

The Devil

by Thomas Bradbury

The sermon highlights the contrast between man's heart and God's Christ, and the importance of having a good understanding in the fear of the Lord.

Scripture: Psalm 121:2, Matthew 15:22-28, Romans 8:26, Hebrews 4:16

Topics: "Demon Possession", "Faith Healing"

Description

Thomas Bradbury preaches about the encounter of a Gentile woman with Jesus, highlighting her great faith and humility in seeking help for her demon-possessed daughter. Despite being initially rebuffed, her persistence and faith in Jesus' power led to her daughter's healing. The sermon emphasizes the importance of genuine faith, humility, and persistence in seeking God's help, even when faced with challenges and apparent setbacks.

Transcript

"And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David: my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." (Matthew 15:22)

A striking contrast is set before us in this very blessed and instructive chapter. The first part exposes the deceitfulness and depravity of man's heart, the second part reveals the love and affection of the heart of God's Christ. To superficial religionists, those who are not taught by the Spirit of the living God, these truths will be hateful. To ceremonialists, sacramentalists, and Ritualists, these are words of withering exposure. The axe of Divine truth is laid by an omnipotent hand to the root of the tree of error, superstition, and outside show. This tree flourished in the days of our blessed Lord and Master, and its fruits are abounding now. It will be for us this morning, in humble dependence upon the guidance of God the ever-blessed Spirit, by the light which He throws upon His own Word, and the spiritual understanding with which He blesses the truly-taught children of God, to see and know on which side of this picture we are represented. Where are we? Have we our portion with the hypocrites or with those who are Israelites indeed? The Lord Jesus Christ was a discriminating Teacher, and the disciple who has been made spiritually and truly honest before Him, loves to know his state described, though the description may be hateful and irksome to his fleshly nature. See how God declares to Jeremiah that the ministry of the Word should be discriminating and separating: "Thou shalt stand before Me; and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth." (Jer. 15:19) But here we find a greater than Jeremiah, ay, a greater than all the prophets combined. This is the Teacher sent from God, the Messenger of the

everlasting covenant, the Expositor of His Father's will, and Revealer of the secrets of all hearts. He speaks and hypocrites are confounded. He ceases to speak and those who are in possession of an honest and good heart of His own giving, cease not to ply Him with petitions and supplications. Here you see the difference between mere professor and the true possessor. The Lord Jesus Christ can never say anything too bad in describing the living in Jerusalem to offend them, while the hypocrites in Zion will be enraged at what they consider to be the unmerciful and uncharitable words which flow from His lips, and from the lips of those who are taught and sent by Him. It is the mercy of those who are brought in true humility and self-abnegation to meet within these walls, and to experience the gathering power of God the Holy Ghost to the person of a precious Christ, to hang only on His grace-filled lips, be blessed with His counsel, and with those comforts which flow from His once exercised and sorrowing heart. It is our unspeakable privilege to see the truths of God's Word in His own light, and to receive them just as He reveals them, without any attempt to make them palatable to our fleshly taste, though the reception of them may scorch up every desire and determination arising from our wretched flesh.

Oh, to be brought to Jesus' feet,

Though sorrows fix me there,

Is still a blessing: and how sweet

To seek His face in prayer!

Though sighs and tears its language be,

If Christ be nigh, and smile on me."

Now let us look at the contrast which appears in this chapter. From the commencement up to the 21st verse Jesus lays bare the hypocrisy of the Jerusalem Pharisees. Mark that! Jerusalem Pharisees, highly-favoured ones, privileged with all the advantages of the temple worship and service. They could consult the law of God each day, and almost every hour of the day, yet all they could do was to flatter themselves and find fault with others. This is the very essence of Pharisaism, and reigns almost on every hand in the professing Church now-a-days. Think a little as to how you would like these titles attached to your names, Murmurers, Complainers, Faultfinders, Busybodies. See! The Pharisees asked Jesus, "Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread." He answered them by asking another question, which was a peculiarity of our blessed Lord and Master. "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" This was as much as to say, My Father's Word requires no human exposition or interpretation to make it plain or clear. "For God commanded, saying, honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." Then, quoting from Isaiah 29., He said, "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you saying, This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me." (Matt. 15:1-8) That is a testing word for us. How many of us have been singing this morning with our lips while our hearts have been cold and indifferent? How many here have been singing with a good understanding in the fear of the Lord, even without that flowing warmth and feeling we so much enjoy? Yes, I ask you, and may God Himself answer the question in an approving conscience, How many of you have been favoured to sing with feeling and understanding that sweet hymn of dear old John Kent, with which we commenced this service?

JEHOVAH hath said, 'tis left on record,
The righteous are one with Jesus the Lord;
At all times He loves them, 'twas for them He died,
Yet often He proves them, for grace must be tried."
Also that precious hymn of old John Berridge:
How watchful is the loving Lord,
How sweet His providential Word,
To children that believe!
Your very hairs are numbered all;
Not one by force or chance can fall
Without your Father's leave."

How many of us, in the presence of the great Searcher of hearts, can give our unfeigned assent and consent to all the everything contained in these precious hymns? He knows I can in the very solemnities of my soul, and that without a shade of presumption. But let us proceed. "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me." Awful state! Awful condition! I was about to say, it is better for such to keep away from the congregation of the faithful; but I will not say so. How can I tell what design of mercy, what purpose of love, God may have toward some whose hearts are now as dead and hard as the nether millstone, and cold as ice itself? It is not for me to sit in judgment, or to speak unadvisedly of such; but I must, in faithfulness to my God, admonish, rebuke, reprove, and declare God's separating truth whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. "But in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matt. 15:9) Man's religion springs from the flesh, has wholly to do with the flesh, and ends in the flesh. It is wholly occupied with outward things while the inward and spiritual are simply ignored. Human tradition is hailed, while Divine revelation is hooted. Beautiful hands are seen at the table; but beastly hearts are hidden from the gaze beneath a mass of fleshly religious rubbish. The head is filled with zeal for outside show; the heart is simply "Enmity against God."

