

SERMON VI.

THE WOMAN OF CANAAN.

A SERMON, PREACHED AT CHRIST'S CHURCH, OCTOBER 26, 1647.

MATTHEW XV.

“ 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 master's 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.”*

YE have in this story a great storehouse of heavenly comfort and instruction. I shall labour, briefly, to open it at this time unto ye.

The words tell us of a great miracle wrought by our Saviour Christ: casting out the devil in one that was possessed. Concerning which cure two things are considerable: where this cure was wrought; and by what means it was wrought. Wrought in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; and by means of a woman's faith, for our Saviour said, “O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole.” The greatness of this woman's faith is set out by three great temptations that she did meet withal

when she came and besought our Saviour for the cure of her child.

First, "He answered her not a word;" but was silent to all her misery and prayer. This was a great temptation, a great trial.

Secondly, He was not only silent, but when the disciples spake for her, he seems to give her a flat denial: "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And this was a further and greater temptation.

Thirdly, When yet she pressed in upon him, he seems to give her the repulse, and to call her dog: "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs." Here was a great temptation indeed. But her faith wrought through all these temptations. And because, as ye shall see and hear in the opening of the words, that there is none of all these temptations but one time or other may befall the best of God's children, it will be good for us to observe how this woman's faith wrought through every temptation, that we may do the like in our temptations.

But before we come unto that. The Holy Ghost here would have us take notice, first, from whence Christ came, and upon what occasion. Secondly, Whither he came, and how he was received.

First of all, it is said here, "Then Jesus went thence:" he went from the Jews. He had been, as ye read in the former part of the chapter, disputing with them against their traditions: "Ye have made the commandments of God void through your traditions," verse 6. Whereupon they were much offended, verse 12. Our Saviour now then goes from them; they were offended, and rejected his words, and he goes from them. These were the Jews that dwelt at Jerusalem, not the meanest neither, the scribes and pharisees, the learned men of that time, and those that were most in account for holiness. See what entertainment the gospel finds in Christ's own time among the learned and those that were accounted the most holy: scribes, learned men, and the pharisees, the most precise and strict men of those times, and yet here the gospel is rejected by them. Christ goes away, Christ goes from thence upon this account.

None more rigorous opposers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, than learned men, and such as go for holy and pre-

cise men, being wedded to their own inventions: so were these here. Know ye, therefore, men wedded to their own inventions, though never so learned, or never so strict in their lives; little hope that the gospel or the Lord Christ, should find entertainment among them. Be not offended though this fall out.

Jesus went from thence: but whither went he? The text says, "He departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon." How so? Our Lord and Saviour Christ, commanded his disciples, that they should not go into the way of the gentiles; but says he, "Go and preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but go not into the way of the gentiles," Matt. x. 5, 6. Will Christ forbid his disciples and apostles to go into the way of the gentiles, and will he himself go into the way of the gentiles, go into Tyre and Sidon, how can this be? Some answer it thus: That the law-giver was not bound unto the law that he made himself. Others answer it thus: That our Lord and Saviour did not go unto Tyre and Sidon for to preach, but he went thither to be hid. And in Mark vii., where ye have the same story, "From thence he arose and went to Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it." In this respect now, he did not forbid his disciples to go into the way of the gentiles.

But the answer is clear, both in Matthew xv., and that same of Mark, "He departed *εις ταμεση* unto the coasts of Tyre and Sidon." And in Mark vii. 34., "He arose and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon." He went unto some place of Judea; he did not go into the way of the gentiles, but he went unto some town and place in Judea, which was upon the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

And here now he being, a woman comes unto him, who is described at verse 22., from her country; and from the action which she did. "Behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him saying," &c.

A woman, a woman of Canaan, and "behold a woman of Canaan." As if that the Holy Ghost would have us take special notice of it, "Behold, a woman of Canaan came unto him." The Canaanites were of all others the most wicked: the Jews were for to cast them out of their nation, and not to converse with them: in the Jews' account they were dogs. And therefore our Saviour says afterward, "It is not lawful

to cast children's bread unto dogs." She was a Canaanite. But now this woman, this Canaanite, she believes; comes unto Christ, and believes greatly: "O woman, great is thy faith."

