1 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,
2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.
3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?
4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.
5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;
6 And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.
7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,
8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.
9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.
10 And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:
11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.
12 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?
13 But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.
14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.
15 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.
16 And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?
17 Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?
18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.
19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:
20 These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.
21 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.
22 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; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.
23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.
24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.
26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs.
27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.
28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.
29 And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.
30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them:
31 Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.
32 Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.
33 And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?
34 And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.
35 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.
36 And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.
37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full.
38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.
39 And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

Scripture Reference Guide
Matthew 15:1-39

1–20_ Defilement Comes From Within
v. 1 --- Mark 7:1
v. 2 --- Mark 7:5; Col. 2:8
v. 4 --- Ex. 20:12; Lev. 19:3; Deut. 5:16; Prov. 23:22; Eph. 6:2; Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9; Deut. 27:16; Prov. 20:20; 30:17
v. 5 --- Mark 7:11, 12
v. 7 --- Mark 7:6
v. 8 --- Is. 29:13; Ezek. 33:31
v. 9 --- Is. 29:13; Col. 2:18-22; Titus 1:14
v. 10 – Mark 7:14
v. 11 – Acts 10:15; Rom. 14:14; 17:20; 1 Tim. 4:4; Titus 1:5
v. 13 – John 15:2; 1 Cor. 3:12, & c.
v. 14 – Is. 9:16; Mal. 2:8; ch. 23:16; Luke 6:39
v. 15 – Mark 7:17
v. 16 – ch. 16:9; Mark 7:18
v. 17 – 1 Cor. 6:13
v. 18 – James 3:6
v. 19 – Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Prov. 6:14; Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21

21-28_ A Gentile Shows Her Faith: Her Daughter Healed
v. 21 – Mark 7:24
v. 24 – ch. 10:5, 6; Acts 3:25, 26; 13:46; Rom. 15:8
v. 26 – ch. 7:6; Phil. 3:2

29-31_ Jesus Heals Great Multitudes
v. 29 – Mark 7:31; ch. 4:18
v. 30 – Is. 35:5, 6; ch. 11:5; Luke 7:22

32-39_ He Feeds More Than Four Thousand
v. 32 – Mark 8:1
v. 33 – 2 Kin. 4:43
v. 36 – ch. 14:19; 1 Sam. 9:13; Luke 22:19
v. 39 – Mark 8:10
Lesson 6
Defilement Comes From Within. A Canaanite Woman’s Faith
Matthew 15:1-39

Christ Came to Earth to Fulfill the Law.---(vs. 1, 2)

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. Matt. 5:17.

God chose Israel as the depository of priceless treasure of truth for all nations, and He gave them His law as the standard of the character they were to develop before the world, before angels, and before the unfallen worlds... Through disobedience and disloyalty God's chosen nation developed a character exactly opposite to the character God designed them to develop by obeying His law. They placed their own mold and superscription upon the truth, removing from it the superscription of God....

The law of God was being buried beneath the minutiae of outward forms, such as the frequent washing of the hands before eating, and the washing of pots and cups. Tithes were exacted on simple garden herbs. To those who made so much of these minor things, Christ said, "...these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."....

Amid all this confusing din of voices there was need of a teacher direct from the heavenly universe to speak from inspired lips to human hearts, and to proclaim the testing truths so important to every one....

As a Teacher sent from God, Christ's work was to explain the true significance of the laws of God's government.... Resetting truth in the framework of God's own law, He caused it to shine in its original, heavenly luster.... He enthroned the divine precepts in companionship with the royalty of eternal, uncorrupted truth bearing the sanction of God, the Source of all truth....

Christ came not only to vindicate the law before the inhabitants of this world, but by His life to settle forever the immutability of God's law.... He {God} never lets go one who commits the keeping of the soul to His care. Having loved them because of their love of Jesus, He loves them to the end. --SD 55.

