

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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JESUS AT A STAND.

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## A Sermon

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“And Jesus stood still.”—Mark x. 49.

A FRIEND enquired of me yesterday, “Will you preach on Sunday morning to saints or to sinners?” I could not at the moment answer him; but I afterwards thought within myself—If I preach concerning Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, I shall kill two birds with one stone, and give both saints and sinners a profitable theme for thought. There is but one message of the gospel, and it has a voice to all. Saints know no sweeter music than the name of Jesus, and sinners know no richer comfort than his person and his work. We preach to all when we preach him who is all in all. Christ comes as life to the dead, and he is equally life to the living. I trust there will at this time be a word in season, both to those who fear God and to those who fear him not, while I speak of the Saviour from these three words, “Jesus stood still.”

Our divine Lord has changed his position, but he is himself the same as ever, and therefore every truth which we learn concerning him in the past becomes all the more valuable since it is still true of him. Our Lord's name is “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” What his character was on earth such it is still; his pursuits on earth are his pursuits still; his main object when he was here is his chief aim even in the glory. We have not to say, “This is what Jesus *was*,” and then to mourn that he has changed; for he is without variableness. His transit from the tree to the throne has not affected his nature so as to make him other than he was when here below. If we delight in a trait of his character as drawn in the gospels, we may be sure that he possesses the same excellence now that he is at the right hand of the Father. His dealing with blind Bartimæus nineteen centuries ago is a fair type of his conduct towards every poor blind sinner who at this hour comes to him crying, “Son of David, have mercy on me.” I hope we shall see the miracle of Jericho repeated in this house this very day. I am persuaded that it will be so; for even now, constrained by the prayers already offered, Jesus waits to be

gracious ; and to-day it shall be said that at the entreaties of his people Jesus paused to work wonders of love—"Jesus stood still."

I. First, let us answer this question,—WHAT MEANS THIS PAUSE IN THE SAVIOUR'S PROGRESS, "Jesus stood still"? This was not his frequent posture ; for he was ever on the move : "He went about doing good." He might have done much among men if he had taken up his station and remained in one place, so that the crowds could have resorted to him to listen to his voice, or to be healed by his power ; but Jesus was not an immovable statue of benevolence, he was active and energetic, an itinerant preacher who never wearied in his circuit. One does not often see Jesus standing still. His was the love which does not wait to be sought after by men ; for it has come to seek as well as to save that which was lost. The zeal of the Lord's house consumed him, so that for him there was no loitering or standing still. Yet in the case before us the Great Worker ceased from his activity : "Jesus stood still."

In the gospel we read that our Lord was going up to Jerusalem, with his face steadfastly set to accomplish his great work. His own words were, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem ; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes ; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles : and they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him : and the third day he shall rise again." (Mark x. 33, 34.) He had a baptism to be baptized with, and he was straitened until it was accomplished ; therefore with brave resolve he forced his way to the city. Every pause to him would have been untimely unless there had been some weighty reason to arrest him. His great work pressed upon his soul, and he longed to be fully engaged in it, as one who has a cup to drink and thirsts to set it to his lips. Yet, though his thoughts were thus urgently preoccupied, and his whole heart engrossed, we find him pausing in his steady progress to the desired end ; "Jesus stood still." There was, doubtless, somewhat special about this recorded pause. What was it which fastened him to the spot ? It was not hesitancy—his resolve was too firm ; it was not fear—the thought of drawing back never passed the Redeemer's mind. Onward, onward, was his fixed resolve. He stood still from no unworthy motive ; all his movements and his pauses have a nobility about them and a fulness of meaning which no personal motive can account for.

Our Lord was beginning at the moment that triumphal procession which continued till he reached the temple amid the hosannas of the multitude. It is true he was advancing to the cross ; but ere he reached his death he was to be proclaimed as the King, meek and lowly, who came riding upon a colt the foal of an ass. His triumphal march has begun, and Jesus is in the midst of admiring listeners. Yet Jesus stands still ; the whole procession halts ; the twelve disciples and the company of the faithful are arrested, and the crowd tarries in the roadway of Jericho. For what great reason did it happen that Jesus stood still ? I could have wished that a master sculptor had been there and could then have caught a glimpse of the standing Jesus. I think I see him suddenly arrested ; he moves not an inch, but waits in listening

