

The Last Message for the Year

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon passionately teaches that salvation is exclusively found in coming personally to Christ, assured by the omnipotence and freeness of Divine Grace.

Scripture: John 6:37, 1 Corinthians 3:11, 1 Timothy 2:5, Mark 16:16, Jeremiah 6:16, Philippians 3:7-9, Isaiah 53:6-10, 2 Peter 1:10

Topics: "Divine Grace", "Salvation", "Christology"

Description

In 'The Last Message for the Year,' C.H. Spurgeon exhorts believers and seekers alike to recognize the exclusivity, power, and generosity of Divine Grace. He unfolds the profound truth that salvation is found only through a personal coming to Christ, assured by God's sovereign will and Christ's unchanging promise never to cast out any who come. This sermon encourages steadfast faith and offers comfort to ministers laboring in difficult times, affirming the eternal victory of Christ's redemptive work.

Transcript

"All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.

John 6:37.

[Mr. Spurgeon preached many Sermons upon this verse. Among those already published are #1762, Volume 30—HIGH DOCTRINE AND BROAD DOCTRINE; #2349, Volume 40—ALL COMERS TO CHRIST WELCOMED; #2954, Volume 51—THE BIG GATES WIDE OPEN and #3000, Volume 52—NUMBER 3000—OR, COME AND WELCOME.]

WE have come to the last Sabbath evening and the last public Sabbath service of another year. With some of us it may be our last Sabbath on earth and our last public Sabbath service in this life. It becomes us, then, to fix our thoughts upon solemn and weighty themes—those which are of the utmost importance to us—and those which most closely concern our eternal destiny. I pray that the Holy Spirit may cause the deepest possible seriousness to rest upon this whole assembly and that He may very specially guide me to speak as I ought upon the familiar but most weighty words that I trust He has moved me to select once again for your very earnest consideration tonight.

I have preached many times upon this text but, on this occasion, I am going to speak briefly upon three topics that it suggests to me. The first is that there is only one way of salvation—"All that the Father gives

Me shall come to Me." "Him that comes to Me." This topic will teach us the exclusiveness of Divine Grace. Secondly, this way will be used by some—"All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me." This teaches us the Omnipotence of Divine Grace. Thirdly, all who come by this way shall be saved—"him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." This teaches us the fullness and freeness of Divine Grace.

I. First, then, we learn from our text THE EXCLUSIVENESS OF DIVINE GRACE—THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY OF SALVATION "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me" "Him that comes to Me"

To come to Jesus is the one and only way of salvation. If there could have been any other way, this one would never have been opened. It is not conceivable that God would have given His only-begotten and well-beloved Son to die upon the Cross of Calvary in order to save sinners if there had been any other way of saving them that would have been as consistent with the principles of Infallible Justice. If men could have entered into everlasting life without passing along the path stained and consecrated by the blood of Jesus, surely that blood would never have been "shed for many for the remission of sins." The very fact that this new and living way has been opened proves that there is no other, for God would never have provided it unless it had been absolutely necessary. That this is the only way of salvation is again and again emphasized in Scripture with a sacred intolerance which none ought to mistake! Writing to the Corinthians, under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul says, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." And to Timothy, his own son in the faith, he writes, "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." And the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, who had a more loving heart than ever beat in any merely human being's breast, most solemnly said, in almost His last words on earth, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned."

So there is no other way of salvation and sinners are most faithfully warned that however pleasant and attractive any other ways may appear to be, the end of those ways is death and "everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." When Jesus said, "I am the Way," He clearly intended to exclude all other ways, so beware lest you perish in any one of them! Be not like the foolish and wicked people of Jeremiah's day to whom the Lord

said, "Stand you in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way and walk therein, and you shall find rest for your souls." But, alas, they said, "We will not walk therein." Be you not like unto them!

But what is this exclusive way of salvation? In our text it is twice described as coming to Christ. But what is meant by that expression? It does not mean any mere locomotion, any moving of the body from one place to another. There were many who came to Christ in that sense while He was upon the earth—they thronged around Him and pressed upon Him—but the mere proximity of their bodies to Christ did not bring salvation to them, for many of them turned away and walked no more with Him when His heart-searching teaching was too faithful for them. Well, then, what does coming to Christ readily mean?