Tradition.---(vs. 1-13)

The scribes and Pharisees, expecting to see Jesus at the Passover, had laid a trap for Him. But Jesus, knowing their purpose, had absented Himself from this gathering. "Then came together unto Him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes." As He did not go to them, they came to Him. For a time it had seemed that the people of Galilee would receive Jesus as the Messiah, and that the power of the hierarchy in that region would be broken. The mission of the twelve, indicating the extension of Christ's work, and bringing the disciples more directly into conflict with the rabbis, had excited anew the jealousy of the leaders at Jerusalem. The spies they sent to Capernaum in the early part of His ministry, who had tried to fix on Him the charge of Sabbathbreaking, had been put to confusion; but the rabbis were bent on carrying out their purpose. Now another deputation was sent to watch His movements, and find some accusation against Him.

As before, the ground of complaint was His disregard of the traditional precepts that encumbered the law of God. These were professedly designed to guard the observance of the law, but they were regarded as more sacred than the law itself. When they came in collision with the commandments given from Sinai, preference was given to the rabbinical precepts.

Ceremonial Washings.--- Among the observances most strenuously enforced was that of ceremonial purification. A neglect of the forms to be observed before eating was accounted a heinous sin, to be punished both in this world and in the next; and it was regarded as a virtue to destroy the transgressor.

The rules in regard to purification were numberless. The period of a lifetime was scarcely sufficient for one to learn them all. The life of those who tried to observe the rabbinical requirements was one long struggle against ceremonial defilement, an endless round of washings and purifications. While the people were occupied with trifling distinctions, and observances which God had not required, their
attention was turned away from the great principles of His law.

Christ and His disciples did not observe these ceremonial washings, and the spies made this neglect the ground of their accusation. They did not, however, make a direct attack on Christ, but came to Him with criticism of His disciples. In the presence of the multitude they said, "Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread."

Whenever the message of truth comes home to souls with special power, Satan stirs up his agents to start a dispute over some minor question. Thus he seeks to attract attention from the real issue. Whenever a good work is begun, there are cavilers ready to enter into dispute over forms or technicalities, to draw minds away from the living realities. When it appears that God is about to work in a special manner for His people, let them not be enticed into a controversy that will work only ruin of souls. The questions that most concern us are, Do I believe with saving faith on the Son of God? Is my life in harmony with the divine law? "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." John 3:36; 1 John 2:3.

Jesus made no attempt to defend Himself or His disciples. He made no reference to the charges against Him, but proceeded to show the spirit that actuated these sticklers for human rites. He gave them an example of what they were repeatedly doing, and had done just before coming in search of Him. "Full well ye reject the commandment of God," He said, "that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or his mother." They set aside the fifth commandment as of no consequence, but were very exact in carrying out the traditions of the elders. They taught the people that the devotion of their property to the temple was a duty more sacred than even the support of their parents; and that, however great the necessity, it was sacrilege to impart to father or mother any part of what had been thus consecrated. An undutiful child had only to pronounce the word "Corban" over his property, thus devoting it to God, and he could retain it for his own use during his lifetime, and after his death it was to be appropriated to the temple service. Thus he was at liberty, both in life and in death, to dishonor and defraud his parents, under cover of a pretended devotion to God.

Never, by word or deed, did Jesus lessen man's obligation to present gifts and offerings to God. It was Christ who gave all the directions of the law in regard to tithes and offerings. When on earth He commended the poor woman who gave her all to the temple treasury. But the apparent zeal for God on the part of the priests and rabbis was a pretense to cover their desire for self-aggrandizement. The people were deceived by them. They were bearing heavy burdens which God had not imposed. Even the disciples of Christ were not wholly free from the yoke that had been bound upon them by inherited prejudice and rabbinical authority. Now, by revealing the true spirit of the rabbis, Jesus sought to free from the bondage of tradition all who were really desirous of serving God.

"Ye hypocrites," He said, addressing the wily spies, "well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoreth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." The words of Christ were an arraignment of the whole system of Pharisaism. He declared that by placing their requirements above the divine precepts the rabbis were setting themselves above God.

