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ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

– DECEMBER 1. – MARK 9:14-29. –

"And Jesus said unto Him, "If thou canst believe; all things are possible to him that believeth." – Mark 9:23.

WHEN JESUS and the three favored Apostles came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, where they had been enjoying the vision of coming glory, they found the other nine Apostles at the foot of the mountain surrounded by a multitude. They had made several inefficacious attempts to cast out a demon from a boy whose father had brought him for the purpose.

So it is with some of the Lord's people; occasionally by faith they go up into the mountain, into the Kingdom; by faith they see the glory of the Lord revealed, and hear afresh that they must suffer with the Lord if they would enter into His glory. Then, coming down from the exalted heights of contemplation of things glorious, they face the realities of the present time – the Adversary is in possession of the world still; many are his slaves and dupes; no earthly power seems sufficient to cast him out; they are back with the remainder of the Church. But if the Master be with them, victory will ultimately be achieved.

This case was one of occasional obsession by an evil [R5128 : page 345] spirit, whereas many of the others were continuous. The evil spirit came into this boy at times, causing him to have a fit, to froth at the mouth, to wallow in the mire, sometimes striving to throw him into the fire or into the water, or otherwise destroy him. The parents had brought the child to Jesus for a cure; in His absence they sought the nine Apostles remaining, but their endeavors were fruitless; they could not cast out this spirit.

The unsuccessful disciples were perplexed; never before had the Master's name failed to be respected by the demons. The Scribes also were harassing them with questions, when Jesus and the other three appeared coming down the mountain. The multitude hailed Jesus and flocked to Him, but He came promptly to the relief of the Apostles and inquired the nature of their trouble. The father interposed and explained: "I have brought my son, who is possessed of a dumb spirit; and whenever it takes hold upon him it dashes him down and he foameth and grindeth his teeth and pineth away; and I spake to Thy disciples that they should cast it out, and they were not able."

And Jesus answered, "O faithless generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring the boy to me." And they brought him, and immediately the spirit caused him to fall to the ground, wallowing and foaming. Jesus questioned how long he had been thus. The father answered, "From a child," and that often the spirit attempted to cast the boy into the fire or into the water to destroy him; "But if Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

"TO HIM THAT BELIEVETH"

Jesus replied, "If thou canst believe; all things are possible to him that believeth." How great stress the Lord lays everywhere upon the exercise of faith in the Divine Power! "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Those who cannot exercise the faith cannot have the blessing which others may have who do exercise faith; and our blessings increase in proportion as we will exercise our faith. Thus the Lord puts a premium upon this element of character, and makes it essential to His favor. **[R5129 : page 345]**

This does not imply that people who cannot now exercise faith will never get any blessing. On the contrary, while the Lord has given certain exceeding great and precious promises to those who can believe and who do believe, and who follow their belief with obedience to the extent of their ability, He has also promised that by and by, during Messiah's Kingdom, the way of faith and obedience will be made so

plain, so simple, that all will be able to follow it and to gain a reward – but a lesser reward than that now extended to those who can and do exercise faith and obedience.

The reason for this is manifest. God is now seeking a special class of specially faithful and obedient children, to be heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus in His glorious Messianic Kingdom. He is now selecting the class which by and by He will use in bestowing His blessing world-wide; and He desires that in this class shall be only such as can exercise absolute faith in Him. Hence, now, God's rule for dealing with the Church is, "According to thy *faith* be it unto thee."

And in this and other miracles the Lord required faith seemingly as the condition of the healing. He thus manifested forth His coming glory and the power of His Kingdom. During the Kingdom reign there will be such manifestations of Divine Power, and such assistance given to those willing to exercise faith, that all may profit thereby and experience the healings of their flesh and the casting out of every power of Satan and sin.

The poor father realized from Jesus' words that the difficulty rested with him, that he must exercise faith else his son could not be recovered. With tears he cried out, "Lord, I do believe; Help Thou mine unbelief!" His faith got its reward. Jesus commanded the evil spirit to come out of the boy, and enter no more into him. This last was the special point of this cure. The evil spirit had frequently left the boy, but only to return. The Lord's command was that he should leave and never return.

It may be wondered why the Master permitted the evil spirit to tear the boy and cause him pain, etc., in leaving him. If He had power to cast him out, He also undoubtedly had power to control the manner of his coming out. We can only surmise therefore that Jesus, on this and other occasions, allowed the evil spirit a measure of liberty in the method of leaving the victims, and that this was for the very purpose of demonstrating how malicious and evil the spirit was which had

control; and thus the miracle was the more clearly seen, and thus the more would the Lord be praised by those interested.

"MANY SAID, 'HE IS DEAD'"

The boy was left in an apparently dead condition, but Jesus took him by the hand and raised him up. The lesson for us in this is that it is not only that the Adversary and his power be cast out of humanity and from control, which the poor world needs, but they need Divine aid, the hand of Divine Power, for their uplift out of the mire of sin and death. According to the Scriptures, we are near the time when Satan will be bound, when all the influences of evil amongst humanity will be restrained. According to the Scriptures, also, this binding of Satan will be accomplished in a great "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation," and humanity will be left in an almost dead condition. The pride, the hopes, the ambition of men will perish in that awful trouble time, but the Master will be present in Kingdom power to uplift them.

Messiah's Kingdom will not only bind the Adversary and forbid him to re-enter humanity and interfere with their affairs, but the power of the Kingdom will for a thousand years do an uplifting work amongst the fallen and degraded members of our race, lifting them up, up, up, until they will be fully up to the Divine standard, as represented in Father Adam – from which condition he originally fell through disobedience, and return to which condition has been secured for all through the merit of Jesus' sacrifice accomplished at Calvary.

The disciples asked Jesus why they could not cast out this demon. And so God's people many a time have asked themselves, Why cannot we do more than we are doing in the way of opposing Satan and Sin, and their reign of evil? The answer of Jesus is applicable here as well as there: "This kind cometh not out save by fasting and prayer." Undoubtedly God's people could accomplish much more in their own conflicts with Sin and Satan, and in helping others to get free from the power of Sin, if we would always exercise full faith in the Lord, and if

we would continually live more in the spirit and less according to the flesh. This would mean fasting, or self-denial, and prayer, or fellowship with God. To him who believeth, every blessing belongs which God has promised to His faithful ones, but we have the conditions expressed elsewhere by Jesus: "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