Coming to Christ means, first, turning away from all confidence in ourselves or in others and trusting alone in Jesus. In order to come to a certain person, you must turn away from another person who is in a different direction, so if you want to be saved, you must come right away from trusting in yourselves—you must cease to have any confidence in anything that you have ever done, or ever hope to do—you must not place any reliance upon the alms you have bestowed upon the poor, the prayers you have presented to God, the services you have attended, or anything of your own! You must utterly abhor all hope of

salvation from yourself, even as Paul did when, after recounting the things in which he had formerly trusted, he wrote, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

If you are resolved to come to Christ, you must also give up all trust in others as a means of salvation. If you have up to now been placing any reliance upon your godly ancestry, your Christian father and mother, or if you have been depending upon your close connection with good people. If you have trusted to a man who calls himself a priest. If you have put any dependence upon what he can do towards your salvation—I pray you to cast away all such confidence, and dependence, for if you do not, you cannot come to Christ! If you have been relying upon any rite, or ceremony, or "sacrament" relating to water or bread and wine, any "priestly" performance, or posture, or ritual, or anything apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, I implore you to abandon all those soul-destroying delusions, for no one of them nor all of them combined will help you into the one and only way of salvation!

For, observe, that the text speaks—and it is the Lord Jesus Christ who speaks through the text—of coming to a Person—"All that the Father gives ME shall come to ME; and him that comes to ME I will no wise cast out." Note how personal the text is both concerning the one coming and the One to whom he is to come—"Hm that comes to ME." That is the long and the short of the whole matter—its Alpha and Omega, its beginning and its end—there must be a personal coming to the personal Christ! It will not suffice for you to come to Christ's Doctrine—you must, of course, believe what He taught—but believing His teaching will not save you unless you come to HIM. It will not be enough merely to come to Christ's precepts and to try to practice them—an utterly impossible task for you to perform in your own unaided strength! You must first come to Christ and then, trusting in Him for salvation, His gracious Spirit will take of the things of Christ and show them to you, and teach and enable you to walk in His ways and to obey His precepts.

Does someone ask, "Who and what is He to whom I am to come?" Listen. The Eternal Son of the Eternal Father— He who has made the heavens and the earth and all things that are, whose almighty Word fashioned this round globe and sent it spinning on its wondrous course around the sun—the Creator and Lord of all the angelic host before whom cherubim and seraphim bow down in reverent adoration—this great King of kings and Lord of lords, in His amazing love and wondrous condescension, "made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." It is to Him that you are to come! You are to believe in Him as the Incarnate God, equally and just as truly Son of Man and Son of God! And then, (and this is the crux of your faith, your faith in the Cross—that "Cross" in which Paul gloried—not a cross of wood, or stone, or ivory before which people idolatrously prostrate themselves—but the Doctrine of the Cross, which is today as great an "offence" as it was in Paul's day), you must believe that God laid upon His Incarnate and Immaculate Son, the sins of all His people whom He had given to Him from all eternity! And you must believe that He even took pleasure in bruising Him because of the wondrous results that were to follow and

flow from His atoning Sacrifice on the Cross! Do you think I am speaking too strongly? Remember the words of the inspired Prophet Isaiah—"All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way, and the Lord has laid on Him (made to meet on Him) the iniquity of us all...It pleased the

Lord to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief: when You shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." If you, my Brother or Sister, rely upon this great expiatory Sacrifice and believe that when Christ died upon the Cross, He died as your Substitute and Representative, you are saved! You have entered the one and only way of salvation!

But be assured of this, if you reject the Incarnate God. If you will not trust in Him. If you will not come to Him that you may have life, there is no other way of salvation and there will never be any other! Never forget that this same Jesus, who was taken up into Heaven, shall so come again in like manner as He went up into Heaven—and "when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," there will be others to whom His Second Advent will bring nothing but dismay and terror, for then, "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and they that know not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." It will be utterly in vain for you to cry, then, to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of His wrath is come and who shall be able to stand?"