attitude. His eye is fixed in the direction whence had come a certain pleading cry. His ears are evidently open to hear the movement which follows his command to call the suppliant. The Saviour's thoughts are pausing too: he stands still mentally as well as physically, engrossed by one object to which he will attend before he takes another step. Ceasing from his discourse, however much his hearers regret his silence, he gives ear, and eye, and tongue to the petitioner whose voice reached him above the tramping and hubbub of the crowd. *That cry came from a blind beggar—that was the man.* Yes, the blind beggar of Jericho had stopped the prophet of Nazareth: tell out his name—blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, has stayed the Saviour, and holds him spellbound. Jesus waits in perfect readiness to attend to the pleading one, and grant him his desire. The cry of "Son of David, have mercy upon me" has caught his ear, and the music of the word "mercy" holds him. As the Song hath it, "The King is held in the galleries." Attentive and prepared to help with all his mighty power, Jesus waits. He tarries at a blind beggar's prayer, resolved to do his bidding. I have seen servants wait upon their masters, but here is the Lord of all waiting upon one lower than a servant, waiting upon a blind man whose trade was beggary.

"Jesus stood still": he was all there: ready, willing, able, too, to do for the poor man whatsoever he needed. He asked him, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" as if he stood at his beck and call, and could not take a step onward until he had answered the prayer.

"Jesus stood still." I have heard of Joshua who said, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon"; but I rank the blind beggar above Joshua, for he causes the Sun of righteousness to stand still. Yes, he who created both sun and moon stood still, and the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man. Jericho had produced in ages long gone by a prodigy of faith among her harlots, and now she shows us a wonder of grace among her beggars. How marvellous was the power which dwelt in that poor man's cry! Is such power to be found among men at this hour? Ah, there is the point. The Saviour is the same to-day as ever, and I believe, my brethren, that you and I have power at this time to make him stand still if we act as Bartimæus did. Many a poor sinner here this morning, if God shall help him to cry after the style of the blind man, can command the Saviour's full attention, can command his power, and get from him the grace which he is so willing and able to bestow. As for you who know and love him, be ye well assured that no blind beggar can have such power with him as you have who are his friends. I am sure that the voices of those who have laid their heads in his bosom must have great power over him, and if our brethren will but use their influence with the Well-beloved they may ask what they will, and it shall be done unto them. Pleading saints can cause him to stand still even now. I have feared and trembled for my country of late lest the Lord Jesus should depart from it and take away the candlestick out of its place. More than two hundred years ago George Herbert said, when he looked upon the declining state of godliness in England—

"Religion stands a-tiptoe in our land,  
Ready to pass to the American strand."

He saw the Puritans flying away to the New England colonies, and he trembled for the ark of God in his own land; but, thank God, the prayers of Herbert and the prayers of other saints have constrained the Lord Jesus to abide with us, though "he made as though he would have gone further." Brethren, the Lord had thought, as it were, to cross the Atlantic, and fix his dwelling among a people who should be gathered in a newly-discovered land. Thank God, he has built a church in America; but he has not left us without witness. Because of the tears of his saints, "Jesus stood still." Still, we hold him, and we will not let him go; he abides among our churches, still opening blind eyes, saving souls, and making men whole. O ye that love him, take care that by your entreaties you still detain him.

At times our Lord, as judge among the nations, arises to visit the sins of a people upon them. Patience makes room for justice, and Providence determines that guilty nations shall be scourged: at such times they are blessed indeed who can cause the King to stand still. This wicked country of ours has often escaped through the prayers of the saints. No man can read our history without perceiving that among guilty nations we hold a sorrowful place; for we have had more light than any other people, and have sinned against it full often. This erring nation had been scourged to destruction if it had not been that the intercessions of God's people have caused the Judge of all the earth to stand still. Jesus now rules all nations as Lord of Providence, and metes out justice and judgment among them, but a plea for mercy brings a decree of forbearance, and sinful nations are permitted still to stand within the bounds of grace.

I doubt not that when the end of a reprobate has almost come, and when a sinner's breath has almost left his body, and the judgment has been about to be executed upon his guilty soul, the prayers of earnest men and women have made the merciful One linger yet a little longer, and give a further space in which repentance might spring up in the long-hardened heart, and the faith-glance might yet be given by the long-blinded eye. What pauses grace has made when faith has interceded!