Jesus "called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand." The Lord will see to it that His own taught ones have an intelligent knowledge of Himself and His truth. He addresses Himself, not to their feelings, frames, sentiments, or traditions, but to their ears and understanding. Many are on the look out for their feelings to be fed and pampered; and if they are not indulged, their experimental gall is roused against faithful preachers of the Word; and this they call faithfulness and honesty. May God graciously keep us from all such. See! I have come across many in my time who have listened to the preaching of God's glorious Gospel for years, who, when asked a question or two in reference to it, have manifested no understanding in the things of God, and no comprehension of the truth. These appear to drag out a miserable existence, feeding on frames and sentiments, but ignorant of that blessed experience described in Col. 2:2. "That their hearts might be comforted." There is feeling. "Being knit together in love." Where there is a knitting, there must be a mingling of pain and pleasure. "Unto all riches of the full assurance of

understanding of the mystery of God (the Holy Ghost), and of the Father, and of Christ." You see a good understanding in the fear of the Lord is no mean mercy. "Hear, and understand." What? That Pharisees, Papists, Ritualists, and free-willers all lie when they say that defilement is contracted from without. Listen! "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." The Pharisees were indignant after they heard this saying, and well they might, for in it the Lord Jesus Christ conveyed the appalling fact that their praying, praising, and preaching was one mass of filth and abomination in the sight of an all holy and sin-hating God. With the hammer of Divine truth and the rod of Divine judgment Christ smashes the whole superstructure of ceremonialism, sacramentalism, sacerdotalism, and free-willism to shivers. He plucks up all these noxious weeds by the roots. Make a note of this! "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." (Matt. 15:13) O what discrimination! Do you like it? "Let them alone." Very salutary counsel; but why should He say, "Let them alone?" Simply because of that which I have quoted from the prophecies of Jeremiah: "And if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth." See! Take forth the precious, have regard to the precious, preach to the precious; see to it that the testimony is such that the precious sons and daughters of Zion can feed upon, then the vile will be sure to take offence, because they are not noticed, and according to their deceiving insinuation, sinners are not preached to. Blessed be God, in Grove chapel none but sinners are preached to.

To understand these terms aright,

This grand distinction should be known

Tho' all are sinners in God's sight,

There are but few so in their own.

To such as these our Lord was sent:

They're only sinners who repent.

What comfort can a Saviour bring

To those who never felt their woe?

A sinner is a sacred thing;

The Holy Ghost has made him so.

New life from Him we must receive

Before for sin we rightly grieve.

"Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

Peter asks for an explanation. And Jesus said, "Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?" Ofttimes we are terribly afraid and greatly anxious in reference to those we love, who are very near and dear to us by the ties of earthly relationship, on account of the worldly, sensual, and devilish influences which surround them. But think of this, If they had not worldly, sensual, and devilish natures

within them, not all the influences that can spring from hell or from the seething masses of corruption around them could ever affect or hurt them for a single moment. Look at the Saviour's solemn declaration! "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." The child of God does not look around to see whom this painful testimony affects, or whose portrait is thus taken in the light of God's perfections. No! He sees himself, and mourns over his indwelling depravity. He feels and groans under the vile lurkings of every abomination and iniquity, and confesses that were it not for the sovereign power of Jehovah, these, which are ever on the alert, would break out in open sin and villainy. "These are the things which defile a man; but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man." Jesus here directs the minds of His disciples to that which God sees and condemns, not to that which man sees and approves. Now, as we are taught by the Holy Ghost to look at ourselves in the light of His perfections, as He shines into our hearts! Shines into our hearts? No! It is truly astonishing to notice the mistakes we are guilty of when quoting God's Word. Let us read the portion (2 Cor. 4:6) "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The light of God's lamp not only shines into, but it shines in. When this is the case we see ourselves just as we are, vile, black, filthy, and we can join with John Newton

Father, since I can hardly bear

What is myself I see,

How vile and black must I appear,

Most holy Lord, to Thee!

The Pharisees came to Jesus to find fault with the outward acts of His disciples, with their unwashed hands, but were blind to the dirty state of their own hearts. It is wonderful to notice how the wretched Pharisees incessantly found fault with the followers of Christ, and how He in every case confounded the faultfinders and defended His own. It is our lot this morning, by the guidance of the blessed Spirit, to have respect to the state of the inner man, to beg of Him with whom we have to do, in the language of the Psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any way of pain or grief in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Ps. 139:23,24) As we are searched, and we see ourselves in the light of His glory, we are ashamed, ay, horrified; and as we are brought into experimental oneness with the Son of God, and feelingly possess a new heart, a soft heart, an honest and good heart, we are increasingly convinced of our utter vileness and filthiness, and cry to Him who alone can hear and answer,

"Wash me, Saviour, or I die." Now look at the contrast! Jesus, having laid bare the human heart, and fully proved that with all the religion in the world at its beck it is still far from God and deceitful above all things, turns His back upon the clean-handed but hard-hearted gentry which were of Jerusalem. Yes! He turns away from the temple with its services, ceremonies, ordinances, and divers washings, and goes in the way where a poor outsider, with a broken and aching heart, would seek to know the loving heart of a covenant God in Christ.

"Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon." Let me direct your attention to the corresponding portion in Mark 7:24, which to my mind has been very precious for more than a fortnight: "And from thence He arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an

house, and would have no man know it; but He could not be hid." Do you think that He can be hid now? No! No more than He could be hid from poor, tried, and tempted Jacob, when he looked into His face, saying, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me" no more than He could be hid from the three Hebrews amid the fierce flames of Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, no more than He could be hid from Daniel when He shut the lions' mouths, no more than He could be hid from Paul amid the darkness, storm, and tempest which beset the corn-ship of Alexandria, as described in Acts 27:23-25: "For there stood by me this night the Angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." Oh, no! "He could not be hid" from the adoring gaze of the poor widow woman at the gate of Nain, whose son He raised from the cold hand of death. He could not be hid from Martha and Mary, no, nor Lazarus either, when the command went forth, "Lazarus, come forth!" He could not be hid from His own elect in the set time of favour; but He was hid from those who were engrossed with outside washings, human traditions, carnal ordinances, and religious frippery.

"Hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes." Why? Jesus gives the only reason. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." (Matt. 11:25,26) He could not be hid from this hidden one of Syro-Phenicia. With His back upon Jerusalem, and all its religion, He came to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon for the purpose of showing to His own Israel that His lost sheep were not confined within the narrow bounds of one nation, though that nation was highly favoured and distinguished by the name of Israel.

He would reveal the sovereignty of Divine grace in proving that in every nation under heaven, that sinner, Jew or Gentile, that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him. He would demonstrate the fact that they are not all Israel who are of Israel according to the flesh, (Rom. 9:6) that "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." (Rom. 2:28,29) See!

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:29) Jesus will have His own to know that it is not by the outward observance of commands, precepts, laws, or injunctions of God's Word, or of relationship to Abraham after the flesh, that their Israelitish origin, standing, and glory are to be experienced and enjoyed; but by the convincing, confirming, and comforting power of the Holy Ghost, the indwelling Teacher and Guide, they are brought to know their high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

We now come to notice the words of the text: "And, behold." Whenever you see that word "behold," you may rest assured there is something wonderful to be revealed, or, as one has quaintly remarked, "When you see that sentinel at the door, you may be sure there is something very precious within." "And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." She did not come to the Lord with hands well washed and beautifully got up; but with a bursting, broken, and bleeding heart. She did not come to tell Him what a sweet time she had with her family at prayer that morning. She did not come to tell Him how glowing and gushing her love had been, how strong and firm her faith was found, or how confirmed and unshaken her hope was. Oh, no! She was like what many of His tried and tempted ones are now, who groan to Him in the bitterness of their spirit, "Lord, instead of peace I have great trouble; there is a devil in the house, and there was a devil of a row in the house this morning." What do you very

proper and pious ones think of such creatures as these? Know ye anything of such an experience as this? It may be the lot of some who are within these walls now, to groan, not only because there is a devil in the house, but because devils have assailed you in every step of your journey hither. The fervent cry from your oppressed heart is, Lord, do appear for me in that precious Gospel chariot of Thine, and give me in the ministry of Thy Word some words of comfort and consolation for my wounded and bleeding heart. Give me to know, by the teaching of Thy blessed Spirit, that I am one of Thine, and that Thou art mine. Lord, remember my child, the grievously vexed, the devil possessed. Let the untruthful one experience the power of Thy truth, the foolish one the power of Thy wisdom, the dishonest one the power of Thy faithfulness. Do cause the liar, the wayward, and dishonest one to experience the sweetness of Thy love, and the knowledge of blessed oneness with Thee in the Son of Thy love.

"A woman of Canaan." Not a daughter of Abraham according to the flesh. Not one of the Israelites who were brought out of Egypt to inherit the Land of Promise; but one of those who have been set forth as the representatives of those who should be the troublers and tormentors of God's people throughout all time, as pithily described in that blessed hymn of dear old Kent's:

The Canaanite still in the land,
To harass, perplex, and dismay,
Brought Israel of old to a stand,
For Anak was stronger than they.
What God had designed they possessed,
Supported and kept by His hand;
Yet, lest on their lees they should rest,
The Canaanite dwelt in the land."

God had declared that the Canaanite should be driven out of the land; but here was one brought to know her right to the possession of the land of spiritual promise and covenant relationship. She was a Canaanite after the flesh, but an Israelite after the Spirit. And Israelite, indeed, who, in the face of discouragements, could fall at His feet and own His glorious sovereignty. She was one of the accursed race of Canaan, and, according to the law, "an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." (Eph. 2:12) But see! She is brought nigh to God with a cry in her heart for mercy, and a confession on her lips of the sovereignty of Him whose mercy she sought.

"Have mercy on me, O Lord." Look at that cry; it is intensely personal, though the devil was grievously vexing the daughter, not the mother. Ah, my dear friends, the misery of the daughter was the misery of the mother. The want of the daughter was the want of the mother. The sorrow of the daughter was the sorrow of the mother. The sins of the daughter were the sins of the mother. The devilishness of the daughter, the devilishness of the mother. Some of you ask, How can these things be? Don't ask that question; for if you know yourselves and are brought to the experience of God's sovereign mercy and covenant salvation, you will see your own sins, follies, failings, and falls brought to light again, to your shame and sorrow, in those of your children. Come here, my friend. Just give me thy confidence for a moment or two. Hast thou a

wayward, weak, or incorrigible child? Where hast thou taken thy child this morning? Methinks I hear thee say, In the arms of faith to Jesus, though, through accursed unbelief, my arms are weak and weary. In the bosom of parental affection I have borne him to the mercy-seat and laid him there, not with so many words, nicely-rounded periods, or beautiful sentences, but in sighs, and groans, and agonies unknown to all the world beside. This poor woman of Canaan cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord." What a miracle of mercy! A Gentile dog, one of an accursed race, acknowledging the glorious sovereignty of King Jesus, while the wretched Israelites after the flesh, the Pharisees, priests, Scripture readers, and ceremonialists, hated, despised, and rejected Him. A poor outcast stranger came to Jesus and addressed Him as "Lord," and "Thou Son of David." Was that language suited to her Gentile lips? I answer, No! Only to Israelites indeed. But mark! Underneath the words flowing from a Gentile tongue there were the groans, cries, and sighs of a spiritual, Israelitish heart. Look at the titles: "O Lord" that expresses sovereignty; "Thou Son of David" that acknowledges His Messiahship.

"My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." You who are parents, have you not those at home or abroad who are very near and dear to you, "grievously vexed with a devil?" Oh, what a legion of devils distress the homes of God's elect. Here are a few of them. A proud devil, a conceited devil, a lying devil, a dishonest devil, an ill-tempered devil, a profligate devil. Oh, look at this! A daughter's devil is the cause of a mother's visit to the mercy-seat. It is no small privilege, though a very painful one, to besiege the throne with cries and sighs of parental affection to Him who hears in secret, and graciously leads His wayward children into His own right way.