The deputies from Jerusalem were filled with rage. They could not accuse Christ as a violator of the law given from Sinai, for He spoke as its defender against their traditions. The great precepts of the law, which He had presented, appeared in striking contrast to the petty rules that men had devised.

**Defilement Comes From Within.***--- To the multitude, and afterward more fully to His disciples, Jesus explained that defilement comes not from without, but from within. Purity and impurity pertain to the soul. It is the evil deed, the evil word, the evil thought, the transgression of the law of God, not the neglect of external, man-made ceremonies, that defiles a man.

The disciples noted the rage of the spies as their false teaching was exposed. They saw the angry looks, and heard the half-muttered words of dissatisfaction and revenge. Forgetting how often Christ had given evidence that He read the heart as an open book, they told Him of the effect of His words. Hoping that He might conciliate the enraged officials, they said to Jesus, "Knowest
The substitution of the precepts of men for the commandments of God has not ceased. Even among Christians are found institutions and usages that have no better foundation than the traditions of the fathers. Such institutions, resting upon mere human authority, have supplanted those of divine appointment. Men cling to their traditions, and revere their customs, and cherish hatred against those who seek to show them their error. In this day, when we are bidden to call attention to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, we see the same enmity as was manifested in the days of Christ. Of the remnant people of God it is written, "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Rev. 12:17.

But "every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." In place of the authority of the so-called fathers of the church, God bids us accept the word of the eternal Father, the Lord of heaven and earth. Here alone is truth unmixed with error. David said, "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts." Ps. 119:99, 100. Let all who accept human authority, the customs of the church, or the traditions of the fathers, take heed to the warning conveyed in the words of Christ, "In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." --DA 395-8.

Shepherds That Scatter.----(v. 6)

There are professedly pious men who screen the sinner by their own transgression. They disregard the commandments of God, choosing the traditions of men, making void the law of God, and promoting apostasy. The excuses they make are feeble and weak and will bring destruction to their own souls and the souls of others. . . .

Avoid Sudden Changes.---(vs. 8, 9)

It is right that no tea, coffee, or flesh-meat be served in our sanitariums. To many, this is a great change and a severe deprivation. To enforce other changes, such as a change in the number of meals a day, is likely, in the cases of some, to do more harm than good.

There are many to whom the supper hour has been the most cheerful hour of the day. Then it is that all the family, the day's work done, have gathered round the table for social intercourse.

It is plain that two meals a day are better than three. I believe and practice this, but I have no "Thus saith the Lord" that it is wrong for some to eat the third meal. We are not to be as the Pharisees, bound about by set rules and regulations. God's word has not specified any set hours when food should be eaten. We are to be careful not to make laws like the laws of the Pharisees, or to teach for doctrines the commandments of men.

Let your regulations be so consistent that they will appeal to the reason of those even who have not been educated to see all things clearly. As you strive to introduce the renovating, transforming principles of truth into the life practice of those who come to the sanitarium to gain improvement in health, let them see that no arbitrary exactions are laid on them. Give them
no reason to feel that they are compelled to follow a course that they do not choose.--Letter 213, 1902. --MM 284.

Error As Parasites on Tree of Truth.---(v. 9) Satan has wrought with deceiving power, bringing in a multiplicity of errors that obscure truth. Error could not stand alone, and would soon become extinct, if it did not fasten itself like a parasite upon the tree of truth. Error draws its life from the truth of God. The traditions of men, like floating germs, attach themselves to the truth of God, and men regard them as a part of the truth. Through false doctrines Satan gains a foothold, and captivates the minds of men, causing them to hold theories that have no foundation in truth. Men boldly teach for doctrines the commandments of men, and as traditions pass on from age to age, they acquire a power over the human mind. But age does not make error truth, neither does its burdensome weight cause the plant of truth to become a parasite. The tree of truth bears its own genuine fruit, showing its true origin and nature. The parasite of error also bears its own fruit, and makes manifest that its character is diverse from the plant of heavenly origin (Letter 43, 1895). --5BC 1094.

