

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE BLIND MAN'S EARNEST CRIES.

A Sermon

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“ And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.”—Mark x. 47, 48.

WHEREVER *Jesus Christ is found, his presence is marvellously mighty.* The disciples, when Christ was absent, were like sheep without a shepherd, they were foiled in argument, and even defeated in attempted miracles; but as soon as our Saviour made his appearance among them, they returned to their wonted strength. When a valiant general suddenly hastens to the rescue of his routed troops, the dash of his horse-hoofs reassures the trembling, and the sound of his voice transforms each coward into a hero. May the glorious Captain of our salvation show himself in the midst of our Churches, and there will be a joyous shout along our ranks. You will have no need to exchange ministers, or to wish for a better class of Christians; the same officers, and the same soldiers will suffice to win splendid victories. If Jesus be present, the men will be so changed, that you will scarcely know them; they shall be filled with power from on high, and do great exploits in his name and by his strength. Nor does the divine energy of his presence confine itself to those who are already disciples of the Saviour; but strangers, neighbours, wayfarers, and even blind beggars feel the effect of his nearness. This sightless mendicant hears the good news that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by, and straightway he begins to pray. My brethren, there shall be no lack of praying hearts where there is a present Saviour. If there be no conversions in the congregation, it must be because Christ is not dwelling there by his Spirit. Ye have grieved him, and he is gone; ye have forgotten him, and he has left you, that you may prove your own weakness, and learn to glorify his power in future. If the Lord shall graciously return to his Church, cries of penitents will be frequent, and the songs of those who have found peace by faith in him, shall go up to heaven in blessed chorus. Oh! that the Lord Jesus would appear among the Churches of this our age! We have much to mourn over. Infidelity audaciously seats itself in the chief seats of the synagogue. Romanism secretly eats out the very vitals of our national religion.

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Latitudinarianism acts as a moth upon gospel doctrine; inconsistency of life dishonours the profession of practical godliness. O Lord, how long, how long! If the Lord Jesus shall graciously work by his Spirit among us, we shall soon have our languishing churches revived; errors will fly, as the bats and owls betake themselves to their hiding-places when the sun ariseth; and every sweet flower of Christian grace shall yield its blessed perfume under the genial influences of his celestial rays. I thank God we have had Jesus *here*. We have often been able to say, "The Son of David passeth by." He is here still. Believing hearts who recognise his presence, and lament when he is absent, tell us that they often find him sweetly manifested to them here in the preaching of the Word, in breaking of bread, and in the fellowship of prayer. He is here now; but oh! we want to recognise his presence more fully; we want to see the divine influences, like streams from Lebanon, fertilizing all our garden. We desire to see Jesus working more effectually in making poor sinners feel their need of him, and drawing them to himself.

Providence at all times co-works with grace in the salvation of the chosen people. You have an instance of it here. It was providence which brought the blind man where grace brought Jesus Christ. The Lord might have been passing by, but if this blind man had not happened to live at Jericho, or if at that particular moment he had not been pursuing his avocation of begging just in the particular road along which the Saviour marched, he would never have heard that Jesus passed by, consequently would never have cried out to him, and never have obtained the necessary cure. Providence brings sinners under the hearing of the Word, and moves the preacher to select topics suitable to their minds. Providence prepares them, as the plough prepares the soil, and grace guides the minister's mind to act as the hand which throws the wheat broadcast over the field. I am thankful for many of you that you are here this morning, for I know that "Jesus passeth by;" and though it may be that you are still without the heavenly light, it is a circumstance for which you ought to thank God, that many have *here* received sight from the Lord Jesus. It may be a singular providence which induced you to come here at all—I pray it may prove to be the white horse on which Christ rideth forth, conquering and to conquer, that he may win a victory in your souls now. Permit me, however, to remind you that such a circumstance involves responsibility. Jesus passeth by—the blind man sits by the wayside—if he doth not cry his blindness will henceforth be wilful; and there will be an addition to all its gloom in the thought that he did not use the one means within his reach, namely, that of crying to the physician for healing. Remember your responsibility, anxious sinner, and ask God to give you grace now to improve the flying hour, and may his Spirit lead you to imitate the example of the blind man, and cry, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!"