II. Now, secondly, we learn from our text THE OMNIPOTENCE OF DIVINE GRACE—SOME WILL USE THIS ONE AND ONLY WAY OF SALVATION. "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me"

So first, there are some who were given to Christ. We believe that it is clearly revealed in the Scriptures that long before this earth was created, the Lord looked forward upon the race of human beings that He intended to live upon it, and that out of them He chose unto Himself a people whom He gave to His Son to be the reward of the suffering He would endure on their behalf. Peter wrote to the elect strangers, "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." And Paul wrote to Timothy, "The foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, The Lord knows them that are His." We do not know them, but He knows everyone of them and He counts them as His own peculiar treasure! "They shall be Mine, says the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels." These people have been given to Christ by His Father. Again and again, in that great intercessory prayer of His, He spoke of this Truth of God! In fact, the prayer begins with an emphatic declaration of it—"Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You; as You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him."

Why does Christ tell us this? I think He does it partly to comfort His ministers. Oh, it is heart-breaking work to keep on preaching Christ to sinners who will not come to Him, holding up Christ before eyes that see no beauty in Him, praising Him to ears that are not charmed with the music of His name! So our Master says to us, "My servants, you shall not labor in vain, nor spend your strength for nothing. 'All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me.' If all those who were first invited to the great Gospel feast make excuses for not coming, others will accept My invitation and the feast shall be fully furnished with guests. If scribes and Pharisees still reject Me, publicans and harlots will be only too glad to come to

Me and I will cast out none who come. So still go on, My servants, publishing the glad tiding of salvation, for all that My Father gave Me must and shall come to Me."

I think Christ also speaks thus as a rebuff to those who seem to imagine that Christ's work will be a failure if they do not come to Him! You know how many talk, nowadays, about the Gospel being old-fashioned, worn out and not adapted to this enlightened age! Oh, yes, Sir, I know what you think and how you talk! But are you foolish enough to suppose that Christ's great Sacrifice on Calvary will prove to have been offered in vain just because you refuse to trust to it? Oh no, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." Here is a poor silly fly drowning in a glass of water. He might as well imagine that his dying struggles would convulse all the empires of the earth as an atheist might think that he can demolish the whole system of Christianity by the nonsensical whimsies that he harbors in his stupid brain! I tell you, Man, that you cannot frustrate the eternal purposes of God, or rob His Son of a single grain of His Glory! What if you will not come to Christ? He never expected that you would come, so He will not be surprised or disappointed! But if you will not come to Him, others will. If you will not enlist in the army of the Cross and join the innumerable hosts that rally round His blood-stained banner, others will, and the great Son of David will never lack brave soldiers who will do and dare for Him more than even David's mighty men did for their royal leader! Voltaire said that he lived in the twilight of Christianity, but if so, it was the twilight of the morning, not of the evening! Julian the apostate vowed that he would put down the Nazarene, but his dying cry was, "O Galilean, You have conquered!" Yes, and so He always will—and they who oppose and reject Him will find that the stone which the builders refused will become the cornerstone in the great Temple of His Church—and also a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to those who reject Him! Woe be unto those upon whom that Stone shall fall, for it will grind them to powder!

I think that Jesus also intended these words, "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me," to be a cause for jubilation in the hearts of His people. We often feel very sad concerning the times in which we live and there is more than enough to make us sigh and cry because of the abominations and iniquities in the world and, alas, because of the many evils in the professing church! But those who love the Lord and seek to serve Him are not left without many consolations and compensations. The purposes of God shall all be fulfilled! There shall not be one soul the less in Heaven notwithstanding all that Romanism, Ritualism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Mohammedanism and every other ism may do! Christ shall not be robbed of the reward of His soul-travail by anything that infidelity can do! Satan may rage and roar, and all his legions may come up from the bottomless Pit and league themselves with wicked men to overthrow the Church of God, but founded upon the Rock, "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." The kings and rulers of the earth may take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, but "He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." And when the history of this poor little planet is finished, it shall be found that Christ was speaking nothing but the truth when He said, "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me."

III. Now I come to the last and perhaps the sweetest part of the whole discourse, which is to be concerning THE

FULLNESS AND FREENESS OF DIVINE GRACE—ALL WHO COME BY THIS ONE WAY SHALL BE SAVED!

"Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out.