Humble Men Are Salt of Earth.--- In His teachings, Christ likened His disciples to objects most familiar to them. He compared them to salt and to light. "Ye are the salt of the earth," He said; "ye are the light of the world." These words were spoken to a few poor, humble fishermen. Priests and rabbis were in that congregation of hearers, but these were not the ones addressed. With all their learning, with all their supposed instruction in the mysteries of the law, with all their claims of knowing God, they revealed that they knew Him not. To these leading men had been committed the oracles of God, but Christ declared them to be unsafe teachers. He said to them, Ye teach for doctrine the commandments of men. "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." Turning from these men to the humble fishermen, He said, "Ye are the salt of the earth" (RH Aug. 22, 1899). --5BC 1085.

The Sin of Disregarding A "Thus Saith the Lord."--- Ministers of God have been guilty of the sin of disregarding a "Thus saith the Lord." They have led the members of their churches to observe rites which have no foundation in the word of God, but are in direct opposition to His law. By perversion and misrepresentation of the Word of God, they have caused the people to commit sin. God will reward them according to their works. Even as did the priests and rulers in the time of Christ, they have caused the people to err. Christ says of them as He said of the Jewish leaders, "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (MS 28, 1900). --4BC 1149.

"Choose You This Day Whom Ye Will Serve"--- There will be a sharp conflict between those who are loyal to God and those who cast scorn upon His law. Reverence for God's law has been subverted. The religious leaders are teaching for doctrine the commandments of men. As it was in the days of ancient Israel, so it is in this age of the world. But because of the prevalence of disloyalty and transgression, will those who have reverenced the law of God now cherish less respect for it? Will they unite with the powers of earth to make it void? The loyal will not be carried away by the current of evil. They will not throw contempt on that which God has set apart as holy. They will not follow Israel's example of forgetfulness; they will call to remembrance God's dealings with His people in all ages, and will walk in the way of His commandments.

The test comes to everyone. There are only two sides. On which side are you? --8T 120.

The Blind Leading the Blind.---(v. 14) I have seen how the blind guides were laboring to make souls as blind as themselves, little realizing what is coming upon them. They are exalting themselves against the truth, and as it triumphs, many who have looked on these teachers as men of God and have looked to them for light, are troubled. They inquire of these leaders relative to the Sabbath, and they, with the object of getting rid of the fourth commandment, will answer them thereto. I saw that real honesty was not regarded in taking the many positions that were taken against the Sabbath. The main object is to get around the Sabbath of the Lord and observe another day than that sanctified and hallowed by Jehovah. If they are driven from one position, they take an opposite one, even a position that they had but just before condemned as unsound.

God's people are coming into the unity of the faith. Those who observe the Sabbath of the Bible are united in their views of Bible truth. But those who oppose the Sabbath among the Advent people are disunited and strangely divided. One comes forward in opposition to the
Sabbath and declares it to be thus and so, and at the conclusion calls it settled. But as his effort does not put the question to rest, and as the Sabbath cause progresses and the children of the Lord still embrace it, another comes forward to overthrow it. But in presenting his views to get around the Sabbath, he entirely tears down the arguments of him who made the first effort against the truth, and presents a theory as opposite to his as to ours. So with the third and the fourth; but none of them will have it as it stands in the Word of God: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."

Such, I saw, have the carnal mind, therefore are not subject to the holy law of God. They are not agreed among themselves, yet labor hard with their inferences to wrest the Scriptures to make a breach in God's law, to change, abolish, or do anything with the fourth commandment rather than to observe it. They wish to silence the flocks upon this question; therefore they get up something with the hope that it will quiet them and that many of their followers will search their Bibles so little that their leaders can easily make error appear like truth, and they receive it as such, not looking higher than their leaders. --EW 68-9.