Whatever our Lord Jesus is doing he is never so occupied as to disregard earnest prayer. He would, if needful, put everything aside to listen to importunate and earnest pleading. To this day Jesus standeth still to hear the cry of the destitute. If at this moment we could withdraw the curtains of heaven we should see our Saviour waiting to be gracious, ready to hear our prayers, hearkening to every sigh, putting every tear into his bottle, answering every petition which comes up before him from a sincere heart. What though he ruleth empires, he stands still to hear the wailing of distress; what though he inhabiteth the praises of Israel, he is moved by the sorrows of sinners; what though he hasteneth the day of his coming, and is ready to begin his triumphal advent to the New Jerusalem, yet will he pause when the poor and needy present their case before him.

Thus have I tried to picture the Lord Jesus as standing still. How I wish that some awakened one would now behold the Saviour, and exclaim, with Mr. Wesley,—



“Stopp'd by a sinner's prayer,  
 Thou canst no farther move,  
 Thou canst no more forbear  
 To manifest thy love.  
 Thou waitest now to show thy grace,  
 And callest *me* to seek thy face.”

II. We will now enter upon a practical enquiry: WHO AND WHAT WAS THIS WHICH ARRESTED THE SAVIOUR? What made him stand still? Herod could not have done it, nor Pilate, nor chief priests, nor scribes, nor the foresight of the bloody sweat, nor a vision of the cross. These would but have quickened his steps to enter upon the conflict, and achieve redemption. What made him stand still?

First, as I have already said, it was *a blind beggar*. I am afraid there are very few here this morning who are literally beggars; for nowadays we wear good clothes, and are so very respectable, that abjectly poor people do not like to come and sit with us. The more's the pity. Yet I know that many poor persons are here now, and I thank God that it is so. Those who are in the depths of poverty will, I hope, believe that they are welcome to the house of the Lord, who is no respecter of persons. We are right glad to see the poor among us, the more the merrier. Bartimæus was a man of the very lowest order; he did not earn his own bread; he could not; he sat publicly by the wayside, and held out his hand for alms. Men give small honour to a blind beggar, and are apt to pass him by without regard; but he to whom we owe all hope of heaven stood still at the cry of such as he. After this no one among you will dare to say, “I cannot be saved because I am so obscure, so poor, so homeless, so helpless.” Tell me what you are at your very worst, and still I have good tidings concerning my Lord's condescending favour to the like of you. Did you lodge in the casual ward last night? Yet are you welcome to Christ. Have you come from the workhouse? Yet are you invited to the palace of grace. Do you labour very hard for very little, and can you barely pay your way? The Lord Jesus Christ wants no fee or reward from you; come empty-handed to his treasury. Jesus does not look at garments. What cares Christ about our coats? Tailors think of such matters, but Jesus does not. Christ sees the man himself and not his raiment: he looks not at the man's possessions, but at his heart. In mercy he beholds not the excellence of the man, but his wants, his sorrows, and his poverty. No man here shall ever be able to say, “It was of no use for me to think about religion: my circumstances were too low.” “I was depressed,” says one, “I should have thought about better things, but really the grind of poverty was so dreadful that I could not rise from the dust.” This is not true, for you are not poorer than the blind beggar of Jericho, and the sharp tooth of penury has not bitten you more severely than many of the Lord's suffering saints. Misery had eaten into the heart of this poor blind man, and yet his cry made the Saviour stand still. Now then, you that are the lowest, poorest, most afflicted, most despised in this house, I pray that you may be helped to appeal to Jesus for mercy, and he will stand still to listen to you, even to you.

But what was the art by which Bartimæus stayed the Lord? That

which stopped the Saviour was *a blind beggar's cry*. The man did not sing a touching hymn to a melting tune, he only cried. Sometimes persons have such melodious voices that if they sing in the street you linger to hear them, and are in no hurry to go on with your errand; but this man did not sing; he had not even learned to intone his prayers as certain do in these odd times. I wonder whether the Lord ever listens to prayers when men turn them into sing-song and deliver them in an unnatural voice,—*intoning* they call it. Why do men think it an improvement to say their prayers the wrong way upwards? This man *cried*. It was a cry, a ringing cry, which increased in strength each time it was uttered. Thus it uprose into the ear, "Son of David, have mercy on me! Son of David, have mercy on me!" The voice came from a heart burdened with misery, breaking with desire, weary of long years of darkness, pining for the light, and hopeful of obtaining it. "Son of David, have mercy on me," again the cry rose above all the hubbub of the throng.

