

LESSON III.

THE GENTILE WOMAN'S FAITH

July 15, 1900

Mark 7: 24-30. Commit to memory vs. 27-30. Read Mark 7: 1-23.

24 And from thence he arose, and went¹ into the borders of Tyre² and Sidon³, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: ⁴but he could not be hid.

25 ⁴For a certain woman, whose ⁵young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell ⁶at his feet:

26 The woman was a ⁷Greek, a Syrophenician by ⁸nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the ⁹devil out of her daughter.

27 ¹⁰But Je'sus said unto her, Let the children first

be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.

28 ¹¹And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: ¹²yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

30 And ¹³when she was come to her house, ¹⁴she found ¹⁵the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

Revised Version—¹Away; ²Margin, Some ancient authorities omit and Sidon; ³And; ⁴But straightway a; ⁵Little; ⁶Down; ⁷Margin, Gentile; ⁸Race; ⁹Margin, Greek, demon; ¹⁰And he said; ¹¹But; ¹²Even the dogs; ¹³She went away into; ¹⁴And; ¹⁵The child laid upon the bed, and the devil gone out.

EXPLANATION

Connection—While He was telling of the Bread of Life, the Pharisees were spying on some of His disciples who ate bread without washing their hands. (Mark 7: 2.) They were extremely jealous about outward forms. (vs. 3, 4.) In answer to their question of v. 5 Jesus exposes their hypocrisy and shows wherein true holiness consists. (vs. 6-23.) Their increasing opposition leads Him to withdraw from Capernaum.

24. From thence: Capernaum, where He had been teaching the people. (Lesson II.) The borders of Tyre and Sidon; "two flourishing seaports and capitals of Phoenicia, a narrow, level district along the shores of the Mediterranean. "Tyre was 35 and Sidon 55 miles north-west of the Sea of Galilee. They were heathen cities. Into an house; more likely the house of a heathen stranger than of a friend. He had need of rest. He wished to escape from the multitudes who would make Him a King, and from the Pharisees, whose jealousy and hatred were ripening fast. He desired leisure also to further instruct His disciples. No strict Jew would enter these Gentile cities lest he should become unclean. He could not be hid. However much He might wish to remain unknown for a time, He could not be hid. His fame would follow Him and His very words and ways would reveal Him. Some rays of sunlight find their way through the densest cloud.

25. Straightway. Sorrow has quick ears for help. A certain woman. There is no name given, but her great persistency and great faith have made her immortal. Daughter; Rev. Ver., "little daughter." An unclean spirit; Matthew 15: 22, "grievously vexed with a devil"—a demon that tortured (compare Matt. 17: 15, 18; Mark 9: 17, 18) and made the child unclean in body and soul. Why the demon-possession was permitted, who can tell? Heard of Him. His fame had reached the border region between Galilee and Phoenicia, where

she lived. Fell at his feet; in humility, worship and eager desire.

26. A Greek: A Syrophenician; a Phœnician woman of Syrian descent, who spoke Greek. Some of the Phœnicians were Carthaginians (Phœnicia was a colony of Carthage) and some Syrians. She was a representative Gentile. Besought. See Matthew's fuller statement, ch. 15: 22. There was earnestness and persistency in both word and attitude.

27. But Jesus said. Matthew tells us that at first He was silent, and only spoke after the disciples had urged Him to send her away. The children first. God called the Jews His children. Christ's errand was to them first. (Matt. 15: 24.) The children's bread; the gospel to the Jews. Dogs. So the Jews styled all Gentiles, implying contempt and hatred. Jesus softens the expression by using the word for little pet dogs. His words were meant, not to crush, but to test and to draw out the woman's faith.

28. Yes, Lord. She discerns the note of encouragement in Jesus' words. Besides, is not her need great? The dogs . . . eat of the children's crumbs; bits dropped by the children to the pet dogs under the table. What quick wit the woman showed, and what lively, trust and sweet humility!

29. For this saying; not because it was so clever, but because it showed much faith. (Matt. 15: 28.) Faith makes us true Israelites, children of God. The devil is gone out; wonderful proof of Jesus' divine power and instantaneous reward of the woman's faith.

30. When she went (Rev. Ver.) . . . she found. Her faith was so perfect that she went home at once, expecting to find her little daughter well, and she was not disappointed. Laid upon the bed; probably exhausted by a final onslaught of the frantic demon. (Mark 1: 26; 9: 26.) With exquisite reserve, the writer enters into no particulars of the mother's joy and the child's sweet content.