Christ's Object.--- The One who had spoken through Isaiah was now speaking to His people face to face. He was seeking to weed out the traditions and the false doctrines which had become mingled with the pure principles of God's Word. The scribes and Pharisees had accused Him and His disciples of transgression because they did not observe the traditions of the elders. Christ now showed them that it is not that which enters into the mouth that defiles the soul, but that which proceeds from the heart, and that by exalting the traditions of men above the law, they were polluting their own souls and the souls of others. Calling the multitude, He said, "Hear, and understand; not that which goeth into the mouth entereth into the mouth that defiles the soul, but that which goeth into the mouth which defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man."

These words aroused the indignation of the Pharisees. That their aged traditions should be set aside and treated as fallacious, made them terribly angry. They were angry also that their deceitful hearts should thus be laid bare to the view of the people.

"Then came His disciples, and said unto Him, Knowest Thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But He answered and said, Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone. They be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

By the words, "Let them alone," Christ did not mean that His followers were to make no effort to correct their untruthful doctrines. He was charging His disciples to enter into no controversy with them. "Let them alone," He said. Do not be indignant because they set aside My words. They are blind, and blind men can not see. They are leaders of the blind. They have an influence, and many believe their assertions. But because they do not open their understanding to the Word of God, they walk in darkness. If I tell them that they have no foundation for their tradition, and show them truth in contrast with error, they will not believe Me. It is not evidence of the truth they want; they want an excuse for holding to their traditions.

To Peter, who had imbibed the teachings of the Pharisees, the words of Christ seemed new and strange. He said to Christ, "Declare unto us this parable. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these are the things which defile a man; but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."

The teachings of Christ were just what the nation needed to save them from eternal ruin. He taught them pure requirements. He showed that no man who has not first offered himself to God as a living sacrifice, who is not a fit temple for the Holy Spirit to dwell in, is fit for the service of God. He taught that purification of life and character could be obtained only through Christ. They could discern heavenly things only by becoming partakers of the divine nature, by laying hold of the light and power and knowledge that He was bringing within their reach.

Were Jesus personally teaching in our world today, we should hear from His lips the same truths. If we will submit to the working of the Holy Spirit, God will make us partakers of the divine nature. Only by walking according to the commandments of God can we be clean. --ST, January 3, 1900 par. 12.

A Healthful Diet.---(vs. 17-20)

38. It is of great importance that individually we act well our part, and have an intelligent
understanding of what we should eat and drink, and how we should live to preserve health. All are being proved to see whether they will accept the principles of health reform or follow a course of self-indulgence.

Let no one think that he can do as he pleases in the matter of diet. But before all who sit at the table with you, let it appear that you follow principle in the matter of eating, as in all other matters, that the glory of God may be revealed. You cannot afford to do otherwise; for you have a character to form for the future immortal life. Great responsibilities rest upon every human soul. Let us comprehend these responsibilities, and bear them nobly in the name of the Lord.

To every one who is tempted to indulge appetite I would say, Yield not to temptation, but confine yourself to the use of wholesome foods. You can train yourself to enjoy a healthful diet. The Lord helps those who seek to help themselves; but when men will not take special pains to follow out the mind and will of God, how can He work with them? Let us act our part, working out our salvation with fear and trembling,—with fear and trembling lest we make mistakes in the treatment of our bodies, which, before God, we are under obligation to keep in the most healthy condition possible. --CD 34-5.

A New Life Altogether.----(v. 19)

Nicodemus had come to the Lord thinking to enter into a discussion with Him, but Jesus laid bare the foundation principles of truth. He said to Nicodemus, It is not theoretical knowledge you need so much as spiritual regeneration. You need not to have your curiosity satisfied, but to have a new heart. You must receive a new life from above before you can appreciate heavenly things. Until this change takes place, making all things new, it will result in no saving good for you to discuss with Me My authority or My mission.

Nicodemus had heard the preaching of John the Baptist concerning repentance and baptism, and pointing the people to One who should baptize with the Holy Spirit. He himself had felt that there was a lack of spirituality among the Jews, that, to a great degree, they were controlled by bigotry and worldly ambition. He had hoped for a better state of things at the Messiah's coming. Yet the heart-searching message of the Baptist had failed to work in him conviction of sin. He was a strict Pharisee, and prided himself on his good works. He was widely esteemed for his benevolence and his liberality in sustaining the temple service, and he felt secure of the favor of God. He was startled at the thought of a kingdom too pure for him to see in his present state.