The prayer was *a cry for mercy*: "Son of David, have mercy." If you ask our Lord for anything on the ground of merit, you will find him deaf as a stone: if you think yourself a very good body, deserving favour at his hands, he will pass on and never regard you, for he has not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Change that plea for a better, for when your prayer is for mercy you will touch the Saviour's heart directly, and mercy shall be yours. The proud man prays, and he thinks his eloquent prayer must prevail, but the winds carry away his supplications; the humble man does no more than smite on his breast and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and that cry for mercy wins the day. When the messenger of mercy was travelling through the world he asked himself at what inn he should alight and spend the night. Lions and Eagles were not to his mind, and he passed by houses wearing such warlike names; so, too, he passed by places known by the sign of "The Waving Plume" and "The Conquering Hero," for he knew that there was no room for him in these inns. He hastened by many a hostelry and tarried not, till at last he came to a little inn which bore the sign of "The Broken Heart." "Here," said mercy's messenger, "I would fain tarry, for I know by experience that I shall be welcome here." "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Now, beloved friends, if you plead for mercy because deeply conscious that nothing but the grace of God can save you, even though you cannot put pretty words together or offer a long prayer, you shall prevail with God. You need not be an orator in order to be mighty in pleading with the Lord. Only appeal on the ground of free grace and dying love and Jesus will stand still and listen to you.

There was another point about this cry which must not be forgotten: *the name of Jesus was used as a plea*. Is there anything in heaven, or out of heaven, more powerful than the name of Jesus? "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you": "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do." Father and Son stand pledged to recognise and accept every draft upon the exchequer of heaven which is endorsed with the name of Jesus, a name that makes angels rejoice and devils tremble: there is none like it anywhere. The blind beggar of Jericho had learned to use the name

of Jesus: and he called him "Son of David,"—Prince, Messiah, the sent One of God, the Saviour of the world. Herein is wisdom. O dear hearer, if you know the name of Jesus plead it; if you know what he is, what he came to do, what he has done, what he is doing; if you know anything about his character, his nature, his power, or his promise, plead it before him in prayer. In humble faith say to him, "Son of David, if thou be indeed all this, be all this to *me*, I beseech thee; if thou art a Saviour, save *me*; if thou blottest out sin, blot out mine; if thou dost open the understanding, open thou mine, for thy great mercy sake." When we can thus reason together with the Lord we shall have good speed in his presence, and again it shall be said, "Jesus stood still."

I suppose the main thing which brought our gracious Master to a stand was the fact that he had now *an opportunity for doing good*. Jesus has come to seek his lost sheep, and when his eyes light upon one all torn and lame he stops to deal tenderly with it. Our Lord was an itinerant Saviour, and wherever he found that he was wanted there he staid. The object of his mission is still the same:—

"He comes, from thickest films of vice,  
To clear the mental ray;  
And on the eye-balls of the blind  
To pour celestial day.

"He comes, the broken heart to bind,  
The bleeding soul to cure;  
And, with the treasures of his grace,  
To enrich the humble poor."

Certain people in his day boasted that they could see: our Lord did not tarry to argue with them; they did not want him, and he therefore passed them by; but here is a blind man, and was it not said of the Messiah that he should open the eyes of the blind? Here is the opportunity for him, and before that opportunity he stands still until his illuminating work shall be done. You good people who imagine that you will go to heaven by your own works, my Lord does not wait on you; but you poor sinners who have no merits, you guilty ones who need his mercy, Jesus stops for you. You who have so much strength that you can believe when you like, can repent when you like, can be saved when you like, can be quite independent of the Holy Spirit and the sovereign grace of God, Jesus does not look at you; but oh, you that are blind and cannot see, you that wish you could see, you who groan because you have no strength, you are the men for my Master. Believe me, the Lord of mercy looks not at merit, but at misery. The necessity of the case is its claim upon his tender heart. O sons of men, the Infinite Saviour cares not for your fulness; his eye of pity rests upon your emptiness. He turns indignantly from fancied claims of proud, self-righteous men, but he hastens to relieve those who confess their faults, and seek his face. This is the work and office of Jesus, and he loves to exercise his high calling: come ye to him, and put your case into his hand. Be this your prayer—

"Since still thou goest about to do  
Thy needy creatures good;  
On me, that I thy praise may show,  
Be all thy wonders show'd.