I. Coming directly to the case before us, let us observe THE BLIND MAN'S EARNESTNESS AS A CONTRAST with the behaviour of many hearers of the Word.

It was a very short sermon that was preached to him. He heard that Jesus of Nazareth passed by. He heard nothing more. I do not

know that he understood doctrine, that he precisely knew what Jesus Christ came into the world for. He could not have explained the system of theology. He had never had a clear and distinct statement of grace laid down before him. All he had heard was, that "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." But that short sermon led him to prayer. Beloved, what a contrast between him and some of you! You have been sermonized until you must well nigh be sermon-weary. You have heard the truth till probably, in theory, there are none better instructed than you are. You know the precious doctrines of truth so far as the killing letter is concerned, but you have never yet been led to pray; or, if the prayer has come, it has never been that earnest, heaven-piercing cry which will not be refused: "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" has not been the passionate prayer of your spirit. How many there are who listen to me so often that I fear I shall never be God's instrument of salvation to them. It is so easy for you to get used to one voice, till that which once was shrill as the note of a clarion, becomes like the buzzing of a bee in your ears; you weary of it, you sleep under it as a miller sleeps while his mill is going, because it makes no sound to which he is not accustomed. My figures and illustrations you have heard; my tones of pleading you well know; my words of exhortation you can probably repeat by heart; and some of you are no more affected by twelve years of earnest effort than a piece of marble might be affected by twelve years of pouring oil along its hard unmelting surface.

It is a melancholy reflection, that instead of praying over sermons *many disport themselves with them*: that which costs us many a prayer and many a tear is of no further worth to them than as giving an opportunity for exhibiting their critical abilities. I have not to complain of any hard criticisms from you; you kindly approve of my poorest endeavours, and accept my feeblest words; I almost wish that some of you did not. Oh, that you would but kick against the truth! I might have some hopes of you, but alas for that indifferentism which makes you receive it all as matter of course, and praise the style, and say you are thankful that the preacher is bold and honest with you, and thus the whole thing ends in your having complimented me without having sought my Master's favour. Oh, my hearer, we have something else to seek beside your good words. If you would hate *us*, we could not regret it if you would but love your own souls; but if you love us, and listen to our voice with respect, but nevertheless choose the downward path and go on to your own destruction, how can the preacher be content? Shall he go to his bed, and remember that hundreds of you will dwell in everlasting burnings, and can never have a portion among the glorified spirits in heaven, can he go to his bed and say, "It does not matter, they are pleased with me, and I am unto them as one that maketh a sweet sound upon a goodly instrument?" Oh, I would God that instead of this you were brought like this poor blind man to go from hearing to praying, from your pews to your closets, from listening to me to communing with God, and seeking mercy at his hands.

You will say that you cannot fairly be classed in this category, for under the preaching of the Word *you have been led occasionally to pray*. Yes, and I do remember well when I myself was led to pray by hearing

the Word. But what of it? The prayers of Sunday were forgotten in the sins of Monday, and the anxieties of the Sabbath were dissipated in the pleasures of the week. It is so with some of you. You pray when a sermon has been especially earnest; when the arrows of God wound you you weep, and you promise amendment and a thousand fine things, and you even dream of flying to Christ, and taking hold upon the horns of the blood-besprinkled altar; but yet it is not done. You have made resolutions enough to pave the road to hell therewith, you have piled up enough of your own professions to condemn you to an everlasting insolvency for bills dishonored and for debts unpaid. Oh, would God ye had done with resolving and re-resolving, with these transient and temporary feelings! and oh, that these things would go right through your heart, leaving such wounds as none but Christ is able to heal! Oh, for the effectual work of God the Holy Ghost! What is the value of the cloud of the morning which flies before the gale, or the smoke of the chimney which is gone with the first puff? For eternity, you want something more lasting than the morning dew, something more substantial than chimney's smoke. O may the divine Spirit build you with his own right hand upon that good foundation, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The blind beggar, with but one sermon, and that exceedingly brief, never leaves off praying till Christ grants him his desire: may God give you also to pray in earnest, lest you be sent to hell in earnest.