Pray let us observe the wonderful dispensation of God here. The Jews that Christ was sent unto, they rejected Christ: a Canaanite that is called a dog, receives Christ. Oh, the wonderful dispensation of God's grace. Mercy takes those in, and free grace takes in those into Christ that are most unlikely. The Jews they were called the children of the kingdom; the children they turn dogs: "Beware of the concision, beware of dogs," Phil. iii. 2. Children turn dogs: and dogs turn children: the Canaanite, a dog, becomes a child and believes; and the Jews that were the children of the kingdom, they turn dogs and rend Christ; oh, what free grace and love is here. Who would rest upon any outward privilege though it be never so great? Who would be discouraged in regard of any unworthiness though it be never so much?

But what says the woman? Says she, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou son of David." Why does she call him the Son of David, and not rather the son of Abraham; and not rather the son of Adam; and not rather the Son of Man? as Christ was often called; why does she here call him the Son of David?

We find in Scripture, that Christ and David did often exchange names. "And David your king shall reign over you," Jer. xxx. 9. A promise is made to the Jews yet to be converted; that is, Christ, David your king, and not Abraham, shall reign over you; but David your king. David was the king of the people of God, and was to feed them: and so Jesus Christ is king of the church, and feeds the people of God. Abraham was not a king, David a king; and therefore, thou Son of David, and not thou Son of Abraham. And then, Messiah ordinarily among the Jews was called David. And therefore this woman here says, "O Lord, thou Son of David."

She does first of all acknowledge his Deity; and therefore she calls him Lord, "O Lord:" she does acknowledge his humanity, and incarnation; and therefore she says, "Thou

Son of David." Her faith was rightly planted; here now ye have her faith in the mustard seed; look but down a few verses, and you find it grown up into a great tree, that the birds of the air, and the saints may come and build their nests in the branches of her faith, But here it is planted. She had in her own country, some that by exorcism did undertake for to cast out devils: she does not go to them: she had her own gods in her own country, she leaves them, and she singles out Christ, and she singles out that name, title, and attribute of Christ, wherein was most of the covenant, and most of the promise: and her faith now, being thus rightly planted, it rises up unto great perfection, she comes on with boldness.

But stay, O woman, a little, thou art a great sinner, thou art a Canaanite, and so a dog, and what dost thou coming unto Jesus Christ? I know what I do, might she say, I do not come to Peter, I do not come to James, I do not come to John; but I come to Christ, and I come to mercy, to mercy itself. I do not plead mine own righteousness, or mine own patience, or my humility, or prayer, or perseverance in prayer; but I plead mercy, "Have mercy on me, O Lord." Behold a miracle in the midst of a miracle, says Chrysostom. The angels in heaven cover their faces in beholding the glory of Jesus Christ; and a poor woman here on earth comes with boldness: the cherubims and seraphims in heaven, says he, fear before Christ; fear above, and faith below; fear in angels, faith and boldness in a poor woman, she comes with boldness.

If faith be true and right, it lays aside all one's own righteousness, and comes unto naked mercy; passes by all other helps and means, singles out Christ, that name and title of Christ that hath most of the covenant, and of God's love in it.

She does not only come with boldness, but she comes with prayer, "Have mercy upon me," &c. She comes praying, for she came believing. Faith and prayer well go together. Prayer is the issue of faith. Faith is prayer in the coal, and prayer is faith in the flame; she comes praying. And mark also, she comes with love; and such love, as makes another body's infirmity and weakness one's own: for she does not say thus, "My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil," have mercy on my *daughter*; but have mercy on *me*: her

daughter's vexation is her own, her infirmity is her own. Faith wrought the love here. Oh, that parents would imitate this woman, and go unto Jesus Christ for their children that are vexed with devils. If a child be sick in body, a parent will run to God and cry for help; but children's souls may be vexed with devils, every lust and sin is a devil, and they do not run to Christ, and say, Oh, Lord, have mercy on me; for my daughter, or my son, or my child is vexed with an unclean devil, or a profane devil; but this woman, having planted her faith rightly, her faith here it does work by prayer, and it works by love, and she says thus, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil."

But what now is Christ's answer to her? "He answered her not a word." Now comes the temptation, the three great temptations; do not wonder that I call these temptations. It is true, God tempteth no man, and Christ tempteth no man; but take temptation for trial, so Christ tempts, so God tempteth. Satan, he tempts a man for to draw out his sin; but Christ tempts for to draw out our faith. Satan's temptations are black within, white and sweet without; but Christ's temptations are black without, white and sweet within.

