

Sabbath School Teacher.

LESSON XXXVIII.

THE SYRAPHENIAN. (Mark vi. 24-30)

CO. IT TO MEMORY. V. 28, 29. PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. vi. 21-28. With vs. 24-26 read Isa. xlii. 3-6; with v. 27, Matt. x. 5; with vs. 28, 29, Matt. xv. 23; with v. 30, 1 John iii. 8.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—All things are possible to the believer. LEADING TEXT.—Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: for it is unto thee even as thou wilt. Matt. xv. 28.

INTRODUCTION.—Remember the Evangelists select, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, the events and addresses that fall in with their particular aim. This miracle is recorded by both Matthew and Mark. Matthew writes for Jews and this miracle has a message to them. They must not think the Gospel for them only. If they will not have it, The Gentiles will receive it. The children may let the bread fall from the table: the Gentiles, "dogs" as they call them, will eat it gladly.

And Mark, who wrote for converts from among Gentiles, finds this fitting in his narrative. It is a prophecy of the gathering of the Gentiles, of Satan's sway broken, and of their deliverance—long delayed indeed, but certain at the last. We are to study this woman in her affliction, in her application, in the grace she showed, and in the boon she received.

I. THE WOMAN: v. 25, only known by the record, "a certain woman" by verse a Syrophenian; by religion a Greek or non-Jewess; by residence in the coast of Tyre and Sidon, bordering on those cities, though in the bounds of Asher. Many Canaanites (so Matthew calls her, v. 26) remained in the land, Judges i. 31 and ii. 14. Tyre was a famous and ancient city, colonized from Sidon, now called Saida, both lying on the Mediterranean, about a hundred miles to the north of Jerusalem. The whole region was called Phenicia, which the Romans connected with Syria. How did the Lord come to be there? At Capernaum he was beset with the crowds (v. 2, 5) of scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem (v. 1). He left them (v. 21) and went—not probably out of the land of the Jews, but to the confines of it—and so left these objectors, in both senses, parting company with them, as with men whose enmity against him was rooted and settled. They were joined to their pride, unbelief and self-righteousness. He is willing that his disciples should see his mercy, rejected of Jews, exercised toward Gentiles. They needed the lesson.

II. HER AFFLICTION: for a parent is afflicted in the suffering or sin of a child. Let the pupils remember this. Her "young daughter" had an "unclean spirit" (v. 25), of the particular action of which we are not told. But judging from what we are told, of other cases of demoniacal possession, great misery must have been the result. (See on this subject, Lesson XXXIII.) In Satan's hour, these demons had power over some human beings, in ways at which we can only guess; just as we can only guess at the modes in which God's angels minister to saints (Eph. i. 14).

The case was hopeless to all human power. Her heart was well-nigh broken, like the heart of many a parent with a child grown up to doing Satan's will—not suffering a misfortune, but committing wilful sins. The Lord pity them! III. HER APPLICATION TO Jesus (v. 26). He was in a house; did not mean to enter on public teaching; "would have no man know it" (v. 24), "but he could not be hid," for he for his fame had gone before him. She came, at some cost of effort and of feeling, making her way under difficulties. She came from having heard of his works, and besought him that he would cast forth the demon (v. 26). This is a mother's love. It is carrying a miserable child to Christ in prayer. This is the type of many an intercessor. So our mother-church must carry her sinful, prodigal children to God, using all means, teaching them, following after them and praying for them. So, help the mission school, learn to be teachers, visitors, helpers of the poor.

IV. HER GRACES: for it was to bring out these that Jesus "spoke roughly" unto her. Putting together the account of Matthew and Mark, we see that at first he answered her nothing (Matt. xv. 23). She continued her importunity ("she crieth after us") to the annoyance of the disciples. They besought him—not the right kind of intercession—to send her away, either with a refusal, or more likely (see Matt. xv. 23) relief that they might be rid of her. So false "charity" relieves itself and tosses a gift to a petitioner "to get rid of him." Not Christ's way.