This poor man began to cry *for himself*, "Thou Son of David, have mercy *on me*?" and we cannot bring men to hear for themselves. They will say, "I hope that sermon which was so appropriate to my friend will have a beneficial effect on him." You will think of those in the opposite gallery; your hearts will remember some sitting down below. Oh, mind yourselves! yourselves! yourselves! Another man's salvation is of course desirable, but what will it be to thee that he should be in Abraham's bosom, if thou art with the rich man in the flames? Thine own soul is that which thou hast to look to first. Self-preservation is a law of nature; be not disobedient to it! May grace put such force into it, that from this day thou wilt say, "Thou Son of David, have mercy *on me*!" I confess to you that I could not read this passage without feeling the deepest and most humiliating feeling, to think that the mere report should have been so blessed to that man, and that year after year we should have given forth a much more full report of Christ Jesus, and yet have to say of many of you "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" I would God I could lay this more to my heart, and that you laid it more to your hearts, for, after all, it is more your concern than mine whether you are saved or not. The preacher is responsible for the faithfulness of his preaching, but hearers also are responsible for the earnestness of their hearing, and God grant that your responsibility may not prove to be a millstone about your necks, to sink you to the nethermost hell.

II. Passing onwards, we notice this man's intense DESIRE AS AN ABSORBING PASSION.

There are many excuses which men make for themselves why they should not seek their soul's salvation just now. A very common one is, "*I am a very poor man.* Religion is for the gentlefolks, for people

that have time to spare, but it is of no use to a working man." This person was a beggar. His position in life was far less honourable than yours; but, though a beggar, he desired that his eyes might be opened. And you, who are superior in your position to him, ought not to make the lowness of your estate an excuse for not seeking the salvation of your souls. Where did that lie first come from—the lie that the religion of Christ is not for the poor? Is it because so many of our sanctuaries are gorgeous in architecture? Is it because it is usual on the Sunday, and very properly so, for people to put on their best clothes? And does the working man think that therefore he would not be welcome because he happens to be out of work, or has not a good suit of black to put on? Then, by all means in the world let us break down this prejudice, and show to the working man that he is welcome here. I have often noticed you give a seat to a navigator or to a labourer in a smock frock when you have left very respectable people to stand in the aisles, and I do not blame you for it; well-dressed people may be less fatigued than those who have been toiling all the week; I admire the choice you make, because I hope it will go to prove that the working man is not a speckled bird among us. Why, it is all nonsense because we see a congregation well and respectably dressed to think that they must all necessarily belong to the upper classes. A certain preacher said to me the other day, "You preach to the rich, I preach to the poor." Now this was from want of knowing better. We have, I am happy to say, some rich among us, whose princely gifts enable us to do much for the Lord's work; but still our great multitude is made up of the genuine working class. They are not a canting, whining lot, who will go about begging of everybody, and therefore dress shabbily; no, they are sober, saving people, and therefore, for the most part, lift themselves out of the ditch of absolute poverty into manly independence. The religion of Christ not for the poor man! Why, above all men, these are those that want it; and while the religion of Christ appeals to all ranks, if there be ever a preference given at all, it is the boast of the gospel of Christ, that "the poor have the gospel preached to them." Now have I the ear of any man who has talked in that way, and said, "It is all very well for gentlemen, and so on?" Now do not go and say that again, because you know it is not true. *You know it is not true.* We can give you thousands of instances where the religion of Jesus Christ blesses the cottage as much as ever it could bless the palace, and is found quite as useful to the labourer who has to toil from morning to night as to "My lady," who has next to nothing to do if she does not do something in the cause of Jesus Christ. Now get rid of that excuse.