"But He answered her not a word." Have you been there? I have trodden that ground for days, weeks, and months. Prayers and petitions have been presented, cries and sighs have ascended; yet no answer has been given, nor a word from His gracious lips. Satan suggested that it was time to give it up; but God's work cannot be left half-done. You may depend upon this, that faith repelled is faith strengthened, and prayer unheeded is prayer energized. Blessings delayed, while the suppliant lingers at the mercy-seat, will prove to be for the strengthening of faith, the confirmation of hope, and the increase of love. Sooner or later there must be the rich realization of the truth of this. Let me direct your attention to a few portions of God's most Holy Word, which may tend to illustrate this seemingly strange deportment of Jesus. Turn with me to John 11:5,6: "Now Jesus loved Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus. When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He abode two days still in the place where He was." Why does Martha's name come the first? Oh, say some, because she was the mistress of the house. There was a more significant reason than that. Martha is often blamed for her busy, bustling propensities; and those who are possessed of a Martha-spirit, do not receive many blessings from God's poor, short-sighted children. Oftentimes the reflections cast upon such are not in keeping with the spirit of the Master. See! The infirmities of Martha appear, but the weaknesses of Mary are withheld from view. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Rom. 5:20) "And when they had nothing to pay, He frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love Him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And He said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged." (Luke 7:42,43) "Jesus loved Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus." Martha's name is first in order to show that those of Jesus' disciples who are lightly esteemed by men, receive special attention from Him. Lazarus was sick. Did Jesus run with eager haste to the bedside of His dying friend? No! For we are told "He abode two days still in the same place." Know ye not that when He came walking on the sea to His disciples, He appeared as though He "would have passed by them?" (Mark 6:48) And who can forget the sweet narrative of His walk to Emmaus with His two disciples, when "they drew nigh unto the village whither they went, He made as though He would have gone further?" (Luke 24:28) But they constrained Him to turn in and tarry with them. Have you never been in

straits when He appeared to notice and bless every one of His friends but you? The plaintive language of Job well expressed your case: "Lo, He goeth by me." (Job 9:11) It may be that some of you poor children of God in those pews imagine that He makes as though He will go further and not stay with you. You cried, "When wilt Thou come to me?" But He remains in the same place.

"He answered her not a word." Why was this? That the importunate one may be still more importunate, that the praying one may be still more prayerful. But, we may look at this not only in reference to our spiritual experience, but in the every day concerns of life. You whose lot it is to walk the ever fluctuating 'Change, who grapple day by day with the hard and grasping ones of the earth, in that very position which an all-wise Provider has placed you, and in which He has promised to uphold you, tell me, is it yours, when difficulties, dangers, and doubts press hard upon you, to cry to Him from the very depths of your soul's distress and helplessness? Ay, indeed it is; but somehow or other, His chariot wheels drag heavily, His voice is not heard, His help lingers, and He appears to be far away over the mountains and hills of doubt, fear, and unbelief. But, blessed be His holy Name, in His own time and way He will come; "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." (Hab. 2:3) It is our blessed privilege, though we may be looked upon as a motley lot, to wait for the appearing of our only Helper and Deliverer, and to watch for the manifestation of His almighty power on our behalf. "But He answered her not a word."

And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us." Why should the disciples urge such a request upon the Lord Jesus Christ? Various are the conjectures in reference thereto. We wonder not at the importunity of the poor woman, for she had a hard case to carry to the Friend of sinners, and one that would stand investigation by the great Searcher of hearts. She cried, and her cry was one of misery. She cried, and her cry was one of pressing necessity. Her's was a God-given necessity, hence her unabated importunity. The disciples were weary with this wail of woe, which caused them to long for the Master to send her away in possession of the blessing she so earnestly desired. Send her away with the assurance that her request is answered, that the devil is cast out of her daughter, and that she will find at home that peace and quietness which her anxious soul is seeking. Think of this in another light. "They besought Him saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us." They did not say, "She crieth after Thee;" but "she crieth after us." It is an oppressive load for a disciple of Jesus, a preacher of God's glorious Gospel, to find himself in the midst of even an attached people who are looking up to him as though he had the ability to communicate the truth he faithfully and feelingly preaches, or to impart light and love, comfort and consolation, which can alone be done by the sovereign power of the Spirit of Christ. Many of God's children are troubled with this weakness, looking to the sent one instead of to the Sender. I have experienced the sin, the weakness, the folly of looking to the stream for instruction, comfort, and consolation, instead of to the Fountain, "the deep sweet Well of Love." My heart knows what it is to thank God for His own sent servants, from whose anointed lips He has carried words of life, love, and liberty to my thirsty, waiting, and anxious spirit; but He has taught me that not one of His sent messengers, duly commissioned and qualified by His blessed Spirit, is to be lightly esteemed. Hence it is my pleasure and delight to welcome to Grove chapel pulpit those in whom the image of the Master is seen, and in whose testimony His gracious voice is heard. In these words, "Send her away; for she crieth after us," there appears to me to be an acknowledgment of creature-helplessness and a renunciation of fleshly power. It was as much as to say, Lord, Thou alone canst speak the healing and delivering word, we cannot. So it is with all the true disciples of Jesus whom He sends out with His message of love, grace, and mercy. There stand, and in spirit, if not in the very words of Hart, cry,

Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,

Weak and wounded, sick and sore!

Jesus ready stands to save you,

Full of pity join'd with power;

He is able;

He is willing; doubt no more!

God's own sent one loves to see the Father's glory in every word that drops from his lips. He longs for a precious Christ to be exalted in the affections of elect and called sinners, and for the blessed Spirit to be honoured in the experience of all those who hang upon his lips.