This means that everyone who comes to Christ shall certainly be saved, for, if Christ will not cast him out, nobody else can do so! As soon as ever he comes to Christ, he is accepted (not repelled) by Christ! And being accepted by Christ, he is saved with an everlasting salvation—and there is no power on earth or in Hell that can ever make him into an unsaved man after Christ has saved him!

"But," says someone, "suppose he comes to Christ and then finds that he is not one of those who were given to Christ by His Father?" You must not suppose what never can be true, for there never was a sinner yet who came to Christ who was not first given to Christ! All who come to Christ are Divinely drawn to Him and no one is drawn to Him without having been from all eternity given to Him—so there is nothing in our friend's supposition that ought to be a stumbling block in the way of any seeking sinner here! I am quite certain that God has an elect people, for He tells me so in His Word. And I am equally certain that everyone who comes to Christ shall be saved, for that also is His own declaration in the Scriptures! When people ask me how I reconcile these two Truths of God, I usually say that there is no need to reconcile them, for they have never yet quarreled with one another! Both are true and both relate to the same persons, for those who come to Christ are those who were from eternity given to Christ by His Father!

Jesus Christ still says to us, "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." "But, Lord," objects someone, "this man's life has been an outrageously bad one! Will You accept him if he comes to You?" "Oh, yes! 'Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.'" "But, Lord, he has been an habitual drunk and he has also been a great blasphemer." Well, suppose you were obliged to add that he has been an adulterer, a liar, a thief, a perjurer, or even a murderer? Jesus Christ would still say, "'Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.' Whatever his past character may have been, if he truly repents of his sin and trusts in My atoning blood to cleanse him from all his guilt, his sins and iniquities shall be remembered against him no more, forever." If I had the biggest, blackest sinner in the whole world here, I would say to him or to her, "My dear Friend, if you will here and now trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, the one and only Savior of sinners, I can assure you, on the authority of God, Himself, that 'though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though your sins are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' And that your sins, which are many, are all forgiven! And then, like the woman in the city who was a notorious public sinner, you will love Christ much because you have been forgiven much."

"Ah," says some poor sinner here, "but I do not feel that I have repented enough. I do not feel that my heart is tender enough. I do not feel that I have wept enough over my many offenses." Stop a moment, Friend. If you have your Bible open, or if not, listen while I read the text again—"All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out." Is there anything in Christ's words about how much you are to feel? Is there anything at all about your feelings? Not a word! Not even a syllable! If you but come to Christ, which means if you but trust Him, if you rely upon His finished work, if you truthfully say, as we often sing—

"I do believe, I will believe,

That Jesus died for me!

That on the Cross He shed His blood

From sin to set me free"—

then that glorious "Gospel in miniature"—as Martin Luther called it, applies to you as well as to every other sinner who believes in Jesus—"God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." There is nothing in that verse about feelings—everything depends upon faith! And then when you have believed in Jesus, right feelings will be given to you by God's good Spirit. Gratitude, love, joy, hope, peace, courage, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance and every other "fruit of the Spirit" will spring from the blessed root—Grace of faith in Jesus! And so you shall have yet further confirmation of the fact that you are saved for the Lord's own

test is, "By their fruits you shall know them."

Possibly there is someone here, on this last Sabbath night of another year, who is saying to himself, "I hardly know why I came into this building tonight, for I have been everything that I ought not to have been—and nothing that I ought to have been." But, Friend, do you desire to begin a new life even before the new year dawns on you? Are you willing to leave your sins? Do you long to be a holy man? In a word, is it the one wish of your heart that you may be saved? Then I refer you, also, to my text and remind you that the Lord Jesus Christ said, "him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out." There is nothing there to shut out the most irreligious man if he will but come to Christ! You say that you are an odd man—well, I have often said and others have said that I am an odd man—a lot that cannot be put in any catalog! You are self-condemned and so was I before I came to Christ. You feel that you are, as George Whitefield used to say, one of the devil's castaways—so bad that even Satan, himself, would not claim you! Why, you and I ought to shake hands, for that is just how I felt when that poor local preacher pointed to me and said, "Look, young man, look! Jesus Christ says to you, "Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." I did look, and was saved by the same Gospel I preach to you! And as this is the last Sabbath night in another year, and as it may be the last Gospel invitation you will ever have the opportunity of hearing, I repeat to you the very last invitations recorded in the Word of God, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is thirsty come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." This agrees with John 3:16 which I have already quoted to you, and it also agrees with Christ's words in our text, "Him that comes to Me." John Bunyan said that meant any "him" in all the world—"I will in no wise cast out"—that is, for no reason, for no conceivable motive, for no possible cause will Christ cast out one who comes to Him by faith! "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out" is a grand old An-

glo-Saxon expression that sweeps round the man who comes to Christ and guards him like a sword of fire protecting him from every possibility of being cast out by Christ!

