely candidates for discipleship.

In the first century, when the early church began to feel the full brunt of opposition to the gospel, there was one man who breathed out thought threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.

And as you know, this man went to the high priest and asked of him letters to Damascus that if he found any of this way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

And in that day, people might well have said, if there is anyone who is to be one to the faith of the gospel, it is not Saul of Tarsus.

[12 : 11] And the enemies of the gospel might well have said, if there is anyone on whom we can rely for persecution of the church, it is Saul of Tarsus.

Because he barely fought with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

He was under the impulsion of conscience toward God, perverted and of course depraved, but nevertheless, it was under that impulsion that he went to Damascus.

He barely fought with himself that he ought. Well, it was Saul of Tarsus who was converted.

And the history of the church of Christ is marked by similar surprises for the people of God and the enemies of the gospel. The most unlikely candidates for discipleship are those who become the most eminent servants of Christ.

[13 : 27] Well, why? Why have such people become the partakers of saving grace? Why have they become trophies of redemption?

Why such conspicuous examples of godliness? Why have they become the called of Jesus Christ? The text gives the answer.

God the Father has drawn them and he has donated them to his own son. Think of it. Think of it in your ministry.

When you see the first signs of saving grace, when a sinner comes to Christ in the commitment of faith, when the rebellious will is renewed and tears of penitence begin to flow, it is because a mysterious transaction is taking place between the persons of the Godhead.

God the Father has been making a presentation, a donation to his own son. We need to view the most elementary emotions of faith from that angle and perish the thought, perish forever from our thought, perish the very suggestion that coming to Christ finds its explanation in the sovereign determinations of the human will.

[15 : 09] My friends, the exercise of faith finds its explanation in the sovereign will of God the Father. When a soul comes to Christ, this event is the reflex of effectual donation of that person by the Father to the Son.

And if any person has childlike faith in Christ, whereby Christ is made unto that person wisdom from God, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, whereby Christ is made precious as all in all, be assured that God the Father took delight in that person, however apparently abandoned, however apparently desperate that person in sin has been, he took, God the Father took delight in that person, and took delight in causing raptures of joy to spring up in the breast of his own well-beloved Son.

God the Father presented him, donated him, or her, in the effectual donation of his grace.

Let us never suggest any glory or any efficiency for the need of human will.

No second we have coming on the part of men. It might appear that the stress which is placed upon the action of God the Father in this particular text would exclude the appropriateness or even the relevance of any reference to activity on the part of the person given to the Son.

[17 : 32] We might think that since the pivots of the text are the transactions of the persons of the Godhead, the intrusion of human activity would be quite alien to that emphasis or would be out of place.

It is not so. And beware of such exaggerated empathy that we put things out of their divinely appointed location.

We must take account of the fact that the action of God the Father is in the most intimate way conjoined with the activity of the person donated.

all that the Father giveth me shall come to me. Jesus does not say all that the Father giveth me are brought to me.

He doesn't say that. No doubt true in its own place, but he doesn't say that. Jesus uses the term that points to motion on the part of the person concerned and coming to Christ is the movement of approach and commitment to Christ.

[19 : 10] It is but another way of referring to faith in Jesus Christ. It is the Father who gives the person to Christ, but it is not the Father who comes.

It is the person, and it is a coming, of course, that engages the whole souled activity of the person concerned.

Now we have already found that it is a moral and spiritual and even psychological impossibility for a person to come to Christ in the abandonment and commitment to faith apart from the efficacious drawing on the part of the Father, apart from this donation on the part of the Father to his own Son. But what we find now is something equally important. What we find now that it is a moral and spiritual impossibility for the person given by the Father to the Son not to come.

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me. And what Jesus is here asserting is the invariable conjunction of these two diverse kinds of action.

[20 : 47] All that the Father giveth me shall come to me or will come to me. It is not that he may come. It is not that he has the opportunity to come.

It is not that he will in all probability come. And not simply that he is able to come. But that he will come. There is absolute certainty.

My friends, here is a psychology that heaven has created and a psychology that cannot be violated. There is a divine necessity and the order of heaven ensures the sequence and the concomitance. This is established in the effectual action of God.

Let me ask the question. Have you experienced the invincible attraction of the Redeemer? have you been entranced by his glory?

[22 : 05] Have you been so drawn to him that you invest your all in him? Are you able to say whom having not seen I love in whom so now I see him not yet believing I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory?

is he all and in all to you? Well if he is and this is a very concrete and practical way of entering into the marvel of effectual grace if Christ is all and in all to you if his beauty affords supreme attraction and his faithfulness total commitment then you may be assured that the father gave you to his own son and that is the holy constraint by which you have come to Christ in the abandon of faith that's the explanation why has his attraction become irresistible why have you fallen in love with him it is just because an irresistible constraint has been placed upon you a constraint that a constraint that cannot be frustrated and it cannot be frustrated because it is established by the order of heaven and the counsel of unspeakable grace now third and finally we have receiving on the part of Christ I will in no wise cast out this is a negative way of stating the reception on the part of Christ I will in no wise cast out and it is expressed in this way for the sake of emphasis you can very readily detect how emphatic this way of stating it is much more emphatic than to say I will assuredly receive I will in no wise cast out Christ will assuredly embrace in the arms of saving and loving security the person who comes to him now there are a few considerations that it is appropriate to mention in this precise connection and the first is this the receiving on Christ's part is the reception of the father's donation if it has pleased the father to make a donation to his own son don't you see that it would violate all divine proprieties for the son to reject the father's gift is well for us to view the reception on the part of