The first temptation therefore, you have here, "He answered her not a word." Not a word! Christ is called the Word: the Word answers not a word. The fountain of mercy seems to be enclosed; as if he rejected her, and her condition; as if he cared not for it, nor for her; he answered her not a word. Here was a great temptation upon the woman, a great trial; for she might say thus: I have heard "that the Lord heareth prayer;" and now I come and pray unto him, he answers me not a word; how is the Scripture true? I have heard that this man says, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you:" and now I do come unto him, he answers me not a word. The centurion came unto him, and he helped him. A poor leper came unto him, and he helped him: my condition is worse than any body's. Here was a great temptation, Christ answered her not a word.

Though Christ answered her not a word, he heard every word; in not answering her, he answered her. In not

speaking, Christ speaketh much, many times, for when he speaks no answer to your prayers, the language of his actions speaks thus: Pray on, cry on, and lift up your voice on high. Christ holds the door close, not that he may keep you out, but that he may make you knock the more. Christ lets you continue praying, not because he does not regard your prayer, but because he loves your prayer so well, that he would hear your prayer again and again. Christ knows that strength comes in wrestling.

It is no new thing, then, for believers to have no present, visible answer to their prayers. But mark, although they have no visible answer to their prayers, they have invisible strength: he answered her not a word to her prayer, but he assisted her all that while in praying: he gives her no answer to her prayer, but he gave her prayer, he gave her faith to continue in prayer. So long therefore, as the Lord Jesus Christ does send down his Spirit upon your heart in prayer; though you have no visible answer unto your prayer, yet if he uphold your heart in believing, still to hang upon him, still to wait upon him, your condition is not new, it is no other than that which befalls the best of God's children and true believers: thus it befel this woman.

If this temptation do befall any of you as it befel this woman, to have no visible answer unto your prayer; pray do as this woman did. What did she?

He answered her not a word; but still she does acknowledge that he was able to help her, does acknowledge his Deity, and says, "Lord." So do you.

She does acknowledge; that it is his office for to help: and therefore she says, "Thou Son of David." So do you also say in your heart, Though I have not help for the present, it is the office of Christ to help me; he is the Son of David.

She does not rest upon her own duty, or her own righteousness; but she comes unto mere mercy, and she waits on that. So do you also.

She does propound her misery, leave her misery at the feet of Christ, and does not stint or limit him to this or that means. "Lord," says she, "my daughter is grievously vexed;" but she does not say how she would have her daughter cured, she leaves that to Christ, only propounds

her misery, and leaves that at the feet of Christ, to take his own way, and use his own means. So do you also.

She continues yet praying, yea, when the disciples had done. The disciples they said, "Send her away for she crieth after us," verse 23. Christ made an answer to them, and ye hear no more of the disciples, they had done. Thus do you also, as this woman did, though your friends, and the disciples of Christ that have been praying for you, be weary, have done, and have no more to speak for you; yet hold you out, and continue praying. Thus did this woman, she would not leave Christ, but she comes on afresh, she comes unto him again.

What is Christ's answer? "He answered and said, I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Here now is the second temptation. And this indeed seems to be greater than the former. Before, he answered her not a word; and now here is denial, seeming denial, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This temptation is greater: for now in this his dealing, his way seems to run cross unto promises. The promise was made unto the gentiles; the Old Testament is full of it, Isa. xlii. 1. "He shall bring forth judgment unto the gentiles." verse 6. "I have given thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the gentiles." And so in many places, mercy is promised unto the gentiles. Here now our Saviour says, "I am not sent, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." His dealing with this woman seems to run cross to the promises. Yea, now he comes to the great unanswerable objection; as if he should say thus: There are a company of poor lost ones, that are my sheep, elected, predestinated to salvation from all eternity; and I am sent unto them, I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Whereupon this woman might say, Nay then, what do I waiting any longer? for if I be not one of the elect, if I be not one of Christ's sheep, then there is no hope for me. This was a great, and a very great temptation, to lay these words before her, a great trial, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But mark her carriage; she does not fall to dispute the matter of election, or predestination; she came and worshipped him, saying, "Lord help me," verse 24. As if she should say, Lord, whether I be elected or not, I

do not know ; whether I be one of those lost sheep or no, I cannot tell, but I am sure I am lost, and therefore, O Lord, help me. Observe,

A man's temptations may rise higher and higher, even after prayer ; and yet pray aright. This woman did pray before, and her temptation arises after prayer, yet her prayer right, and her faith right.

Observe this, that God's dealings, or Christ's dealings with a man, may sometimes seem to be cross to his very promise, and yet a man's condition right. So here with this woman.