What do you say, My Hearers, to all this? I have pleaded with some of you hundreds of times and now, in this, my last Sabbath message for the year, I ask you once again—Will you come to Christ? When will you come? Tomorrow? That means never, for tomorrow never comes. By-and-by? That means that you do not intend to come to Christ at all! The text is in the present tense, "him that comes to me," for, "now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation." Trust in Jesus now, Sinner! Trust your soul to Him as you trust your money to your banker and your body to your doctor! "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." Oh, that the Holy Spirit may enable you to say, at this moment, "This is a sinner's salvation and, as I am a sinner, it exactly suits my case! I accept it, My Lord, praising and blessing You that I, a poor, foul, lost, condemned sinner coming to You, am saved—saved now and saved forever! Glory be unto Your holy name! Amen!"

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: LUKE 11:1-26.

1. And it came to pass, that as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. It seemed to this disciple as if he did not know how to pray after he had heard Christ pray. The prayer of Jesus was so infinitely above anything that he had ever reached that he said, "Lord, teach us to pray." And as if he felt that he needed a precedent for asking such hallowed instruction, he said, "Teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." We must all feel that if we are to pray aright, we must be taught of God, by his Holy Spirit. We are full of infirmities and if there is any time when our infirmities are felt most, it is when we engage in

prayer, but "the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought." Let us, then, breathe this prayer to our great Teacher, "Lord, teach us to pray."

2. And He said to them, When you pray, say, Our Father which are in Heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, as in Heaven, so in earth. When we come to God in prayer, we are apt to think first of our own necessities, but if we came aright, in the spirit of sonship, truly saying, "Our Father who are in Heaven," we should begin our prayer like this, "'Hallowed be Your name.' May all men honor, reverence, and adore Your holy name. 'Your kingdom come.' We are not satisfied that You should be anything less than King! Our heart's desire is, 'Reign, gracious God over us and over all men.' 'Your will be done, as in Heaven, so in earth.' 'Your will be done,' rather than ours." Now comes a prayer for ourselves—

3. Give us day by day our daily bread."Give us, O Lord, what we really need—not that which would be a luxury, but that which is a necessity. 'Give us,' according as we shall need it day by day, what we shall then actually need—'our daily bread.'" We are not warranted in asking much more than this in temporal matters. They are all comprehended in this petition as far as they are necessary, but God has not given us carte blanche to ask for wealth, or honor, or any such dangerous things. There is no harm in asking for bread—and He will give us that.

4. And forgive us our sins.We also need to pray this prayer. I do not think that our Savior ever anticipated a time when His disciples on earth would not need to pray, "Forgive us our sins."

4. For we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation. "Lord, do not try us and test us more than is absolutely necessary, for we are so apt to fall! 'Lead us not into temptation,' but if we must be tempted"—

4. Deliver us from evil."If some good end is to be answered by our being thus tested, then let it be so, but, O Lord, 'deliver us from evil,' and especially from the Evil One—do not allow us to fall into his hands in the hour of temptation."

5, 6. And He said to them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lendme three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, andIhave nothing to set before him. This man was in a sad plight—his friend was faint and hungry and he was willing enough to entertain him, but he had "nothing to set before him." So he acts very wisely—he goes to a friend, and asks him to lend him three loaves.

7. And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you. If the man outside keeps on knocking. If he will not go away without the bread he wants for his friend, what will happen?

8. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give to him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needs. See the power of importunate prayer? And you, Beloved, can have all that you really need for yourselves or others if you will only ask for it in the right way. If, summoning every faculty of your being, you resolve to plead, and plead, and plead yet again and again, and never take, "No," for an answer, your heart's desire shall be granted!