The Saviour says to the disciples, in not hearing (Matt. xv. 31), "I am not sent," &c. in his own ministry. This she hears. Her believing eye had had been, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David." Canaanite as she was, she saw more in him than did the scribes. His reply, to the disciples, touching his commission, she accepts so far, and now urges another plea, "Lord help me" (Matt. xv. 25). "If as son of David and Messiah, thou dost refuse, yet at this thou Lord." So faith is far-sighted, bold, courageous.

But what was she, that she should receive this boon? He now deals with her as a heathen, called "dogs" by the Jews. "It is not meet," &c. (v. 27). "The children" are the Jews. See Matt. xviii. 12. Now mark her lowliness of mind. "Even so, let me be as the dogs; but the children drop some of the food, the crumbs, on to the ground; the dogs eat of them; though not children yet are they in the household under the masters, here standing for—not the Jews—but the Lord, and in the plural because, "dogs" is plural, under the roof enjoying some benefits; so let it be with me!" This is the "wisdom of wisdom" (James iii. 17), the blessed ingenuity of faith. He who had given her the faith, inspired the

earnestness, drew out this lowliness, resists no longer even in appearance, but acknowledging the power he gave to her, as to Jacob, that he might wrestle (see Gen. xxxii. 24-32), he not only yielded all, but with a word that compensated for delay and seeming harshness, "O woman, great is thy faith" (Matt. xv. 28). "For thus saying go thy way," &c. (v. 29).

V. THE BOON SHE RECEIVED. This was not the first time that the power of his word was felt at a distance. See continuation (see Matt. viii. 13) and the nobleman's (John iv. 51). So it was with her. She has testimony to her own faith from the Master's lips (v. 29), and she has an immediate and complete deliverance for her child (v. 30).

In whatever form the demon afflicted her daughter, the suffering was put away. The lost power to be happy and useful was restored, and the mother had her daughter given to her again as a blessing.

Besides, she has made acquaintance with Jesus, in such a way that it is impossible to suppose her mind stood still at that point. She must needs love the Master, who had done so much for her. She must needs be quite more concerned him, and must needs trust one whose power, and whose grace she had tried and proved. For while it was possible that the outward benefit of the miracle might be enjoyed by itself, and alone; yet in a case like this, where faith was so signally exercised, we may well believe that it grew and took hold of the spiritual benefit of which the temporal was a sign and prophecy. Here is,

(1) A lesson to the body. Feeble, unknown, unnoticed, or ever-despised among men, we may come to the Saviour for all we need.

(2) For the afflicted. Suffering in our own case, or in the case of those whom we love, is no proof of divine anger, but may be the means God employs for bringing to the Great Physician.

(3) The timid. Mothers, widows, sisters, with sick, sinful, wayward relatives, go and tell Jesus.

(4) The prayerful. You have asked long. There is no appearance of your receiving what you ask, matters grow worse in appearance. You do not cast down. Study this example. Persevere in prayer.

"Among the wonders of the loadstone," says Watson, "this is not the least, that it will not draw gold or pearl, but iron, and iron in metal; so Christ leaves angels, noble spirits, to attract poor sinful man."

The treatment Jesus received—its effect—whether he retired—why—the locality—the people—this apparent—race—religion—affliction—her appeal—its reception by the Master—by the disciples—her renewed plea—our Lord's direct commission—her acceptance of the lowest peace—meaning of her words—the Lord's assurance—the deliverance—its probable results, and the lessons to various classes—the lowly—the afflicted—the timid—the prayerful.

Purity of Character.

Over the inner coat of plum and apricot there grows a bloom more beautiful than the fruit itself—a soft, delicate powder that overspreads its rich colors. Now, if you strike your hand over that, and it is once gone, it is gone forever; it only appears once. The flower that hangs in the morning empearled with dew—arrayed by jewels—once shake it, so that the beads roll off, and you may sprinkle water over it as you please, yet it can never be made again what it was when the dew fell gently on it from heaven.