That it may be the case of some of God's children, to be exercised about their election and predestination ; and temptations concerning election and predestination thrown in upon them.

That in case any poor believer, that is a weak person, weak in the faith, be tempted and tried about election or predestination, the best way for the present is, to lay that dispute by ; and to run to mercy, and say, " Lord help me : " and for the present, not to dispute whether he be a sheep or no, elected or no, predestinated or no, but run to Christ, and go to prayer, and say, Lord help me, and lay the dispute by.

Again, As our temptations increase, so our faith shall increase. The woman's temptations rose, so did her faith too ; " She came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me : " still she held on and and hung upon Jesus Christ. According to the increases of our temptations, so shall the increases of our faith be.

If all this will not do, behold now a third, and a greater temptation. " He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs. "

" It is not meet to cast children's bread to *dogs*. " The word in the original is, a *whelp*. A dog grown, or a mastiff, may be, and is good for something, of great use ; but what is a whelp good for, for the present, of what use ? It is not meet to cast children's bread unto whelps.

" To *cast* children's bread. " It intimates thus much, that God does cast out some outward blessings upon wicked men that are even dogs : but the bread of children is so dispensed, gospel bread is so dispensed, as nothing shall be lost.

Here was a very great temptation, and greater than the

other. Dog is most unworthy. When the Scripture would set out the unworthiness of a man, and the abject condition of any, he is called a dog. Goliath could understand this, "Am I a dog, that thou comest out thus against me," 1 Sam. xvii. 43. Am I so base, vile, and unworthy? am I a dog? And so Mephibosheth, when he would acknowledge his own unworthiness to David he calls himself, a dog, and a dead dog. So Hazael, "Am I a dog?" Yet says our Saviour here, "It is not meet to cast children's bread unto dogs." This woman now, her heart might have risen, and she might have said thus, One would think I am no dog; I am no dog; I am a woman, though a sinful woman, but I am no dog: I have now come and spread my condition, and misery before ye; if ye will not relieve me, do not miscall me; if ye will not help me, yet do not abuse me; if ye will not help me, yet pity me, do not call me dog, I am no dog. The Jews, that you call the children of the kingdom, they indeed are dogs, they turn again and rend you, but I do not turn again and rend you, I am no dog. Her heart might have risen at this phrase: here was a great temptation now, a mighty trial here in this third thing.

It is no new thing for true believers, God's own people, to have their unworthiness objected to them. It is an ordinary thing amongst men and women: I am unclean, I am unworthy of communion with the saints, communion with God's people, with Christ, I am a dog, I am most unworthy; it is no new thing for true believers to have their own unworthiness objected to them.

But mark, how this woman's faith works through this temptation. Says she, "True, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table."

"True." The word is the same that in the Corinthians, ye translate, protest. "I protest by our rejoicing, that I die daily," 1 Cor. xv. 33. And it should rather be translated so; "Yea, by our rejoicing we die daily:" rather than in the form of an oath, as it is there, it is the same word that is here for, true.

Ye cannot charge a believer so deeply, or speak so meanly of him, but he does think and speak as meanly of himself: Lord, that dost call me a dog, and one that is most unworthy; true, Lord, I am most unworthy. Some, they will

dispraise themselves; but if you dispraise them too, then they will be angry; if you fall in with their own dispraises, and say, It is true: then they will be angry. But a true believer, you cannot speak or think so meanly of him, but he will say, True, Lord, true.

“Lord.” Observe here, she calls Christ, Lord, when Christ calls her dog. Lord, says she, though thou speakest dishonourably of me, yet I will speak honourably of thee: though I am a dog in thy mouth, thou art a Lord in my mouth. A gracious heart, and a true believer, will speak and think honourably of Jesus Christ, even then, at that time, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall suffer the greatest dirt and reproach to be thrown upon him: True, Lord.

“But the dogs eat the crumbs.” True faith finds out a promise in the very refusal, in Christ’s refusal: finds out encouragement in the bowels of discouragement. True, Lord, bread is for children; that is the loaf, the piece that is cut off the loaf; but the crumbs do as well belong to a dog, as the loaf belongs to the child. And, Lord, thou sayest I am a dog, therefore a crumb does belong to me. True faith, it gathers in upon Jesus Christ, and gathers in upon him by that very hand that seems to put the soul away from him: it makes advantage of a discouragement, and gathers it upon Jesus Christ even by that hand that does thrust it away. “The dogs eat the crumbs.”