"Send her away." It is a marvellous mercy for us to know that neither the weakness of the disciples nor the wickedness of devils can influence the Friend of sinners to send one of His poor crying friends away without a blessing. His loving heart embraces every tried and tempted saint with all its sorrows and sufferings arising from sin and Satan, and can never neglect, look over, or discard a single seeking soul whom the everlasting love of the Father, by the condescending love of the Spirit, has drawn to His sacred feet.

Our time has gone, and if He will graciously preserve and bless us until Sunday morning next, we will ask the guidance of His Spirit through the rest of this precious narrative.

To the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be unceasingly ascribed all glory and praise, now and for ever. Amen.

Instructive and encouraging to the spiritually minded and the spiritually enlightened are those wonderful contrasts which I endeavoured to set before you last Sunday morning from this very chapter. They are calculated to lead us to notice the conduct of those who are blessed or cursed with a Bible in their hands. This is a startling expression to some of you; nevertheless it is no more startling than true. The Bible in the hand with enmity in the heart is a curse indeed. A religious exterior with a graceless interior is an awful condition to be in before a just and holy God. Christ in apparent possession of the tongue, but Satan holding full control of the heart. Punctilious in attention to outward appearances, ceremonies, and duties, yet totally ignorant of the "inward washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus 3:5) Clean hands and a filthy heart. A pretty skin with a polluted soul. Whited sepulchres filled with corruption, pollution, and death. A Bible in the hand, a text ready for every occasion, and suitable portions hung upon the walls; but total ignorance of the inward and spiritual meaning which is couched beneath the letter of Divine inspiration, and brought home to the hearts of God's elect by the power of God the Holy Ghost. Such is the unerring description of mere professors given by our blessed Lord and Master in the former part of this very instructive and heart-searching chapter.

As I told you last Sunday morning, He turned His back upon these fault-finding Pharisees, hard-hearted hypocrites, ready talkers, and apparently consistent walkers, "and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon." This appears to be contrary to the design of His ministry and to the commission which the Father had put into His hands; for in Matt. 10:5,6; we are told that Jesus sent forth the twelve, "and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Now, if you will use your Bibles, you will see that our

blessed Lord, according to Rom. 15:8, was "a Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." Jesus was sent to the Jews, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, to the seed of Abraham; but here He appears to turn His back upon the whole of them, and departs with a longing heart to manifest His Father's mercy, and reveal Himself as the Salvation of God to a poor Gentile dog, to one of those very persons against whom the Jews had, in their head-knowledge of the letter of God's Word, an abiding antipathy. Yet, in this very act, the Lord proves that His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts higher than our thoughts. Here is a path that no fowl knoweth, and the vulture's eye, that is, the keen perception of the unclean professor, hath not detected. As the lightning makes its way with its irresistible power through the murky and dark cloud, so the grace of our God will have free course and be glorified in the most unlikely spots. Innocency and purity in the person of Jesus will find a place in the midst of depravity and pollution, yet contrast no defilement thereby.

"Then Jesus went thence." He turned His back upon the temple, priests, sacrifices, ceremonies, and ordinances, and goes into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. "And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." You see, this poor woman had left a devil in the house that day, and she knew very well that none could effectually deal with that devil but Omnipotence itself. In the Man of sorrows she saw the Sovereign Lord of all. In the despised and Rejected of men, the Eternal and Mighty God, at whose behest all things in heaven, on earth, and in hell do exist. She acknowledged this at the commencement of her request. "Lord" this signifies Ruler and Sovereign. "Son of David" this views Him as the promised Messiah. Now Messiah, acting according to the letter of God's Word, could have nothing to do with one outside the boundaries of Israel. "He answered her not a word." This was a trial of her faith, and under the peculiar circumstances a severe one too. As I told you last Sunday morning, and it is a marvellous truth, a truth which was demonstrated in the experience of more than one anxious sorrowing, and broken heart within these walls, the sins of the child are the sins of the parent twice told; the misery of the child is the misery of the Spirit-taught father or mother. Is a child of mine vexed with a devil of any kind? I am humbled to the dust in knowing and feeling that that devil was first in me. The transmission of all corrupt and carnal dispositions is from parent to child. This we have seen from the Saviour's teaching in this very chapter: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Some here may think themselves not so bad as all that; but as assuredly as Jesus was the Truth, and spake nothing but the truth, so you will find it sooner or later. Yes, the very moment an outburst of temper, folly, or weakness is shown by the child, there is a corresponding feeling of anger and wrath in the parent who has transmitted these infirmities. "Who can understand his errors?" "But He answered her not a word." Why? To whet or sharpen her spiritual appetite, to continue her importunities at His sacred feet, to draw forth the earnest longings of her oppressed spirit in gracious pleas and petitions. See!

When God inclines the heart to pray,

He hath an ear to hear;

To Him there's music in a groan,

And beauty in a tear."

He delights to hear and accept the sweet music of prayer and supplication as it flows from the spiritually-exercised hearts of His weary and heavy-laden ones. He loves to see tears of His own giving as

they flow from the eyes of His sin-burdened, Satan-hunted children. Hence, "He answered her not a word." I need not ask, are there any such here this morning? There is one in the pulpit. He knows all about it. He knows what it is to knock, and wait, and watch; but, No answer. The face of the throne of grace is covered with a cloud of sin, and doubt, and fear. There is a stone on the well's mouth. Yet my soul can sing

Oh! Christ He is the Fountain,

The deep, sweet Well of Love!

The streams on earth I've tasted

Mark that! It does not say, I am tasting, but,

I've tasted,

More deep I'll drink above,

There to an ocean fullness

His mercy doth expand,

And glory, glory dwelleth

In Immanuel's land."

It is our blessed privilege to know something of that expressed in a verse of that beautiful poem which appears not in our hymn book

With mercy and with judgment

My web of time He wove,

And aye the dews of sorrow

Were lustred with His love;

I'll bless the Hand that guided,

I'll bless the Heart that plann'd,

When throned where glory dwelleth

In Immanuel's land."