On a frosty morning you may see the panes of glass covered with landscapes, mountains, lakes and trees, blended into a fantastic picture. Now lay your hand upon the glass, and by the scratch of your finger, or by the warmth of the palm, all the delicate tracery will be obliterated.

So there is in youth a beauty and purity of character, which, when once touched and defiled, can never be restored,—a fringe more delicate than frost work, which, when torn and broken, will never be repaired. When a young lad or girl leaves the parents' house, with the blessings of a mother's tears, still wet upon the cheek, if early purity of character be once lost, it is a loss that can never be made up again. Such is the consequence of crime. Its effect can not but be in some way felt, though by God's mercy it may be forgiven.—Lady Dora.

Power of Love.

I don't know of anything more selfish than a girl, petted by her father and mother, and fed in proud ways. Her pretty person and her pretty ways of manifesting selfish pride are pretty. Every one says she is pretty, but badly spoiled. By and by the hour of her discipline comes, she finds her mate and begins to love. One by one her selfish thoughts begin to drop off. At length love sits beside the cradle, and she whom the father and mother served and for whom the servants ran hither and thither and upon whom all her heavy weight, comes to serve the little ungrateful child. She cares no more for parties or gay assemblages, and she who used to roam as wild as the singing bird, stays at home. All the elements of her being have been harmonized in and by love. What but love could work such a transformation? God sent love into the world in the person of Jesus Christ, and said to men, "Lay aside all your monastic ascetic rules of life and conform yourselves to the living pattern. Here is Godhood, and manhood. Build your character on love, and then because you are of God, you will be drawn into the divine communion."—Selaceo.

For eighty-six years I have served Him, and He has done me no evil. How then shall I curse my King and my Saviour? Almighty God, Father of thy well beloved Son, Jesus Christ, I bless Thee, that Thou has judged me worthy this day to drink the cup of Thy Christ, for the resurrection unto life eternal.—Polignac.

Adam and Eve Over Again.

There was an old couple who earned a poor living, working hard all day in the fields.

"See how hard we work all day," said the wife, "and it all comes of the foolish curiosity of Adam and Eve. If it had not been for that, we should have been living now in a beautiful garden, with nothing to do all day long."

"Yes," said the husband; "if you and I had been there, instead of Adam and Eve, I'm sure the hum in my head had been in paradise still."

The Count, their master, overheard them talking in this way, and he came to them and said,

"How would you like it if I took you to my palace there, to live, and give you servants to wait on you, and plenty to eat and drink?"

"Oh, that would be delightful indeed! That would be as good as paradise itself," answered the husband and wife together.

"Well, you may come up there if you think so. Only remember, in paradise there was one that was not to be touched, and my table there will be one dish not to be touched." "Yes, Marcell said that," said the Count.

"Oh, of course not," replied the old peasant; "that's just what I say when I've had all the fun in the garden, what did she want with just that one that was forbidden? And it was, who are used to the sweetest victuals, are supplied with enough to live well, what does it matter to us whether there is an extra dish or not on the table?"

"Very well reasoned," said the Count. "We quite understand each other, don't we?"

"Perfectly," replied both husband and wife.

"You come to live at my palace, and have everything you can want there, so long as you don't open one dish, which there will be in the centre of the table, if you open that, you go back to your former way of life."

"We quite understand," answered the peasants.

The Count went in and called his servant, and told him to give the peasants an apartment to themselves, with everything they could want, and a sumptuous dinner, in the middle of the table was to be an earthen dish, into which he was to put a little lead above, so that "one lifted the cover, the lead would fly out. He was to stay in the room and wait on them, and report to him what happened."

The people sat down to dinner, and praised everything they saw, so delighted at all seemed.

"Look! that's the dish we're not to touch," said the wife.

"No; better not look at it," said the husband.

