

The Trial & Triumph of Faith

By [Rev. Samuel Rutherford](#)

SERMON 1

“And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and went into an house, and would that no man should know it: but he could not be hid.”—MARK 7:24.

“Then Jesus went from thence, and came 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, for my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.”—MATTHEW 15:21, 22.

“For a certain woman whose young (little) daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came, and fell at his feet: (The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him, that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.”—MARK 7:25, 26.

THIS text being with child of free grace, holdeth forth to us a miracle of note: and because Christ is in the work in an eminent manner; and there is here also much of Christ's new creation, and a flower planted and watered by Christ's own hand, a strong faith in a tried woman; it requireth the bending of our heart to attention: for, to any seeking Jesus Christ, this text crieth, “Come and see.” The words for their scope, drive at the wakening of believers in praying (when an answer is not given at the first,) to a fixed and resolved lying and dying at Christ's door, by continuing in prayer till the King come out and open, and answer the desire of the hungry and poor. 2. For the subject, they are a history of a rare miracle wrought by Christ, in casting forth a devil out of the daughter of a woman of Canaan: and for Christ to throw the devil out of a Canaanite, was very like the white banner of Christ's love displayed to the nations, and the King's royal standard set up to gather in the heathen under his colours. The parts of the miracle are,

I. The place where it was wrought. (Matt. 15:21.)

II. The parties on whom; the mother and the possessed daughter: she is described by her nation.

III. The impulsive cause: she hearing, came, and prayed to Jesus for her little daughter: in which, there is a dialogue between Christ and the woman, containing,

Firstly, Christ's trying of her, 1st, with no answer; 2nd, with a refusal; 3rd, with the reproach of a dog.

Secondly, Her instancy of faith, 1st, in crying till the disciples interposed themselves; 2nd, her going on in adoring; 3rd, praying; 4th, arguing, by faith, with Christ, that she had some interest in Christ, though amongst the dogs; yet withal, (as grace hath no evil eye) not envying, because the morning market of Christ, and the high table, was the Jews' due, as the King's children, so she might be amongst the dogs, to eat the crumbs under Christ's table; knowing, that the very refuse of Christ, is more excellent than ten worlds.

The miracle itself, wrought by the woman's faith: in which, we have, (1.) Christ's heightening of her faith; (2.) The granting of her desire; (3.) The measure of Christ's bounty, "As thou wilt;" (4.) The healing of her daughter.

Mark saith, that the woman came to Christ in a house. Matthew seemeth to say, that she came to him in the way, as these words do make good, "Send her away, for she crieth after us." Augustine thinketh, that the woman first came to Christ while he was in the house, and desired to be hid, either because he did not (for offending the Jews) openly offer himself to the Gentiles, having forbidden his disciples to go to the Samaritans; or, because he would have his glory hid for a time; or rather, of purpose he did hide himself from the woman that her faith might find him out: and then refusing to answer the woman in the house, she still followeth him in the way, and crieth after him, as Matthew saith. For, (1.) Christ's love is liberal, but yet it must be sued; and Christ, though he sell not his love for the penny-worth of our sweating and pains, yet we must dig low, for such a gold mine as Christ. (2.) Christ's love is wise: He holdeth us knocking, till our desire be love-sick for him, and knoweth that delays raise and heighten the market and rate of Christ. We under-rate anything that is at our elbow. Should Christ throw himself in our bosom and lap, while we are in a morning sleep, he should not have the marrow and flower of our esteem. It is good there be some fire in us meeting with water, while we seek after Christ. (3.) His love must not only lead the heart, but also draw. Violence in love is most taking, and delay of enjoying so lovely a thing as Christ, breedeth violence in our affections; and suspension of presence oyleth the wheels of love, desire, joy: want of Christ is a wing to the soul.

Interpreters ask, what woman she was? Matthew saith, a Canaanite, not of any gracious blood; a Syrophoenician; for Syrophoenicia was in the border between Palestine and Syria, and it was now inhabited by the relics of the Canaanites; a Greek; not by birth, but because of the Greek tongue, and rites brought thither by Alexander, and the succeeding kings of Syria. All the Gentiles go under the name of Greeks in Scripture language, as, Rom. 1:14; Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 1:22, 24: not because they are all Greeks by nation and blood; but, because conquest, language, and customs, stand for blood and birth. However, it standeth as no

blemish in Christ's account-book, who was your father, whether an Amorite, or an Hittite, so ye come to him: he asketh not whose you are, so you be his; nor who is your father, so you will be his brother, and be of his house.