Yes, it is our blessed privilege to thank and praise Him for "the dews of sorrow" as well as for the lustre of His love which shines so brightly amid the sweet sympathies of His once sorrowing but ever-loving heart.

"And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us." I would rather judge this request of the disciples charitably than otherwise, and cannot think it arose from a disinclination on their part to attend to her importunity, as from a painful sense of their own inability to yield her any help. They had been taught again and again that effectual means lay in the hands of Jesus only. They had to be

taught almost incessantly the precious lesson contained in the oft-repeated words, Bring it to Me! Bring him to Me! Bring her to Me! Bring everything to Me! There is a very precious illustration of this in the history of Joseph. (Gen. 41:55) "And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph." So every spiritual blessing, every covenant mercy we enjoy, must come to us at the command of JEHOVAH the Father, by the power of JEHOVAH the Spirit, from the hands of JEHOVAH the Saviour. Oftentimes when the command is issued, Go to Jesus, the poor child of God is sensible of so much helplessness that he cannot go. Why not? His knees are feeble and won't carry him. His hands hang down and he cannot lay hold of Him. But love must triumph, grace must reign. This is a glorious experience of the tried and tempted saints of the Most High, when they feel their incompetency to take a single step, Jesus comes just to the spot of His poor disciple's necessity and gives him a gracious lift out of the deep in which he was sinking, and encourages him with the blessed assurance that He has provided, and will provide for him all through his earthly pilgrimage, and secure to him at last an abundant entrance into His everlasting kingdom above. The disciples' entreaty, "Send her away; for she crieth after us," was as much as to say, "Send her home with the assurance that all will be well when she arrives there. Instead of a vexing devil let her be comforted with Thy smile brightening her abode. Instead of a heart throbbing with her sorrows, give her to experience that Thy joy is her strength. 'Send her away; for she crieth after us.'" Mark that! "After us." Much of this spirit preveils in the present day. After the pulpit, after the parson, after the preaching; but "not after Christ." Pulpit and parson worship is awfully prevalent; but God will cleanse His people in His own way from all their idols.

We now come to a very blessed and interesting portion of this narrative. "But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." We may look at this in two ways. "I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say"and may your judgment be according to the infallible touchstone of Divine truthGod's written Word spiritually expounded. See! It was a positive, real, and spiritual fact that Christ was sent to seek and to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But who are the lost sheep of the house of Israel? We cannot see anything of the nature of sheep, or any evidence of their being lost in those Pharisees, hypocrites and ceremonialists who considered themselves to be of the house of Israel because of descent from Abraham according to the course of natural generation. Did our blessed Lord treat them as belonging to the house of Israel, or as His own loved but lost sheep? The concurrent testimony of the Scriptures of truth is against such a fleshly theory. When John the Baptist saw the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he by the Spirit saw something vastly different to the appearance of lost sheep in them, and thus addressed them: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." (Matt. 3:7-9) The teaching of John by the Holy Ghost was this, Do not arrogate to yourselves those blessings, mercies, and privileges which God has made common to His own elect people, whether these be amongst the descendants of Abraham after the flesh or those "Gentiles upon whom His name was called," who must be brought from their wanderings to Himself by His irresistible grace.

You must remember the glorious grace which shines forth from that precious genealogy of Christ given in the first chapter of Matthew's Gospel. The names of three kings are left out of this tree, and three others are brought in. Who are they? Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth. Ruth! A Moabitess, concerning whose race the law said, they should not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever. But, blessed be the Lord, here she is, though a Gentile dog

"Grace had put her in the number

Of the Saviour's family."

According to the bitter spirit of the carnally-minded Jew, Ruth must go to hell; but according to the sovereign love and favour of Israel's covenant God, she is bound indissolubly in the bundle of eternal life, saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, and now mingles her praises with those of the glorified before the throne. Oh, how glorious is the grace that shines throughout the whole of that remarkable chapter, though oftentimes we pass it by with the thought that it will be unprofitable to read the list of names contained therein. Unprofitable? Never! Here we renew our acquaintance and association with our old friend and sister the Canaanitish harlot, and praise God for the grace which left her not to perish. My dear friends, every Word of God is pure, and running underneath the seemingly dry and uninteresting portions of Divine revelation are the streams of life and eternal love. The lost sheep of the house of Israel are God's elect people scattered abroad in midst of a naughty world. To these Christ declared He was sent to seek and save. There, at His feet, He saw one of them who, according to the flesh, could claim no kindred with Israel, but, according to the Spirit, was an Israelite indeed in whom was no guile.

Look at this in another light. Notice the emphasis on the word "but." "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He appears to say, Do not think I am sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel after the flesh, or that the infinite grace with which the Father entrusted Me is but for them. It is for all those whose names are in the book of life, all those upon whom the everlasting love of My Father was fixed before the foundation of the world. To these am I sent, and not one of them shall perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand. To the sheep, not to the goats, was Jesus sent. Look at one or two of the characteristics of sheep. Innocence. Gentleness. Simplicity. The sheep is about the most silly creature in all creation. They are imitators, acting not so much from instinct as from example. A precious truth lies beneath all this. The sheep of Christ act not graciously from any movement of the natural mind, but from something done for them and in them. Does not this lead the mind to John 10:27-29? "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." I wonder why our translators should have put the word "man" there. See! It is, "neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." Neither shall any devil, or any number of devils; any sin, or any number of sins; any influence, or any number of influences, either worldly, fleshly, or infernal, can pluck a sheep from the hand of the faithful Shepherd.

What from Christ that soul shall sever

Bound by everlasting bands?

Once in Him, in Him for ever;

Thus th' eternal covenant stands;

None shall pluck thee

From the Strength of Israel's hands."