"Pshaw! There's no danger of wanting to open it when we have such a lot of dishes to eat our fill out of," returned the wife.

So they set to and made such a repast as they had never dreamed of before. By degrees, however, as the novelty of the thing wore off, they grew more and more desirous for something newer and newer still. Though when they at first sat down it seemed that two dishes would be ample to satisfy them, they had now seven or eight, and they were wishing there might be others coming. There is an end to all things human, and no other came. There only remained the earthen dish in the middle of the table.

"We will just lift the lid up a little wee bit," said the wife.

"No; don't talk about it," said the husband.

The wife sat still for five minutes, and then she said:

"If one just lifted up one corner of the lid, it would scarcely be called opening it, you know."

"Better leave it alone, altogether, and not think about it at all."

The wife sat still another five minutes, and then she said: "If one peeped in just the least in the world, it would not be any harm, surely, and I should so like to know what can the Count have put in that dish?"

"I'm sure I can't guess in the least," said the husband, "and I must say I can't see what it can signify to him if we do look at it."

"No; that's what I think, and besides, how would he know if we peeped? It would not hurt him," said the wife.

"No, as you say, one could just take a look," said the husband.

The wife did not want more encouragement than that. But when she lifted one side of the lid the least little, she could see nothing. She opened it the least little more, and the lid flew out. The servant ran and told his master, and the Count came down and drove them out, bidding them never complain of Adam and Eve any more.—Roman Eccl. Lore.

Jesuits in the Church of England.

"During the discussion of the Public Worship Regulation Bill, the possibility of a secession from the Church of England was sometimes spoken of. This is a very unlikely thing. The Jesuit emissaries who are working the mischief, will not thus expose themselves, or lose their vantage-ground. If their dupes of the Ritualistic party were to leave the Church, with all their congregations, the real loss for any Christian work would be small. We doubt if any of the great missionary and evangelic agencies of our day would lose fifty pounds by the secession of the whole Ritualistic party to its own place. They collect and use their money for their own purposes, which are ecclesiastical rather than Christian, and Popish rather than Protestant. The loss of the Polish element would leave the Church of England far more free and powerful for good. Things cannot be suffered to remain as they are now; and this, not for the sake of the Church of England only but for the sake of the Protestantism of the empire."—Sunday at Home.

The Late Lord Dalhousie.

In the Past Free Church, Brechin, of which Lord Dalhousie was an elder, the Rev. D. Rose, pastor of the congregation, in preaching his funeral sermon, in allusion to the closing of his earthly career, said:

"During ten dark days, we prayed and wept for his recovery, for we were most unwilling that he should depart. But he, like one who had heard the clear call of the Master, never faltered in the announcement that he was dying. The first time I saw him he told me he was going home, but in the most firm and decided way he added, 'I know whom I have beloved, and He is with me now.' I have seldom seen any one so well prepared as Lord Dalhousie was to face the last enemy, or, rather so ready to answer the call of Him who has conquered death. Many touching incidents might be told of the daily visits which I then paid him. I took up a Bible one day and turning to appropriate promises found the verses I sought all marked. 'Ah, I said, 'some one has been here before me.' 'Yes,' he replied, 'these were marked to my dear day to me, and now they are doubly precious.' He referred to his wife, Lady Panmure, who died twenty-one years ago, soon after he came to the title and estates. Going on one day I got his usual mode of recognition; but the moment any agitation brought on a slight attack of distressing symptoms. When it passed he said, 'This heart will soon cease to beat to anyone.' 'But, I said, 'it beats true to Jesus?' 'Yes, I trust Him, He is my all—'

Back of age—oh! it is true. Let me have news of thee."

One day, on my using the familiar designation 'My Lord,' he said 'Oh, Mr. Rose, lay aside that title, and call me your dear Christian friend.' It was most instructive and impressive to witness the calm way in which, without a murmur or a sigh, he at once laid down all his earthly honours and possessions when the Master came. For there was much to make his life pleasant and desirable. He had wide domains, many well-earned honours and special favour of his Sovereign, growing popularity, and the power above most men of enjoying his himself and shedding sunshine on all around him. But he would not be detained, having desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better."