Again, You may observe here, that the least of Christ is highly prized with a true believer: a gracious heart, a true believer does highly prize and value the least of Christ. A crumb, a crumb; oh, if I may have but a crumb; a crumb shall be welcome; Lord, a crumb of mercy is welcome: the loaves are for children, but if I can get a crumb I will praise God for it, I will be contented. The least, the worst of Christ in the eye of a believer is highly valued, and he sets a great price upon it.

Lastly, All this is said by a woman. Women usually are not of that boldness, but more easily dashed out of countenance. Faith rises above our nature and above our natural disposition. Faith had gotten into this woman’s heart, and she forgets her own disposition, she come like any man with boldness upon Jesus Christ, follows him, and will never let

him alone. Faith rises above our own dispositions and above our natures.

From all this you may observe here, if you be tempted with consideration of your own unworthiness, how you should give an answer unto those temptations. Do as this woman did: If I be a dog, Lord, yet I am thy dog; and if I be a dog, Lord, yet crumbs belong to me; and if I be never so great a sinner, mercy and grace is for sinners, and I come to mercy. Oh, still, still hang upon Jesus Christ, still hang upon Jesus Christ, and never let him go. *Ab negando promittit*, he does promise in denying. There was honeycombs found in the body of the lion. Do but hang upon Jesus Christ, hang upon him by faith, and you will find honeycombs in the midst of all those temptations and discouragements that you do meet withal. And though for the present he does seem to give a denial unto all your prayers, yet at the last he will own your prayers, he will own your faith, and he will say unto thee, man or woman, "Great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

I come to the victory after this combat. "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Here, now, the Lord does give a testimony of her faith, and he does give her the mercy desired. First, he commends her faith, and, secondly, he commends the greatness of her faith, "O woman, great is thy faith."

Why does he rather commend her faith than other graces? She had other graces. Here is humility in this woman to be seen; here is a great deal of wisdom in this woman to be seen; here is prayer; here is perseverance in prayer. Christ commends none of these, but commends her faith. Why does he rather commend her faith than any other grace?

Faith does commend Christ above all the other, and therefore Christ will commend faith above all other duties or graces. Faith honours Christ, and Christ will honour faith. It is faith that gives a being to, and is the root of all other graces. He commends that. It is only faith that brings Christ and the soul together; and therefore he does commend faith above all other graces.

If the Lord Jesus Christ does commend faith so, why should we not all labour especially to strengthen our faith.

Get faith, you that have it not; and strengthen it, you that have it. Get humility, patience, wisdom; be much in prayer, and continue in prayer; but above all things get faith. Faith is the grace commended by Jesus Christ above all other graces; therefore we should labour above all for to get faith, and to strengthen faith. It is observed from this place, that Christ commends none but the gentiles, the faith of the gentiles. He says concerning the centurion, "I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel;" he was a gentile. And here he says concerning this woman, "O woman, great is thy faith;" and she was a gentile. Whatever, therefore, thou hast been; though a Canaanite, though a sinner, though a great sinner; get faith, labour to strengthen thy faith, and the Lord Jesus Christ will own thy faith at last. Though for the present he seems to hide himself from thee, yet he will own it at the last, and he will commend it at the last.

He commends here the greatness of her faith. Wherein was the greatness of her faith? Faith consists in the knowledge of Christ, assent unto the truth, a relying upon God in Christ in time of temptation; it is a coming to Jesus Christ, an adherence to him. But the greatness of her faith lay in this, that in the midst of all these temptations, yet she did hang on Christ, and would not be beaten off by any of these discouragements or temptations. Here was the greatness of her faith.

The strength of faith does not lie in the assurance of our salvation, or of God's love, or of the mercy that we desire in prayer; one may have strong faith, and yet no assurance; I say, not only faith, but strong faith. This woman had no assurance, that we read of, not assurance of the thing that she begged, that the Lord would hear her prayer; she had no assurance of it, only she hung upon Christ, and would not away. And when he put her away, she gathered in upon him; in the midst of all temptation and opposition still she did hang upon him. So, then, a man may have faith, and strong faith, although he have no assurance.