“If thou, my God, art passing by,  
 Oh let me find thee near!  
 Jesus, in mercy hear my cry,  
 Thou, Son of David, hear!

“Behold me waiting, in the way,  
 For thee, the heavenly light;  
 Command me to be brought, and say,  
 ‘Sinner, receive thy sight.’”

Thus I have tried to show what was the power which rivetted the Saviour to the spot so that the gospel saith, “Jesus stood still.”

Under our third head we shall now enquire—

III. WHAT WAS THERE SPECIAL ABOUT THIS BLIND MAN AND HIS PRAYER? An answer lies on the surface,—there was this special about it, first, that *the man was full of need*. He had two loads to carry. He was poor,—that is bad enough; but he was also blind,—that is worse. Here was a man with double need, without bread and without light; and therefore his cries had a double loudness in the ears of the sinner’s friend. I cannot so look around these galleries and over this area as to spy out those in direst need, or I would look their way and say,

“Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched;”

but I can make a few enquiries, and may the Lord find out his own by them. Is there anyone here who has a double need, who is doubly guilty, doubly helpless—a man who feels that, if Jesus does not save him, he will be doubly damned? Do I speak to one whose need is doubly pressing, so that his heart breaks for immediate relief? Ah, thou doubly lost one, Jesus will stand still for thee. You who are blind and poverty-stricken, too, shall have speedy audience. You that have nothing, and can see no hope of ever having anything, you are the favoured ones whose pleading voices Jesus never disregards. Cry mightily to him at once. He waits at this moment. “Why,” says one, “you are preaching up our poverty, our beggary, our bankruptcy.” Exactly so.

“’Tis perfect poverty alone  
 That sets the soul at large;  
 While we can call one mite our own  
 We get no full discharge.

“But let our debts be what they may,  
 However great or small,  
 As soon as we have nought to pay,  
 Our Lord forgives us all.”

But there was another speciality about this man besides his double need, and that was *his strong desire*. When he sought for sight he meant it, and there was no question about his sincerity and eagerness. His was no prayer which froze on the lips. His desire was, moreover, a very fitting and appropriate one. He sighed not for a luxury, but for a necessity. Our Lord said in the thirty-sixth verse to James and John, “What would ye that I should do for you?” and now, when he speaks to Bartimæus, he uses the same words—“What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?” James and John asked what was not fitting, or needful, or proper; but this poor man had a desire which was, of all



others, the most natural and suitable. What should a blind man seek but sight? Have you, dear hearer, a longing for salvation? What else should a sinner long for? Do you desire forgiveness of sin? It is of all things most fitting that a guilty one should desire pardon. Do you wish for an opened spiritual eye? Do you pray to be made whole? Do you pine to become holy? Oh, then, if your desire be real and fervent its object is so suitable, so commendable, that you may be sure of its being granted: therefore, be of good cheer, and at this moment hope in the Lord.

Another thing that was special about the case was *the man's earnest pleading*, for his desire turned itself into prayer, and that prayer took up arguments and urged them earnestly. His prayer was so full of life that it could not be repressed. Many tried to silence his cry, but it could not be hushed. Important persons said to the man, "Be quiet." Apostles charged him to hold his tongue; but he heeded no one. I am sure that if an apostle were to say to some of you, "Do not pray," you would feel quite warranted in ceasing from praying; at least, it would serve as a good enough excuse for you. You would say, "I never mean to seek mercy any more, for Peter told me not to do so." Oh, but if in your heart there is a work of grace, fifty Peters could not stop your praying. Irrepressible prayer brings assured answers. If there is a prayer in your soul that James and John could not silence, if there is a cry in your soul that Andrew and Bartholomew and Nathanael and the whole eleven of them could not suffocate, the Lord Jesus will speedily hear you. Pray, my brethren, pray without ceasing, though all the devils in hell should charge you not to pray. Though all the saints in heaven should vote your pleading useless, yet still plead on, and your suit shall speed with the Redeemer. He stops for you, and even now it may be said of him, "Jesus stood still."