A Hundred Thousand Pounds.

"I'd give a hundred thousand pounds to feel as I did in 1820," said a man thirty years old, as he listened to an account of revival scenes occurring in his native village. "Only a small matter kept me from becoming a Christian then."

"What stood in your way?" enquired his sister.

"I was just starting in business with Ralph Turner, and I finally thought I would attend to business first, and put off religion to a future time. I have never seen the day when I was so near being a Christian, and I don't suppose I ever shall."

"What hinders you now?" said his sister kindly. "Your business is established and prosperous, you acknowledge the importance of attending to the salvation of your soul; surely, you can never expect a better time than this."

"I know it; I know it; but the trouble is now that I don't feel as if I cared so much for it; I'd give a hundred thousand pounds if I did."

"Give yourself no rest until you are once more convinced of sin, and anxious to be reconciled to God. Take time for thought, for the Bible, for prayer."

"Time! that is just what I haven't at command," interrupted the brother. "Business is very hurrying just now; I've stayed from the office too long already. Good-bye."

Twenty years passed rapidly away; the poor sister had just gone to her long home, and the man of fifty, still impatient, stood tearfully beside her new-made grave. A neighbor was telling him of her happy death, of the sweet peace and holy joy which made her last hours radiant with the glories of heaven.

I would give a thousand pound for such a hope as she had," was the agitated answer.

"If you would die the death of a Christian, you must live a Christian's life," replied the friend. "When will you have a better time?"

"I don't know; I don't know," replied the wondering. "I never was so busy in my life. I seem to have no time for anything. I have tried my own hands and am powerless to help myself. But I am not so indifferent as you may think. I really wish I was a Christian; and as I said at the beginning of our talk, I'd give a thousand pounds this minute to be one. But it's time for the train, I see, and I must hasten back to the city. Come and see me."

Twenty years more, and an old man lay upon his death-bed. Many a rival of religion had awakened in his breast a passing interest, but left him still unaltered.

Now he must give up the world, though that was all. Seventy years had made him rich in heaps of gold, but he was a poor man without God. He must reap what he had sown.

But oh, the terror and anguish which overwhelmed his departing spirit. A faithful minister tried, even then, to lead his departing soul to Him who welcomed the dying thief. But no emotion of love and trust arose in his dark heart; his last exclamation being: "Oh, if I could; if I could; I'd give a hundred thousand pounds to die a Christian!" He had gained this world's abundance, and lost his soul.—Evangelical Messenger.

One instance of dying repentance is given—that of the crucified thief—in order that no one may "despair or despair; one instance of the experience of a departing Christian is supplied, to teach believers how to die:—'He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.'"

Dr. Fraser's New Church, Marylebone.