Well, but this beggar might have said, "*I must stick to my business.*" His business was begging, and though Jesus Christ might be passing by, he might very reasonably have said, "I really have no time to attend to this gentleman, whoever he may be. His preaching may be all very well and good, but I must beg right on, for when I get home there is little enough in my hat, and I really cannot afford the time to attend to this gentleman." That is what many people say:—"Really our business occupies all our time. We have to be always at it, early in the morning, almost before the sun is risen, and late at night till we are much too tired to read a book or to pray." Ah, but you see this man

forgot his begging to find his eyesight; and you might well forget your trading to find your soul's sight; if it were worth while to neglect his begging to have his eyes opened, it were worth while even if it were necessary to neglect your business if you might but find Christ; though, mark you, I do not believe that any man need neglect his lawful calling on account of religion.

Bartimæus might have said, "I cannot attend to Jesus Christ now, for *it is the height of the season.*" You see a beggar's season always is when plenty of people are about, and as Jesus had brought a crowd with him, he might very justly have said, "Why, if I do not beg now, it is of no use begging at any other time. I have a call of Providence to stick to my begging just now. I must attend to getting my eyes opened, if they can be opened, at some future time; but just now, I must make hay while the sun shines." This is your style of talking. "See! I am so very busy just now; providence has put a good thing in my way, and I must stick to it. I cannot be supposed to go out week nights to hear sermons, and I cannot spare time for prayer. I want every moment that I can possibly get, to make money, for now is my time. When I get old, and can get a house in the country, I may then rest and attend to divine things." Ah! thou simpleton! here is a man who flings away the golden opportunity of gleaning money of the multitudes to seek his sight, and yet thou art such a simpleton that thou wilt not leave thy gains to think of thine eternal state.

He might have made yet other excuses if he would. For instance, he might have said, "Well, suppose I do get my eyes opened, then *I shall not be so well fitted for my trade as I now am.*" for a blind beggar gets twice as much as a man who can see; and it is rather a qualification to a beggar to have no eyes. Some of you feel, "If I had my soul saved, I could not trade as I now do. I know I should have to shut up that gin palace. I could not be the nurse of drunkenness, and yet call myself a Christian." "I could not stand at that bar," said a young woman to me who had been serving at one of the gin-palaces, "the Lord had met with me, I did serve a few nights, but I could not stand it. I could not serve glasses of gin, and then go to the communion table—that would never do." There are some who are afraid to think about religion, because it will disqualify them for their business: and a blessed disqualification too—the Lord disqualify thousands for the accursed work. But oh! if this man could well give up his poor trade of beggary to pray for his eyes, you may well give up your wicked trade if your souls may but enter heaven. If ye should lose all the world, ye have lost next to nothing if ye have gained eternity.

I wonder this man did not make the well-known excuse, "I do not know whether I am predestinated to have my eyes opened; because if I am to have my eyes opened, they will be opened, and if I am not to have my eyes opened, they will not be opened. So I shall sit still here, and hold my hat and beg. That is the main chance! I shall hold my hat, and stick to my trade!" I do think that every man who uses this last excuse, knows within himself that he is talking nonsense. I cannot believe in a rational man standing upright, and saying, "If I am to be saved, I shall be saved, and therefore I shall not pray." I believe that man is a sneak; he is trying to make himself believe what he knows

is not true. He knows very well that he does not say that kind of thing in business: "If I am to make twenty pounds, I shall make twenty pounds, and so I shall not take down the shutters to-morrow. If I am to have a harvest, I shall have a harvest, and so I shall not plough this year." He never does anything of the kind ordinarily, and yet he pretends he is such an idiot that he must throw away his soul because of the doctrine of predestination. Brethren, if a man means to hang himself, he can always find a piece of rope; and if a man means to damn himself, he can always find an excuse; and this excuse about predestination is one to which those run who are greater fools or knaves than ordinary. This man made no excuse of any sort whatever about his family, or his trade, or predestination, but he just cried out with vehemence, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!"