See Ezekiel 34:30,31: "Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are My people, saith the Lord God. And ye My flock, the flock of My pasture, are men, saith the Lord God." Chosen, redeemed, preserved, and provided for by the Good, the Great, and the Chief Shepherd. He goes before to lead, guide, guard, and provide for them, and each shall be taught by

Him to say from a feeling heart, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." (Ps. 23:1)

But see! "Lost sheep." You read of these in many portions of God's blessed Book. Psalm 119:176: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Thy servant." Isaiah 53:6: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Jeremiah 50:6: "My people hath been lost sheep." See Matthew 18:11-14, and Luke 15:4-7. But especially notice 1 Peter 2:25: "But ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." Look at that word "returned." Peter does not say ye have, but "ye are returned." The language is intensely passive, in keeping with the experience of all those who are guided by the skillfulness of the Good Shepherd hands. I might multiply passages in reference to this, but look at that confession at the commencement of the service in the churches and chapels of the Establishment this morning: "Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against Thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us." That is Scriptural and experimental truth as flowing from the exercised hearts of the living children; but it is a huge lie as falling from the lips of intoning, jabbering, parroting, and whining hirelings.

How stands the case, my soul, with thee?

For heav'n are thy credentials clear?

Is Jesus' blood thy only plea?

Is He thy great Forerunner there?"

The words "Lost sheep" from the lips of the Master inspire the poor woman with sweet encouragement. Clean-handed but hard-hearted hypocrites might taunt her by raising dispensational barriers between her and Israel; but nothing could rob her of the conviction that she was one with the "lost sheep." Hers was a pressing case, and the faith and confidence which the Good Shepherd had wrought in her could not be destroyed. God-inspired importunity can never be discomfited. In the cries and entreaties of lost sheep, the Good Shepherd's heart has wondrous sympathy. "Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me." In these three words she confessed, "Lord, I am a lost sheep, a wandering sheep, a silly sheep, a miserable sheep. I am one of the very characters Thou hast described. Have mercy upon me!" It is marvellous to notice, shall I say? The electric thread of spiritual communication and sympathy existing between the loving heart of Jesus and the sorrowing spirit of this poor woman. Does He speak? He gives a spiritual understanding with the words. Does He hint at His mission to the lost? Lost sheep experience an intelligent apprehension of His mind. If He speaks of the house of Israel, though there may be those about me who are more highly favoured and more deeply taught, I look to Him with the eyes of faith and spiritual understanding; and as my ears catch the words which proceed from His gracious lips, I feel assured He means them for me. When He speaks of the lost, a chord is struck in my heart, and I cannot refrain from crying, Lord, that is me. When He speaks of the foolish, my chastened spirit responds, He means me. When He describes the wavering, the weak, and the weary, I feel it must be me. Does He paint me as black as Satan, and as filthy as a hog? I find no fault. I know it is the truth, and bowed in lowly adoration before Him as He reveals Himself in His lovingkindness and tender mercy, I cry, "Lord, help me!"

Let us look at these precious words: "Lord" a glorious person. "Help" a gracious link. "Me" a pitiable object. Did you notice that gracious link? Just note it down, for it is one of God's own "loops of blue." What does that mean? See! A loop connects, joins, unites. Blue is the colour which speaks of heaven, and God, and home. Look at the heavenly union expressed in this precious though short petition. A miserable sinner clinging to a merciful Saviour. Her misery was caused because she had a devil in her house.

We in our shortsightedness sometimes imagine the devil has full possession of the earthly house of this tabernacle; but this can never be. When once the devil is put out of possession of the house by the mighty power of the Lord Jesus Christ, he can never get possession again. According to your feelings some of you may be saying, That is not my experience. To such I say, May God graciously lead you to rest in His Word as sweetly applied by His good Spirit to your hearts. See Rev. 12:10; "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." But while the accuser is cast down, and the devil is cast out, we shall not be ignorant of his devices. His buffetings will cause us to cry out, Lord, in Thy glorious sovereignty, help, in Thy marvellous mercy, me, a poor sin-stricken, devil-distressed suppliant. The time would fail me to enumerate the portions of God's blessed Word which crowd upon my mind in which the help of JEHOVAH-JESUS is revealed.

What is help? Aid, assistance, healing, prevention, supply, deliverance. Blessed be God, all these we have in Zion's Deliverer. Look at Asa in 2 Chr. 14:11. He cried unto the Lord his God, and said, "Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power; help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, Thou art our God; let not man prevail against Thee." Have you noticed how Hezekiah renounces all help but God? 2 Chr. 32:8: "With him (Sennacherib) is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles."

This is brought about by the convicting power of God the Holy Ghost. See how he speaks to the heart: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thy help." (Hosea 13:9) Satan, the world, and the flesh will suggest there is no help for thee in thy God; but He who has begun the good work will finish it, and the children will be found crying, "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, and the faithful fail from among the children of men." (Ps. 12:1) "Be not Thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste Thee to help me." (Ps. 22:19) "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for Thy name's sake." (Ps. 79:9) How blessed it is to know that God, in the person and work of Jesus, has made full provision for every necessity and every cry of His poor children.

In Jesus I find all that I can possibly require for my soul's salvation, and all that God can give. See! He says, "I have laid help upon One that is mighty." (Ps. 89:19) In the person of Jesus, God is united to poor, helpless sinners, and teaches them by His blessed Spirit to confess, "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." (Ps. 121:2) Have you ever noticed that precious testimony in Psalm 54:4? "Behold, God is mine Helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul."

You will see the marginal reference is to Psalm 118:7: "The Lord taketh my part with them that help me." Who are these helpers, and how do they help? See 2 Cor. 1:11: "Ye also helping together by prayer for us." This is God-wrought, God-inspired, and God-indited prayer. O what a mercy to be found not seeking to have dominion over each other's faith, but to be helpers of each other's joy. (2 Cor. 1:24) All this

spiritual help is in union and communion with Christ. Am I sin-burdened?

The Sin-Bearer is my Helper. Am I distressed with the weight of my transgressions? The Obedient One is my Helper. Am I troubled with that foul spirit of unbelief? Through my tears I cry to my only Helper, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." (Mark 9:24) Am I oppressed because of coldness and listlessness in prayer? "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Rom. 8:26) Glorious Helper! Gracious help! Help in the covenant. Help in Jesus, nowhere else.