On Monday the Lord Mayor laid the memorial-stone of the new church which is to be erected in Upper George-street, Marylebone, of which the Rev. Dr. Fraser is minister, in the presence of a numerous assemblage. Amongst those present were Lord Ebury, the Lord Advocate, M. P., Mr. Samuel Morely, M. P., the Hon. A. Knapp, M. P., Mr. J. C. Stevenson, M. P., Mr. Cory, M. P., The Lord Mayor, who was accompanied by the Lady Mayress, ascended the platform, the secretary of the fund, Mr. Stevenson at the same time announcing that the congregation had been formed in 1843, and that the church which was about to be enlarged and remodelled had its foundation laid on the 25th of June, 1845, by the Marquis of Blandford. The nave at present 300 communicants connected with the congregation. His lordship, having duly laid the stone, was then presented with a silver bowl as a mark of respect from the congregation, after which he addressed a few words to those assembled. He said he hoped that the good work that was just being entered upon would produce those good results which the first wishes of the work had so much at heart. It was the memorial-stone of a house which was to be erected for the worship of God. He hoped it would prosper, and that peace would be among those who worshipped within its walls. (Cheers.) They must look to the Architect of the Universe for all blessings, for without they had God with them when they were building the house, all their labour would be in vain. The old church could not accommodate the increasing numbers of the congregation, but he trusted that the new erection, which would hold 1600, would be found sufficient for their present wants. They must not relax their efforts, but strive to do their utmost for the good work that was before them. The meeting was also addressed by Lord Ebury, the Lord Advocate, the Hon. A. Knapp, Mr. Hugh Matheson, the Rev. Mr. Freeman, the Rev. Mr. MacGregor, Mr. Stevenson M.P., and Mr. Mailey M.P. The latter gentleman, in the course of his observations, said that although he was neither a Presbyterian nor a Free Churchman, yet he was present as being a thorough believer in Free Churches. His object in appearing before them was to express his desire for their continued prosperity. He thanked God for the power which their minister, Dr. Fraser, exhibited in the preaching of the simple truth. He was thankful also at the prospect of the establishment of a stronger Church than they had had hitherto at the spot on which they were assembled. The Lord Mayor had told them what was then duty towards their Church, but he wished to tell them their duty towards London as a Church. One-third of the population did not go to church on a Sabbath day, which was a very deplorable state of things. At the sight of such a fact denominationalism faded away, and he believed that eudaemonism should be first to make men and women Christians, then, if they could, afterwards Presbyterians. They might depend upon it if Presbyterianism was their object, it was the fly which would spoil the ointment—they would have no success. He had not a word to say against Presbyterianism, except that the Independents would be all the better if they had a little more of it. His earnest appeal to them was to give the power they might be able to exercise as a Church not upon their fellow-members, but upon the people amongst whom they lived. It was dreadfully to think of the spiritual destitution amongst the enormous masses in London, and he thought one of the duties their excellent minister would feel imposed on him would be to make Church membership and work synonymous terms. The proceedings were brought to a close with the passing of a vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor. The following is the inscription on the stone:—"This stone, to commemorate the enlargement and rebuilding of the St. Marylebone Presbyterian Church, was duly laid by the Right Hon. Sir Andrew Lusk, Bart., M.P., Lord Mayor of London, July 27, 1874."

Random Readings.

No Sunshine but bath a shadow.

Peace does not dwell in outward things, but within the soul; we may preserve it in the midst of the bitterest pain, if our will remain firm and submissive. Peace in this life springs from acquiescence not in an exemption from suffering.—Fenelon.

The tender father values his child's kiss, because it is a gush of love from the child's heart. Thus God approves even of the simple wish, when nothing is done, because he sees the heart that desires to do it.—Norman Macleod.

Had it been an evil thing to suffer wrong, God would not have enjoined it upon us. Know ye not that he is the King of glory, and therefore he commands us to suffer wrong, and doth all to withdraw us from worldly things and to convince us what is glory, and what shame; what loss, and what gain.—Chrysostom.

The ruin of multitudes has begun with a desecration of the Sabbath. They were in the sanctuary but a part of the day—then not at all—then read the novels and political papers at home—then rode out, or spent the day in some saloon or refectory, in company with the unprincipled and dissipated—then drank, gambled, and revelled—then leaped over the bounds of honesty, defrauded or stole—and then—but you know the rest. And this is the downward career of thousands—these the steps by which they descended from virtue, respectability and comfort, to corruption, disgrace and destruction.

Thou art to be in thy work a copyist, imitator of God. Now, whatever God does, he does perfectly. If it be but the creation of a leaf or flower, it is done in such a manner. Let it be thy earnest effort that he who looks into it shall no flaw. Let the thing not only be done, but be done gracefully and ornamentally, as far as may be. It is a great and precious thought that God may be pleased by service done with the whole soul, and with strict punctuality and conscientiousness.—Goulden.