9. And I say unto you, ask, andit shall be given you. But if asking does not seem to prevail with God— 9. Seek, and you shall find. And if, for a while, you do not find, come closer in—

9. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. There are different methods of praying and each one has its special adaptation to the state in which you may be—so use that method to which the Holy Spirit guides you—so use all methods until you prevail.

10, 11. For everyone that asks receives, and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? There were many stones in those days that were in appearance wonderfully like the bread which they used in the East, but would any father mock his son by giving him one of those stones to break his teeth, instead of bread that he could eat? Never!

11-13. Or if he asks for a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly

Father give the Holy Spirit to them that asks Him? [See Sermon #959, Volume 16—RIGHT REPLIES TO RIGHT REQUESTS.] If you have the Holy Spirit, you virtually have all good gifts, for the Spirit is the earnest of God's Love, the pledge of joys to come! And He brings with Him all things that are necessary and good for you!

14. And He was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. So that this poor man could not obey the Savior's teaching. He could not pray, for he was under the influence of a dumb devil. How many of that sort there are still in the world! They cannot speak with God, they have never learned to pray, for they are possessed by a dumb devil!

14. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spoke; and the people wondered. When the devil is driven out of men by Christ, they soon begin to pray. The little sentence, "Behold, he prays," was the indication of a new birth in Saul of Tarsus. The Lord grant that some here who have been possessed by a dumb spirit, may be graciously led to pray! Remember, dear Friend, that God will hear your prayer the first time you call upon Him—and there is a text which says, "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

15. But some of them said, He casts out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils. They could not have uttered a fouler lie than this! And if people thus slandered the Lord Jesus Christ, we need not be surprised if they speak ill of us!

16. And others, tempting Him, sought of Him a sign from Heaven. Yet they had a very striking one in the dumb devil being cast out of the man! What clearer sign than that could they have?

17. 18. But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house fails. If Satan also is divided against himself how shall his kingdom stand? Because you say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. If Satan cast out Satan, his kingdom would soon come to an end! Note how calmly the Savior met these mockers and quibblers. There is no trace of anger in His words—they said the worst thing they could say about Him and His work and yet, in the coolest manner possible, He closes their mouths in the silence of shame. God grant us Grace to be calm and strong even when we are most furiously assailed! It is when we are in a hurry and fret that we grow weak.

19-23. And if I, by Beelzebub, cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges. But if I, with the finger of God, cast out devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keeps his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he takes from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divides his spoils. He that is not with Me is against Me: and he that gathers not with Me, scatters. Christ had made no compact with the powers of darkness! He was not casting the demons out with the devil's aid—it was absurd to think that He was! He was fighting them and casting them out by His own Divine, Omnipotent energy. Now comes a very striking parable—

24. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man—Satan does, sometimes, go out of men entirely of his own accord without being turned out. He goes out for a walk, meaning to go back again. Many a man has left off being a drunk, or left off being lascivious—for a time—"when the unclean spirit is gone out of a man"—

24. He walks through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, I will return unto my house—You see that he still calls it his house. He has gone out for a walk, but he has taken the keys of his house with him. Some people sign the pledge and give up being drunks for a time, but if the devil is still their master, he has only gone away for a while, and he will come back again before long. If he goes out of his own accord, he will come back when he pleases—"I will return unto my house"—

24, 26. From where I came out. And when he comes, he finds it swept and garnished. The man has become quite a decent sort of fellow! He has given up his bad ways and is a respectable member of society. The house is swept and garnished, but it is the devil's house all the same!

26. Then goes he, and takes to him even other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first [See Sermon #613, Volume 11—"the strong one driven out by a stronger one."] There are, alas, many who have only a sham conversion, a conversion which lasts but a very little while. The devil was not cast out of them, but he went out of his own accord. But where Christ has come—the One who is far stronger than the devil—to cast him out of his house, the devil will never be allowed to come back again, Christ will take care of that! Having won the victory and taken the house, he will keep it by force of arms. But beware, I pray you, of a "conversion" without Christ! Beware of a "reformation" in which the devil, himself, is a co-worker with you, for it will come to something worse in the end! Let me read the verse again—"Then goes he, and takes to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first." He becomes a worse man than ever because once he promised to be better, but only promised it in his own strength, which was utter weakness!

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