The figure of the new birth, which Jesus had used, was not wholly unfamiliar to Nicodemus. Converts from heathenism to the faith of Israel were often compared to children just born. Therefore he must have perceived that the words of Christ were not to be taken in a literal sense. But by virtue of his birth as an Israelite he regarded himself as sure of a place in the kingdom of God. He felt that he needed no change. Hence his surprise at the Saviour's words. He was irritated by their close application to himself. The pride of the Pharisee was struggling against the honest desire of the seeker after truth. He wondered that Christ should speak to him as He did, not respecting his position as ruler in Israel.

Surprised out of his self-possession, he answered Christ in words full of irony, "How can a man be born when he is old?" Like many others when cutting truth is brought home to the conscience, he revealed the fact that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. There is in him nothing that responds to spiritual things; for spiritual things are spiritually discerned.

But the Saviour did not meet argument with argument. Raising His hand with solemn, quiet dignity, He pressed the truth home with greater assurance, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Nicodemus knew that Christ here referred to water baptism and the renewing of the heart by the Spirit of God. He was convinced that he was in the presence of the One whom John the Baptist had foretold.

Jesus continued: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." By nature the heart is evil, and "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Job 14:4. No human invention can find a remedy for the sinning soul. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Rom. 8:7; Matt. 15:19. The fountain of the heart must be purified before the streams can become pure. He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of
nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit. --DA 171-2.

**Barriers Broken Down.---(vs. 21-28)**

After the encounter with the Pharisees, Jesus withdrew from Capernaum, and crossing Galilee, repaired to the hill country on the borders of Phoenicia. Looking westward, He could see, spread out upon the plain below, the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon, with their heathen temples, their magnificent palaces and marts of trade, and the harbors filled with shipping. Beyond was the blue expanse of the Mediterranean, over which the messengers of the gospel were to bear its glad tidings to the centers of the world's great empire. But the time was not yet. The work before Him now was to prepare His disciples for their mission. In coming to this region He hoped to find the retirement He had failed to secure at Bethsaida. Yet this was not His only purpose in taking this journey.

"Behold, a Canaanitish woman came out from those borders, and cried, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." Matt. 15:22, R. V. The people of this district were of the old Canaanite race. They were idolaters, and were despised and hated by the Jews. To this class belonged the woman who now came to Jesus. She was a heathen, and was therefore excluded from the advantages which the Jews daily enjoyed. There were many Jews living among the Phoenicians, and the tidings of Christ's work had penetrated to this region. Some of the people had listened to His words and had witnessed His wonderful works. This woman had heard of the prophet, who, it was reported, healed all manner of diseases. As she heard of His power, hope sprang up in her heart. Inspired by a mother's love, she determined to present her daughter's case to Him. It was her resolute purpose to bring her affliction to Jesus. He must heal her child. She had sought help from the heathen gods, but had obtained no relief. And at times she was tempted to think, What can this Jewish teacher do for me? But the word had come, He heals all manner of diseases, whether those who come to Him for help are rich or poor. She determined not to lose her only hope.

Christ knew this woman's situation. He knew that she was longing to see Him, and He placed Himself in her path. By ministering to her sorrow, He could give a living representation of the lesson He designed to teach. For this He had brought His disciples into this region. He desired them to see the ignorance existing in cities and villages close to the land of Israel. The people who had been given every opportunity to understand the truth were without a knowledge of the needs of those around them. No effort was made to help souls in darkness. The partition wall which Jewish pride had erected, shut even the disciples from sympathy with the heathen world. But these barriers were to be broken down.

"Lord, help me."--- Christ did not immediately reply to the woman's request. He received this representative of a despised race as the Jews would have done. In this He designed that His disciples should be impressed with the cold and heartless manner in which the Jews would treat such a case, as evinced by His reception of the woman, and the compassionate manner in which He would have them deal with such distress, as manifested by His subsequent granting of her petition.