Christ from that angle for our own consolation and for our consolation in the ministry of the gospel now you see we have noted already certain moral and spiritual impossibilities the impossibilities which in here in our lord's teaching in this particular passage but here we have another divine impossibility it is divinely impossible for the son our lord Jesus Christ to cast out any person who is the donation of his own father the donation of the father's grace Christ came down from heaven not to do his own will but the will of him that sent him and here is the expression of the father's will how impossible for

Jesus to reject but the second consideration I want to mention here is that the assurance given in this particular instance includes not only the initial reception but extends to the never failing and never ending embrace of Christ's love and preservation it is that of which he speaks elsewhere in this very gospel I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish neither shall anyone pluck them out of my hand my father who gave them me is greater than all and none can pluck out of the father's hand and this is the father's will who has sent me that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing but should raise it up again at the last day yes it is a security that extends to the very ultimate of

[28 : 15] Christ's faithfulness if the explanation of faith my friend is the sovereign autonomy of the human will we can readily see that that same autonomy can be enlisted in apostasy from faith and no security resides in what depends upon the determinations of the human will don't you see my friends how the precious truths of our holy faith interpenetrate one another they're all intimately interlocked and you see the very doctrine that our

Lord is enunciating in this text and enunciating in this discourse more broadly current is exceedingly precious to the people of God because it traces all the security that belongs to the believer to the determinations and transactions of divine grace and we see how alien is such a conception of faith as is broadly current to the orbit which our Lord here defines for us the security of which our Lord speaks is a security which finds its source and necessity in the Father's actions and we are led back to that determinedness that belongs only to

God and the faith which is coordinate is one that derives its character from the very coordination and the third consideration is that the assurance that Christ gives in this particular text is one that bespeaks the freeness of the gospel over I don't think we can escape that implication of the words him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out it is surely redolent of the full free and unfettered overture of grace to sinners I say it is surely redolent of that full free and unfettered offer so I say

that in this word of Christ by implication the gates of hope and grace are flung wide open for it is not only the coordination of faith with the father's donation that is here set forth there is also the certification of him who is the faithful witness that anyone who comes to him he will in no wise cast out and the conjunction of faith in Jesus and reception by Jesus is as invariable as the conjunction of faith and the father's donation that is not missed this aspect of the guarantee implicit in the gospel all the lines of heavenly order converge upon this assurance that

Christ will receive into the arms of loving and never failing embrace any sinner whoever he be who comes to him in the abandon of faith and we cannot exclude that from the scope of our text I will in no wise cast out now the sovereign operations of grace and the free overtures of mercy lie side by side in the revelation of scripture I could appeal to many texts which exemplify that great truth that the sovereign operations of grace and the free overtures of mercy are placed side by side and there is no contradiction there is contradiction when we allow our own carnal reasoning to determine the truth of

God or to determine our interpretation of the truth of scripture but it is not simply that they lie side by side and as I want to emphasize with my whole being it is not simply that the sovereign operations of grace and the free overtures of mercy lie side by side in the scripture without any contradiction the truth is that the free overtures of grace proceed from the heart of divine sovereignty and as I have often said and sometimes written it is on the crest of the wave of God's sovereign grace that the free overtures of the gospel break upon the shores of lost humanity these overtures come to us of course with the demand for faith and faith always meets with the response of Christ faithfulness and love we may never plead we may never plead our own depravity as a reason for not believing nor our own inability as an excuse for unbelief we are confronted here with our responsibility as well as with our great and precious privilege now I have found in my experience with preachers over a long period of time especially with young men whom I have taught at

[35 : 25] Westminster Theological Seminary on the other side of the Atlantic that when they were converted to the reformed faith to Calvinism they found it very difficult any longer to preach the full and free overture of Christ in the gospel it seemed unnatural to them there seemed to be an inhibition now I can have a great deal of sympathy with the revolution that has taken place in the thought of such young men they were brought up in an Armenian atmosphere and their presentation of the gospel was always colored by that

Armenian theology which formed its background and now they came to see the error of that Armenian theology or that Armenian conception of the plan of salvation that Armenian conception of soteriology and they found it very difficult now to readjust their presentation of the gospel to that new and biblical conception of the plan of salvation and I suspect that this may be true even with us that we have a certain inhibition arising from our appreciation of the sovereign grace of God and our appreciation of the great truth that it is only by the efficacious work of

God the Father and the efficacious work of God the Holy Spirit that anyone can come to the abandon of faith let us learn even from this particular text as from numerous others that might be appealed to that we ought to have no inhibition whatsoever in presenting the full free and unfettered overture of Christ in the gospel because my friends that full and free and unfettered torture comes to us in the gospel and comes to men from the very heart of the divine sovereignty and it is just because it comes to us on the crest of the wave of divine sovereignty that we can proclaim to men their responsibility and their inestimable privilege as they are confronted with the overture of Christ in the gospel it is just our conviction that this comes on the crest of the wave of divine sovereignty that we may do it with full assurance and realize that in doing so we have the authority of none other and of him who is the faithful witness and who has said all that the father giveth me will come to me and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out I thank you not I don't I see

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