"None but Jesus

Can do helpless sinners good."

Do I groan under the conflict which rages within between the law of sin in my members and the law of God in my mind? Is my cry, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The Helper, the Deliverer, is sure to appear, and cause me to cry with a spirit of adoring gratitude, "I thank my God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 7:24,25) With such help as this, we may well encourage each other with these words, "Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16) There is many a soul within these walls this morning experiencing the need of help. Such are in possession of that precious loop which fastens poor sinners to the Help of the helpless, a precious Christ.

Now look! She meets with another seeming rebuff. "But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Dogs! An expression of supreme contempt. Look when you get home at the many places in the Word where it occurs. Under the law the dog was an unclean animal and must not be brought into the house of the Lord. David on one occasion appealed to the kingly position and magnanimity of Saul, the persecutor, thus, "After whom is the king of Israel come out? After whom dost thou pursue? After a dead dog, after a flea." (1 Sam. 24:14) When lame Mephibosheth was brought into the presence of David, with true humility he acknowledged his unworthiness to enjoy such an honour, thus, "What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?" (2 Sam. 9:8) When Shimei cursed David, Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, said unto the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord, the king? Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head." (2 Sam. 16:9) The term dog in many places of God's most Holy Word is used to describe the vilest characters. In one place it means the devil. Psalm 22:20: "Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog." In the 16th verse the persecutors of God's people are thus pictured, "For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me." Turn with me to Isaiah 56:10,11. False teachers are represented as dumb dogs that cannot bark, and greedy dogs which never have enough. In Matt. 7:6, the reprobate are set as a caution to God's elect. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs." Here we find ourselves sitting with the disciples listening to the injunction of the Master, not to display that which has been spiritually and Divinely communicated before the gaze of carnal and unregenerate men. Just notice those two awful Scriptures:

"BEWARE OF DOGS" (Phil. 3:2)

"WITHOUT ARE DOGS" (Rev. 22:15)

In the answer of our Lord to the poor woman her faith was cast into the furnace; but being genuine, heaven-born, God-wrought, it stood the test. She was classed with the dogs of whom the children are called to beware. Unbelief would reason thus: As a dog I cannot count upon the notice of the Master, nor

upon association with those who sit at His table and hear Him say, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." Faith, which ever worketh by love and attended with true humility, was willing to take its place with the Master's dogs under the table, out of sight. This woman took no word as harsh from the lips of so gentle and loving a Master as Jesus ever shows Himself to be. Look at her answer: "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their Master's table." Our translators do not give us the full meaning, nor the depth of reproach, contempt, and weakness couched beneath that expression which they have rendered "dogs." The simple meaning of the word is, "whelp." Her faith was willing to take the lowest place if Jesus would only speak the word. She seems to say, Lord, it is perfectly true. Thy judgment is just; yet Thou art full of grace.

I wish you to notice two very significant words in her reply to the Lord. The first is "Truth." Here she acknowledged the right of Jesus to say of her, and do with her, as He thought fit. The second is "Yet." Here she declared her desire to share in the love and affection of His heart. "Truth" is faith's Amen to God's judgment. "Yet" is faith's plea for God's mercy. "Truth" is the confession of the condemned. "Yet" is the cry of the child. "Truth" renounces all idea of merit. "Yet" receives everything from God's hands as the expression of His sovereign love. "Truth, Lord;" I deserve to be left without the gate, and to have written up against me wherever I go, "Beware of that dog." But, Lord, a living dog is better than a dead lion, and Thy life in me is evidenced by the abhorrence I have to the dog-like propensities of my nature, and the depravity of my heart. Lord, surely I must have Thy life or I should not long for Thy sweet company, to sit at Thy feet and to be lost in Thy love." Is this the experience of any here this morning? See! God-wrought faith cannot be beaten off. The faith of God's elect is that which overcomes the world, and defies the devil and all his brood. Oh, the blessedness of that "Yet." "Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their Master's table." Lord, I know Thy children must first be fed, but don't forget Thy dogs. Look at the humility of the woman! Content to be called a dog. Look at her modesty! Thankful to pick up crumbs. Look at her importunity! She would not be put off.

Listen to the words of the Deliverer: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Here I wish you to notice the difference in Jesus' language when speaking to believing Jews, to that addressed to believing Gentiles. "O thou of little faith," to those who were His, and Israelites according to the flesh; but to this Gentile dog, "O woman, great is thy faith." Turn to Matthew 8:5-13. Here you see the faith of the Gentile centurion. He said to Jesus, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." Lord, if I have this authority, surely Thou, who art the Sovereign Lord over all things, before whose word devils and diseases fly, canst "speak the word and my servant shall be healed." "When Jesus heard, He marvelled." Here is a wonder of grace! The Christ of God marvelling at the faith of His own creating. "He marvelled and said to them that followed, Verily." That is God's own Amen. "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel." Great faith in those who were accounted dogs. Little faith in those who were looked upon as sheep. Oh, my dear friends, of any of you have been led heretofore to trust in your religious connections, may it be your blessed privilege to experience the breaking down of all barriers, and to enjoy sweet communion with the eternally-loved flock. In Christ there is no partition dividing, no vail separating, but blessed oneness of heart. All in Him unite in praising Him Saviour, Helper, Shepherd, Healer, and Deliverer, yea, All in all.

"Be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Grace reigned. Faith triumphed. Barriers were broken. Devils defeated. Dogs defended, and the grievously vexed one

delivered. May it be our gracious lot to enjoy sweet communications from Him and blest communion with Him, sit at His sacred feet and delight in the sympathy of His loving heart which ever flows to His despised ones, and in His covenant mercy which He manifests to outcasts vile and base, to dogs, but not dead ones. O ye humble souls who cry for His mercy, ye modest ones who are thankful for His crumbs, ye importunate ones who linger at His feet, as assuredly as mercy is treasured up for you in Him, He will see to it that you are brought into the blessed realization of the same.

Gracious Deliverer command Thy blessing for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake. Amen.

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