That, after all, which fastest bound the Saviour was *the man's faith*, for he said to him, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." What kind of faith was it? It was the best faith as to origin, for it was the faith of a blind man, and therefore was not adulterated by the confidence which comes of sight. Faith cometh not by seeing, or else it never could have come to this poor beggar; it cometh by hearing, and he could hear. We have among us a certain sort of people who seem to imagine that faith comes by sight. Acting upon this, they work upon the eye in many ways. If you step inside the walls of their churches you see an enormous cross; the altar is sumptuously adorned, mystical letters and characters are here and there in abundance. Open your eyes and get a blessing, if there be one. See, here comes a man who on his back and all around him carries means of grace for the eye. He wears an embroidered cross, and all over he is rigged out and ragged out, so as to instruct and save all who are willing to study symbolical vestures. He that hath eyes to see let him see. Watch what this successor of the apostles is doing; observe his genuflexions, his facings about, his noddings of the head,—all these minister grace to the beholders. Faith of the High Anglican kind would seem to come by sight; but the faith of God's elect, the faith which saves the soul, "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Bartimæus had seen nothing, but he had believed the report concerning

the Messiah, and had received the benediction, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." If Jesus Christ raised the dead, this man did not see the miracle; if Jesus healed the leper, this man did not see the wonder; and if the lame man leaped like a hart, this man had neither seen his crutches nor his leaping: his faith was solely born of hearing, and this is faith's best pedigree. Dear friends, be attentive hearers of the gospel. Thank God that you are privileged to be hearers. You need not sigh for ceremonials or architecture or processions. If you are a hearer of the gospel you have sufficient means of grace. By Eargate King Jesus rides into the town of Mansoul. He saith, "Incline your ear and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live." What! though no dream, or vision, or rapturous experience be as a sign for your eye to see, believe in Jesus and you shall find in him more than all signs and wonders.

IV. Thus have we thought over the peculiar forces which made the Saviour stand; may we know how to use them. Does anyone enquire, What has this to do with us? This is my last point: "WHAT IS THERE SPECIAL FOR YOU, MY HEARER?" I think there may be much for you, for it contains much for me. I was a blind beggar once, as blind as the heathens' gods, of which we read, "eyes have they, but they see not;" and I was a beggar too, so penniless as not to possess a pennyworth of merits to bless myself with. I thought I had some good works once, quite a little cupboard full, but they bred worms and stank, and I had to sweep them all out and sweeten the place which they had defiled. I found myself worse than having nothing, for, like the Egyptians when the plague of frogs was removed, I had heaps of rubbish to get rid of. My former good works became, in my judgment, like forged bank notes or counterfeit money: I was afraid of being charged with the attempt to utter them. Alas, my base good works, my proud good works, my deceitful good works pressed heavily on my conscience. By putting these into the place of Christ I had made them worse than my sins. I was in a worse state than a man who owns nothing, for I was over head and ears in debt, and I knew it. Then it was that I heard of one who would deliver me, and I cried to him, and he delivered me speedily. Oh, how I wish that many others would feel that they too need the divine Saviour. O that men knew that they are poor, and blind, and that Jesus can give them eyes, and can supply all their wants.

It is a very curious thing—a very curious thing to me—that so much uncertainty hangs over this narrative. I am not so sure as to speak positively, but I believe that this story which Mark tells us is not the whole of what happened, for Matthew is certain that there were two blind men. Hear what Matthew says about it. Surely it is the same incident, or one strangely similar. Matthew xx. 29. "And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. And, behold, *two* blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David. And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto him, Lord,