But although Jesus did not reply, the woman did not lose faith. As He passed on, as if not hearing her, she followed Him, continuing her importunities. Annoyed by her importunities, the disciples asked Jesus to send her away. They saw that their Master treated her with indifference, and they therefore supposed that the prejudice of the Jews against the Canaanites was pleasing to Him. But it was a pitying Saviour to whom the woman made her plea, and in answer to the request of the disciples, Jesus said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Although this answer appeared to be in accordance with the prejudice of the Jews, it was an implied rebuke to the disciples, which they afterward understood as reminding them of what He had often told them,—that He came to the world to save all who would accept Him.

The woman urged her case with increased earnestness, bowing at Christ's feet, and crying, "Lord, help me." Jesus, still apparently rejecting her entreaties, according to the unfeeling prejudice of the Jews, answered, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." This was virtually asserting that it was not just to lavish the blessings brought to the favored people of God upon strangers and aliens from Israel. This answer would have utterly discouraged a less earnest seeker. But the woman saw that her opportunity had come. Beneath the apparent refusal of Jesus, she saw a compassion that He could not hide. "Truth, Lord," she answered, "yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."
While the children of the household eat at the father's table, even the dogs are not left unfed. They have a right to the crumbs that fall from the table abundantly supplied. So while there were many blessings given to Israel, was there not also a blessing for her? She was looked upon as a dog, and had she not then a dog's claim to a crumb from His bounty?

Jesus had just departed from His field of labor because the scribes and Pharisees were seeking to take His life. They murmured and complained. They manifested unbelief and bitterness, and refused the salvation so freely offered them. Here Christ meets one of an unfortunate and despised race, that has not been favored with the light of God's word; yet she yields at once to the divine influence of Christ, and has implicit faith in His ability to grant the favor she asks. She begs for the crumbs that fall from the Master's table. If she may have the privilege of a dog, she is willing to be regarded as a dog. She has no national or religious prejudice or pride to influence her course, and she immediately acknowledges Jesus as the Redeemer, and as being able to do all that she asks of Him.

The Saviour is satisfied. He has tested her faith in Him. By His dealings with her, He has shown that she who has been regarded as an outcast from Israel is no longer an alien, but a child in God's household. As a child it is her privilege to share in the Father's gifts. Christ now grants her request, and finishes the lesson to the disciples. Turning to her with a look of pity and love, He says, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." From that hour her daughter became whole. The demon troubled her no more. The woman departed, acknowledging Her Saviour, and happy in the granting of her prayer.

This was the only miracle that Jesus wrought while on this journey. It was for the performance of this act that He went to the borders of Tyre and Sidon. He wished to relieve the afflicted woman, and at the same time to leave an example in His work of mercy toward one of a despised people for the benefit of His disciples when He should no longer be with them. He wished to lead them from their Jewish exclusiveness to be interested in working for others besides their own people.

**Gentiles Fellow Heirs With the Jews.---** Jesus longed to unfold the deep mysteries of the truth which had been hid for ages, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs with the Jews, and "partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." Eph. 3:6. This truth the disciples were slow to learn, and the divine Teacher gave them lesson upon lesson. In rewarding the faith of the centurion at Capernaum, and preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of Sychar, He had already given evidence that He did not share the intolerance of the Jews. But the Samaritans had some knowledge of God; and the centurion had shown kindness to Israel. Now Jesus brought the disciples in contact with a heathen, whom they regarded as having no reason above any of her people, to expect favor from Him. He would give an example of how such a one should be treated. The disciples had thought that He dispensed too freely the gifts of His grace. He would show that His love was not to be circumscribed to race or nation.

When He said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," He stated the truth, and in His work for the Canaanite woman He was fulfilling His commission. This woman was one of the lost sheep that Israel should have rescued. It was their appointed work, the work which they had neglected, that Christ was doing.