III. We turn now to NOTICE HIS VEHEMENCE, and observe that it WAS A MOST REASONABLE ZEAL.

It appears, according to the Greek, that this man had a good voice, or, at least, made the most of it. He did not sit and whisper, "Thou Son of David have mercy on me;" but he shouted, and, as the opposition increased, his shouts grew yet more loud, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." He was vehement and persevering in his prayer, but he was justified in his zeal. He was blind and *he knew the misery of blindness*. There are unutterable woes connected with it, and it needs much grace to make a man contented when his eye is closed to the light of day. This poor soul could not be content while there was a chance of a cure. But yours, sinner, is spiritual blindness, the blindness which does not let you see yourself or see your Saviour, the blindness which shuts out all spiritual joys from your eyes, and will shut out the joys of heaven eternally from you, and condemn you to wander hopelessly in the blackness of darkness for ever. However awfully earnest your prayers may be, they cannot be too earnest. *He was a beggar, and had doubtless learned the weakness of man*. He had often gone home with nothing when he had expected that his bag would be filled. And you, too, you are a beggar; you have tried your own works and found them fail; you have begged at the door of ceremonies and you have found them to be an empty show; you have trusted first to one thing of man's invention and then another, but after all your begging you still need a heavenly alms to make you rich; you are naked, and poor and miserable. Now, considering the weakness of man, and that Christ alone has power to save you, if your prayer should become as terribly earnest even as the shrieks of lost souls, it would be fully justified, for yours is an urgent pressing case. *He knew, moreover, that Jesus Christ was near*, and when Jesus Christ is near there is much cause for earnest prayer. If Jesus would not hear, if it were not a season of mercy, if grace were not being distributed

plentifully, you might be excused praying; but oh! when it is a season of revival, when you are in the place where Jesus does bless souls, when you listen to the ministry which God has honoured, then let your cry be more vehement than ever it has been. This poor man felt *it was now or never with him*. If he did not get his eyes opened that day they might never be opened. Christ was passing by then and he might never pass that way again. Oh, sinner! it may be now or never with you. I know that God saves men at the eleventh hour, but I know also that there are many who are not saved at the eleventh hour, and that after such-and-such an hour has struck, many are given up to hardness of heart, permitted to be their own destroyers, without any checks of conscience or of the Holy Spirit—and such may be your case. The ticking of the clock always cries to men who know how to interpret its meaning. “Now, or never! Now, or never! To-day on earth, to-morrow in eternity!” If thou wouldst have Christ, the only time to seek him is to-day. “To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” “For *now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation.” This the beggar felt, and therefore, up went the cry louder and yet more loud, “Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.” *He guessed at least something of the value of sight*. He had heard what others told him of the happiness of gazing upon the landscape, the field, the flood, the sky. He longed to look into the face of friendship, and to know his own parent or his own child by sight. Well might he, if he guessed the value of his eyesight, cry most mightily. Sinner! thou hast at least a guess of the happiness of pardon. Thou hast at least some idea of the sweetness of justification. Thou knowest, for thou hast often been told, that eternal life is well worth thy seeking. Oh, man, may the Holy Ghost stir thy heart this morning, till thou canst no longer restrain the cry, “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.” I say, if you think of the dreadfulness of his present state, of the hope which the presence of Christ afforded him, and of the blessedness which he might expect from a restored eyesight, he had good reasons for being vehement: and, sinner, if thou wilt think of the wrath of God abiding on thee now, of the future with all its array of terror, and if thou wilt remember the power of Christ to save, and the eternal blessedness of being safe in him, all these things, and especially the shortness of time and the present necessity of thy case, should move thee to cry yet more and more earnestly, “Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.”