And, upon this account, how many are there that have strong faith, that think they have no faith all. Some think they have no faith because they cannot say, Christ is mine, mercy is mine, heaven is mine; but yet, if in the time of your temptation ye can hang upon Christ, and will not away from

Christ, but will still hang upon him, still wait upon him; you have not only faith, but you may have strong faith, a great faith, as this woman had. And let me tell you this for your comfort: at the last the Lord will make a report of your faith unto your own heart; yea, he will make a report answerable to your temptation; for you may observe here, that as the wound was made, so the plaster was laid. You have three great temptations: answerably, now, the Lord Jesus Christ does testify of this woman. First of all, "He answered her not a word," would not own her, would not speak to her: now, says he, "O woman." Then he said that "he was not sent but unto the lost sheep:" now he does own her for a sheep, and he says she hath faith. Before, he says, "It is not meet to cast children's bread to dogs:" this did argue that she was a dog, one most unworthy: now, he says, that she is most worthy; O woman, thou hast not only faith, but thou hast a great faith; "O woman, great is thy faith." So that, I say, still hang upon Christ; in all your temptations, in the midst of all your discouragements, still hang upon Christ; and the Lord Jesus, he will not only make a report of your faith unto ye, but, according as your temptations rise, so shall the report of your grace be from the Lord Christ unto your poor soul: therefore hang upon Christ.

He does not only here give a testimony of her faith, and the greatness of her faith, but now he does give the thing: "Be it unto thee as thou wilt." Christ can deny nothing to a true believer. A believer may have what he will of Christ at last. Christ cannot hold: though he do hide himself from his brethren, as Joseph did, for a time, he cannot hold it out always, he cannot hold out the siege always, but he will give up himself to a poor believer; O poor believer, be it according as thou wilt; thou wouldest have grace, thou wouldest have this or that mercy, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.

I will only take one lesson from all and so conclude.

And the great lesson that we should all learn from this whole story is, to believe in the face of all discouragement, of all opposition, all temptation; still to hang upon Jesus Christ. The very reading of this story provokes us hereunto. Whatsoever your temptations be, whatever your discouragements be, yet hang on Christ, never away, still wait upon him.

You say, it may be, But I fear Christ and the promise does not belong to me.

But did Jesus Christ ever say unto ye with his own mouth, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep," and thou art none? He said so to this woman, and yet she did hang upon him, and he commended her for her faith.

But you will say unto me, I have been at prayer, I have prayed long, and I hear nothing of all my prayers.

This woman did pray to Christ, he answered her not a word, and yet she did hang upon him, yet she did believe: and she is commended for her believing.

You will say, I am one that have been a great sinner, an unclean wretch, even as a dog; surely there is no hope and no mercy for me.

Did the Lord Jesus Christ ever himself say to you, as he said to this woman, seeming to call her dog? yet she did hang upon him, yet she did wait upon him, yet she did believe, and the Lord commended her for her faith.

I pray, indeed, but it is my necessities make me go unto God in prayer; and when I go unto God in prayer, my necessities put me on.

And was it not so with this woman? Her daughter was grievously vexed with a devil, and thereupon her necessity drave her unto Christ; and yet, poor woman, she is welcome.

But I do not go unto Jesus Christ: I go not unto Christ at all.

But Jesus Christ yet will come to you. This woman did not come to Jerusalem, Christ went down unto the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; Christ came to her, and yet she believed: this stood with faith, and Christ commended her faith.

I have no assurance of Christ's love and mercy towards me.

Tell me, Had this woman any assurance of this mercy that she prayed for? She only brings in her wants, propounds them to Jesus Christ, lays them at his feet, hangs upon him; and this was her faith, and she is commended for her faith, and the greatness of her faith: "O woman, great is thy faith." So that, do but now hang on Christ, though thou hast not assurance of thy salvation, or of the love of God, yet in the face of all temptations, and all discouragement, hang on Christ, never away, never be beaten off by

any discouragement, hang on Christ, wait on Christ, and the Lord Christ will at last commend thee as thou wilt. How shall people that go on in a continued way of doubting and unbelief, ever look this poor woman in the face at the great day of judgment, this poor Canaanitish woman? How will you be able, you that go on in a continual way of doubting and unbelief, to look the Lord Jesus Christ in the face? Stir up yourselves, stir up yourselves, I beseech you, to this great work of believing. I confess it is a hard thing to believe, and harder to believe than to keep all the ten commandments. There is something in nature to contribute towards the keeping of the ten commandments, but there is nothing in nature to contribute to thy believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a very hard thing to believe truly; and those that make it an easy matter, they do not know what it is to believe. But read over this story, and your hearts will be provoked to believe, to hang upon Jesus Christ. Do it, and the Lord will commend your faith, and own you and your faith.