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"A CRUMB FROM THE CHILDREN'S TABLE"

- *JUNE 12. - MATTHEW 15:21-28. -*

Golden Text: – "Great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

GOD loves the faithful and delights to have them trust in him. His chiefest blessings are for such. By reason of various conditions connected with our birth, it is not alike easy to all to accept the Divine promises and to shape life according to these, trusting that the rewards and blessings of the future will more than offset the sacrifices of the present. However, while only the faithful will attain the exceeding great and precious things of God's promises in this present age, we are glad that the Creator has still in reservation an inferior blessing for those who cannot exercise faith now, but who must be dealt with during the Millennial Age more along the lines of sight. Our present study well illustrates the Lord's grace towards those who trust him.

The Canaanitish woman was a heathen woman – one not an Israelite – one with whom the Lord had not entered into covenant relationship – one of those who at that time were without God and without hope, because the Divine provision for the blessing of the Gentiles was not yet opened up to them. When our Lord sent forth his Apostles to preach the Gospel, healing all manner of diseases and casting out devils, he instructed them to pass by all who were not Jews – Gentiles and Samaritans. His words were, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not, for I am not sent save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." With a few exceptions our Lord's miracles were confined to the Jews. They alone were God's covenanted people. For this reason Jesus ignored the petition of the Canaanitish woman, crying "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of

David! My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." And later on he explained, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs."

PRAYING FOR A BITE

The term "dogs" was applied to the Gentiles by the Jews as signifying their inferiority. Our Lord merely made use of an expression common in his day, and still common in Palestine. But note the woman's faith: She replied, "Yea, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the Master's table." What perseverance, what faith, was thus manifested! How evidently she believed the Lord to be the promised Messiah, the Heir of the throne of David! As Jesus intimated, she had more faith than a majority of the Jews. Her request was granted – "O woman, great is thy faith! Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Her daughter was healed from that hour.

There are several lessons for us in this study. However degraded we may be by nature, by heredity, by environment; however outcast from God's favor, we may still know of the Divine compassion. The message is, "God is Love." If he chose first of all to manifest his favor towards Abraham's children, it did not signify that he had no love or care for the remainder of mankind; merely that the Divine purpose must flow out to mankind through Divinely-appointed channels and in God's due time. We may be sure that when we get to the standpoint of perfect knowledge in the hereafter we shall see wisdom in every feature of the Divine program. For instance, from the human standpoint it seems strange that God has permitted a reign of sin and death in the world for 6000 years, when he has the full power to speak the word and to overthrow the forces of evil and to inaugurate gracious influences of blessing for the deliverance **[R4627 : page 188]** of mankind from the power of

sin and Satan, ignorance and superstition; to give light for darkness; knowledge of God for ignorance and blindness. Studying the Divine Plan of the Ages, we find the lesson to be that God will first select a Church class and subsequently use the elect Church as channels of blessing toward the world of mankind.

A little while, and the permission of sin and the trials and difficulties of the present life shall have served to chisel and polish the "very elect." A little while, and they shall be transformed to the glorious likeness of their Redeemer beyond the veil. And then a little while, and the blessings long-promised to the world in general will be dispensed. The children of God will first be fed from this table, and then not merely crumbs will fall for the remainder of the race, but rich and bountiful provision, exceedingly and abundantly more than we could have asked or thought.

AFFLICTED OF THE DEVIL

It is a great and important truth that many human beings are more or less completely obsessed by evil spirits – demons – not the spirits of human beings, but the fallen angels, as the Scriptures declare. Many battle for years against these influences of demons and, because not rightly informed of the Bible teaching on the subject, they come more and more under the occult influences with danger of entirely losing their reason. It was probably some such affliction as this which affected the daughter of the Canaanitess. She seemed to realize that there was only the one quarter from which she could get help. Hence her importunity, when she recognized the Lord.

In another sense of the word all sin and sickness may be said to be afflictions of the devil, because all are either directly, or through heredity, Satan's work. Thus our Lord declared that Satan had murdered our race by his falsehood to mother Eve – "He was

a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the Truth." Through his lie our race has gone down into sickness, mental, moral and physical, and is going down rapidly to the tomb. Thank God for the great Deliverer; thank God also, for his great day of deliverance, the Millennial Age, now nigh at hand!

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