“And from thence he arose, and went into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.” Mark 7:24 . Christ wearied of Judea, had been grieved in spirit with the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, and the provocation of that stiff-necked people. He was chased away to the profane Pagans. The hardening of the Jews, maketh way to Christ's first and young love laid upon the Gentiles. Christ doth but draw aside a lap of the curtain of separation, and look through to one believing heathen: the King openeth one little window, and holdeth out his face, in one glimpse, to the woman of Canaan. So, Christ's works of deep Providence, are free mercy and pure justice interwoven, making one web. He departeth from the Jews, and setteth his face and heart on the Gentiles.

Consider the art of Providence here: 1st, The devil sometimes shapeth, and our wise Lord seweth; Babylon killeth, God maketh alive; sin, hell, and death, are made a chariot to carry on the Lord's excellent work. 2nd, The Providence of God hath two sides; one black and sad, another white and joyful. Heresy taketh strength, and is green before the sun; God's clearing of necessary and seasonable truths, is a fair side of that same providence. Adam's first sin, was the devil and hell digging a hole through the comely and beautiful frame of the creation of God; and that is the dark side of Providence: but the flower of Jesse springing up, to take away sin, and to paint out to men and angels the glory of a heaven, and a new world of free grace—that is a lightsome side of Providence. Christ scourged; Christ in a case, that he cannot command a cup of water; Christ dying, shamed, forsaken, is black: but Christ, in that same work redeeming the captives of hell, opening to sinners forfeited paradise, that is fair and white. Joseph, weeping in the prison for no fault, is foul and sad; but Joseph brought out to reign as half a king, to keep alive the Church of God in great famine, is joyful and glorious. The apostles whipped, imprisoned, killed all the day long, are sad and heavy: but sewed with this, that God causeth them always to triumph, and show the savour of the knowledge of Christ; and Paul triumphing in his iron chains, and exalting Christ in the gospel, through the court of bloody Nero,—maketh up a fair and comely contexture of divine Providence. 3rd, God, in all his works, now, when he raineth from heaven a sad shower of blood on the three kingdoms, hath his one foot on justice, that wrath may fill to the brim the cup of malignants, prelates, and papists; and his other foot on mercy, “to wash away the filth of the daughter of Zion, and to purge the blood of Jerusalem in the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.” [Isa. 4:4] And this is God's way and ordinary path-road, (Psalm 25:10) And in one and the same motion, God can walk both to the east and to the west, and to the north and the south.

USE.—It is our fault, that we look upon God's ways and works by halves and pieces; and so, we see often nothing but the black side, and the dark part of the

moon. We mistake all, when we look upon men's works by parts; a house in the building, lying in an hundred pieces; here timber, here a rafter, there a spar, there a stone; in another place, half a window, in another place, the side of a door: there is no beauty, no face of a house here. Have patience a little, and see them all by art compacted together in order, and you will see a fair building. When a painter draweth the half of a man; the one side of his head, one eye, the left arm, shoulder, and leg, and hath not drawn the other side, nor filled up with colours all the members, parts, limbs, in its full proportion, it is not like a man. So do we look on God's works by halves or parts; and we see him bleeding his people, scattering parliaments, chasing away nobles and prelates, as not willing they should have a finger in laying one stone of his house: yet do we not see, that in this dispensation, the other half of God's work makes it a fair piece. God is washing away the blood and filth of his church, removing those from the work who would cross it. In bloody wars, malignant soldiers ripping up women with child, waste, spoil, kill; yet are they but purging Zion's tin, brass, and lead, and such reprobate metal as themselves. Jesuits and false teachers are but God's snuffers, to occasion the clearing and snuffing of the lamps of the tabernacle, and make truth more naked and obvious.

This article is provided as a ministry of [Third Millennium Ministries](#). If you have a question about this article, please [email](#) our *Theological Editor*. If you would like to discuss this article in our online community, please visit our [RPM Forum](#).

Subscribe to RPM

RPM subscribers receive an email notification each time a new issue is published. Notifications include the title, author, and description of each article in the issue, as well as links directly to the articles. Like RPM itself, *subscriptions are free*. To subscribe to [RPM](#), please select this [link](#).