IV. Let us pass on to a fourth point: THIS MAN EXPERIENCED CHECKS IN HIS PRAYER, and this is *a very common affliction*.

John Bunyan tells us, that hard by the wicket gate, Diabolus had a castle, and from this castle he used to shoot at all who sought an entrance. Moreover, he kept a big dog, which did always bark and

howl, and seek to devour every person that knocked at the gate of mercy. I am sure that is true. When ever a sinner gets to mercy's gate and begins knocking, that noise is heard in hell, and straightway the devil endeavours to drive the poor wretch away from the gate of hope. In the olden times, when the Algerian pirates took many Christian prisoners, they chained them to the oars of their galleys to row their masters. When Christian ships of war were seen in the distance, the captives knew that there was a hope of their being liberated; but their masters would come on deck, and cry, "Pull for your lives," and the whip was laid on to make these poor captives fly by their efforts from their own rescue. This is what the devil does. He gets sinners to tug at the oar, and whenever Christ with his blood-red flag of liberty is seen within hail, the sinner exerts himself to the utmost to get out of Christ's way. If that does not suffice, Satan will employ sometimes bad men and sometimes good men to stop the sinner from seeking a Saviour at all. You know the ways in which *the world* will try to make a crying sinner hold his peace. The world will tell him that he is crying out about a matter that does not signify, for the book is not true, there is no God, no heaven, no hell, no hereafter. But if God has set you crying, sinner, I know you will not be stopped with that; you will cry yet the more exceedingly, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." Then the world will try pleasure, you will be invited to the theatre, you will be attracted from one ballroom to another; but if the Lord put the cry in your mouth, the intense anguish of your spirit will not be satisfied by the noise of viols, nor by the shouts of them that make merry. Perhaps the world will call you a fool to be vexed about such things; you are melancholy and have got the mopes. They will tell you that you will soon go where many others have gone—to Bedlam; but if once God has made you cry, you will not be stopped by a fool's laughter; the agonizing prayer will go up in secret, "Have mercy on me." Perhaps the world will try its cares. You will be called into more business; you will get a prosperity which will not make your soul prosper; and so it will be hoped by Satan that you will forget Christ, in accumulated wealth and growing cares. But ah! if this be such a cry as I hope it is, poor anxious sinner, thou wilt not be stopped by that. Then the world will affect to look down upon you with pity. Ah, poor creature, you are being misled, when you are being led to Christ and to heaven. They will say you have become the dupe of some fanatic, when, in truth, you are now coming to your senses, and estimating eternal things at their proper value. Ay, but the worst is that even *the disciples* of Christ will act as these did in this narrative—they will charge you to "hold your peace." Some professors have no sympathy with anxious souls. Much mischief is done by the light and frothy conversation of Christian

professors, especially on the Sabbath-day. How often sermons are blunted by a spirit of cavilling. I have heard of a woman who prayed for her husband's conversion very earnestly, and one day, after sermon, as she was walking home she was speaking to her friend, and pulling the sermon to pieces, the doctrine did not quite suit her taste; and her husband looked at her with wonder; that sermon had broken his heart and yet here was a woman cavilling at the very truth which God had blessed to give her the desire of her heart. I do not doubt that Christian people, by their unprofitable criticisms upon ministrations which God has blessed, may mar the good work, and be the instruments in the hands of Satan of urging poor sinners to cease their cry. But oh, poor soul, let neither saint nor sinner make thee stop. If thou hast begun to pray, though thou hast cried for months, and no sweet answer of mercy has come, cry more loudly! Oh, be yet more earnest! Take the gates of heaven and shake them with thy vehemence, as though thou wouldst pull them up post and bar and all. Stand at Mercy's door, and take no denial. Knock, and knock, and knock again, as though thou wouldst shake the very spheres, but what thou wouldst obtain an answer to thy cries. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Cold prayers never win God's ear. Draw thy bow with thy full strength, if thou wouldst send thy arrow up so high as heaven. He whom God has taught to be resolved to be saved will be saved. He that will not take damnation as his fate, but who feels he must have Christ, is already under the divine operation of the Eternal Spirit; such a man bears the marks of divine election upon his very brow; such a man must and shall obtain everlasting salvation.