This act opened the minds of the disciples more fully to the labor that lay before them among the Gentiles. They saw a wide field of usefulness outside of Judea. They saw souls bearing sorrows unknown to those more highly favored. Among those whom they had been taught to despise were souls longing for help from the mighty Healer, hungering for the light of truth, which had been so abundantly given to the Jews.

Afterward, when the Jews turned still more persistently from the disciples, because they declared Jesus to be the Saviour of the world, and when the partition wall between Jew and Gentile was broken down by the death of Christ, this lesson, and similar ones which pointed to the gospel work unrestricted by custom or nationality, had a powerful influence upon the representatives of Christ, in directing their labors.

**Strong Walls of Separation.---** The Saviour's visit to Phoenicia and the miracle there performed had a yet wider purpose. Not alone for the afflicted woman, nor even for His disciples and those who received their labors, was the work accomplished; but also "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." John 20:31. The same agencies that barred men away from Christ eighteen hundred years ago are at work today. The spirit which built up the partition wall between Jew and Gentile is still active. Pride and prejudice have built strong walls of separation between different races and nations.
classes of men. Christ and His mission have been misrepresented, and multitudes feel that they are virtually shut away from the ministry of the gospel. But let them not feel that they are shut away from Christ. There are no barriers which man or Satan can erect but that faith can penetrate.

In faith the woman of Phoenicia flung herself against the barriers that had been piled up between Jew and Gentile. Against discouragement, regardless of appearances that might have led her to doubt, she trusted the Saviour's love. It is thus that Christ desires us to trust in Him. The blessings of salvation are for every soul. Nothing but his own choice can prevent any man from becoming a partaker of the promise in Christ by the gospel.

Caste is hateful to God. He ignores everything of this character. In His sight the souls of all men are of equal value. He "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us." Without distinction of age, or rank, or nationality, or religious privilege, all are invited to come unto Him and live. "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference." "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free." "The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the Maker of them all." "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Acts 17:26, 27; Gal. 3:28; Prov. 22:2; Rom. 10:11-13. --DA 399-403.

Feeding the Four Thousand.—(29-39)

"Again He went out from the borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon unto the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis." Mark 7:31, R. V.

It was in the region of Decapolis that the demoniacs of Gergesa had been healed. Here the people, alarmed at the destruction of the swine, had constrained Jesus to depart from among them. But they had listened to the messengers He left behind, and a desire was aroused to see Him. As He came again into that region, a crowd gathered about Him, and a deaf, stammering man was brought to Him. Jesus did not, according to His custom, restore the man by a word only. Taking him apart from the multitude, He put His fingers in his ears, and touched his tongue; looking up to heaven, He sighed at thought of the ears that would not be open to the truth, the tongues that refused to acknowledge the Redeemer. At the word, "Be opened," the man's speech was restored, and, disregarding the command to tell no man, he published abroad the story of his cure.

Gentiles and Heathen Fed.— Jesus went up into a mountain, and there the multitude flocked to Him, bringing their sick and lame, and laying them at His feet. He healed them all; and the people, heathen as they were, glorified the God of Israel. For three days they continued to throng about the Saviour, sleeping at night in the open air, and through the day pressing eagerly to hear the words of Christ, and to see His works. At the end of three days their food was spent. Jesus would not send them away hungry, and He called upon His disciples to give them food. Again the disciples revealed their unbelief. At Bethsaida they had seen how, with Christ's blessing, their little store availed for the feeding of the multitude; yet they did not now bring forward their all, trusting His power to multiply it for the hungry crowds. Moreover, those whom He fed at Bethsaida were Jews; these were Gentiles and heathen. Jewish prejudice was still strong in the hearts of the disciples, and they answered Jesus, "Whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?" But obedient to His word they brought Him what they had,—seven loaves and two fishes. The multitude were fed, seven large baskets of fragments remaining. Four thousand men, besides women and children, were thus refreshed, and Jesus sent them away with glad and grateful hearts. --DA 404-5.
Lesson Study Notes

2 Timothy 2:15