that our eyes may be opened." There were two blind beggars, though Mark only sees it needful to mention the principal one. If there were two, one of them is not known by name at all. We know the name of Bartimæus, and we know the name of his father, but we do not know the name of his companion. Mark might have left out the father's name, which is implied in the name of Bartimæus, and he might have mentioned the other beggar, but he was not moved so to do, perhaps for the very reason that we should learn more out of his silence than out of the information. I venerate the silence of the Bible as much as its speech. I have been wondering if there be a man or woman here who will be saved this morning of whom we shall never hear, whose name will never be on our books, and whose story will never cheer our heart. It appears from what Matthew says that this No. 2, whoever he was, this anonymous body, prayed in the same words as Bartimæus. Bartimæus was a man of force and energy, and he made the prayer as to its words, "Son of David, have mercy on me"; the other man followed suit, and adopted the methods of Bartimæus. He was like the poor orator who had to speak after Burke, and very wisely said no more than "I say ditto to Mr. Burke." Mark does not take much notice of him, because he was the echo of Bartimæus, and probably a poor feeble-minded shiftless body, whose only chance seemed to be in following the lead of a stronger mind. Here, then, is the mercy of it, that though we do not know the man's name he had his eyes opened quite as surely as Bartimæus, and though he could not make a prayer of his own, and only followed Bartimæus, he had sight of his own, and a word of comfort for himself from Jesus. Oh, poor dear hearts, you right away in the background there, you that never will have the courage to join the church because you are so timid, be of good courage, for Jesus observes even you. Oh, you poor tremblers, who have not wit enough to put a dozen words together—at least you think so, for there is no telling what may be hidden away in you somewhere—remember that it is the inward desire that Jesus hears, and not the pleasing sentences of ready speakers. If you can only pray as somebody else prayed I would have you borrow your prayers from the Bible, for Scriptural prayers are sure to be right. Take the prayer of the publican if you cannot make one of your own, and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

As soon as I saw that there were two beggars whose eyes were opened I thought, "After preaching I will look to meet with a convert whose name and family I shall know, and with his tale of grace I will solace myself; but oh that my Lord would bless some whom I shall never know, some anonymous ones, some nobodies, some weak and shrinking souls. Are there any such here? Will not many such *read* the sermon? O that at their cry Jesus may stand still to bless them.

I must mention a more curious thing still. I am not certain, I am not clear, I am talking about things which must remain undecided—but it is very possible that there were *three* blind beggars healed. It may be that first of all one man, Bartimæus, applied to the Lord Jesus and had his eyes opened when Jesus was nearly out of Jericho; and then two others had their eyes opened when Jesus and the crowds were actually going out of the town. Many writers think that Matthew and



Mark record two different incidents, and it is very likely to be so. Probably the two blind men, having heard of the success of Bartimæus, were encouraged to try for themselves, and carefully imitated his model, crying in the same language for the same boon. Thus there was a repetition of the incident on a doubled scale. I like that notion. I wonder whether No. 3 is here, whose name we do not know, and probably never shall know, but yet he is known to Jesus and his cry is heard. He has come here with poor No. 2, who is equally weak and trembling with himself: God bless them both.

Those of us on whom the Saviour has wrought a good work would speak well of him for the encouragement of the fearing ones. I bear my witness to the eye-opening power of the gospel. "One thing I know, whereas I was blind; now I see," and no one opened my eyes but Jesus. I went to him just as I was, I trusted him and he saved me. May there not be two more blind men or women sitting somewhere about who will follow our example? Just do as we have done, pray and trust, cry and believe. Say, "Lord, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" Remember he that hath saved one can save two; he that hath saved two can save three; ay, it stops not at three; if there were three thousand here, who all cried for mercy, they should all have it, and as many millions more as could be found to follow in the same track.

I see this morning before my mind's eye Jesus standing before Jericho like a second Joshua. As you all know, the names Jesus and Joshua are the same. Joshua crossed the Jordan, and he stood with his sword drawn to capture Jericho, and commence his march through Canaan, conquering and to conquer. See, here is Jesus, and he must needs make captives in Jericho before he advances further into the land. The city of palm-trees must yield him followers before the palms of victory are cast at his feet. He enters into Jericho, not to lay its walls flat to the ground, nor to slay its inhabitants, but to open eyes that have long been closed, and bless poor creatures who have pined in penury. This is the first fruit of his warfare, the commencement of a career which shall end at Jerusalem, where he shall smite the Prince of Darkness, and win the victory for all mankind. Even now I may say of Jesus Christ which was said of the son of Nun—"So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame was noised abroad throughout all the country." I wish the Lord Jesus Christ this morning would make this place as the gate of Jericho, and begin on this spot a great revival of religion throughout the whole land, by opening the eyes of some that are blind. Let the prayer go up from many a heart, "Lord, open my eyes," and he will do it; and let that request be followed by another, "Lord, save millions," and he will hear us. Let us pray boldly and believingly in the name of Jesus. Hear thou us, O Lord. Amen.

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PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Mark x. 32—52.

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HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—63 (Song I.), 598, 611.