V. I come to the closing point. THIS MAN'S IMPORTUNITY AT LAST BECAME SO MIGHTY, THAT REBUFFS BECAME ARGUMENTS WITH HIM.

"He cried the more a great deal." He took the weapons out of their hands and used them on his own account. What do you suppose were the arguments that they used to induce him to leave off praying? Would not one of them say, "Hold your tongue! You ragged, filthy beggar, hold your tongue!" "That is why I will not hold my tongue," says he. "I am such a poor loathsome object that I have need to cry. You gentlemen that are better off have no need to cry as I have; but the worse you prove me to be, the more need I have of the Master's help, and therefore I shall cry the more." The devil says to you, "Do not pray, you are such a sinner." Tell the devil that is the reason why you will pray, for being so black, and foul and filthy, these are all arguments why you above all other men should cry aloud, "Jesus, have mercy on me." Then they said, "Why, you have nothing to recommend you. Jesus Christ has not invited you; he has never looked on you with an eye of love, he has never called *you*." "Then it is the

very reason," said he, "why I should call him. If I have no love-token, then so much the worse for me, and so much the more reason why I should never be happy till I get one. If he has not invited me, then I will cry to him for an invitation." You see the more you can prove that the sinner's case is hopeless and bad, you have only proved that the sinner has the more reason for prayer. If I am the furthest from hope, why then he who wants to be heard, and is a very long way off, must call loudly; he that is further still, must call more loudly still; and he that is furthest off, must be the loudest of all; so if I am the furthest off from God and hope, I will only pray with the greater importunity till I do prevail. "Ay, but," said another of them, "you make such a noise. Be still! you disturb the whole neighbourhood." "Ah," says he, "I am thankful for that, for now *he* will hear me." Methinks this man, if he had heard the Saviour tell the parable about the woman whose perpetual coming wearied the Judge, must have said, "Make a noise, do I? So much the better; then I will make more, for I see I tease you, perhaps I shall weary him, so I will even keep on till the Judge is drawn to grant my request by the very noise I make." Some tell you you should not be so earnest; why, you really disturb your friends; you have got to be so concerned about your soul that your friends are concerned about your sanity. Tell them you are glad of it and you mean to be more earnest, for if you have made hard-hearted man feel, you will soon make God, who bids us give him no rest, at last give you the desire of your heart. Then they would say to him, "Now, do not disturb the Saviour, he is so busy, he has so much to do. He is preaching now; he is talking to his disciples." "Ah, well," says he, "then if he does so many good things, the more reason why I should cry that he would do me a good turn also." It is of no use to ask a man to give anything who never gives anything, but the man who is always giving always will give; and so from Christ's many works he derives a reason why he should cry. "Is he blessing others, then why not me?" So, dear hearer, when you hear of showers of blessings ask that they may fall on you, and when you know that Christ is saving so many make that a reason why he should save you, even you. Then they said, "He is on a journey, he is going to Jerusalem, he cannot be stopped by every beggar. Hold your tongue! When do you think he will ever get there if he is to turn aside to every clamorous mendicant who chooses to urge his claim?" "Travelling! is he," said he, "then I will stop him now, for if I once let him go by I shall never catch him again. Going to Jerusalem to die! Ah, then my hope will be all over. I have him now, I will not give him a chance of going by." Louder goes up the cry, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." If the devil tells you "It is too late!" then say, "I will go directly, I will not stop; if so many years have

passed over my head without my finding a Saviour, then every one of these shall be a spur to make me fly like the wind, more swiftly." It is very likely that they also said to him, "How dare you, a beggar, interrupt such a person as Jesus Christ? Why, he is going in triumph through Jerusalem. He is to ride with solemn pomp all through the streets. What can you be at, thinking that you are to have an audience with such a great one as he is?" "Great one! is he?" the man seemed to say. "Great one! I want a great one! a little one will not serve my turn. It must be a great one that can open my eyes, and the greater he is the more reason why I should cry to him." So whenever you are alarmed at the glory and greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ, do not be put back because of that, but the rather say, "Is he mighty? then he is mighty to save. Is he a Saviour and a great one? then he is just such a Saviour as I want. I will never rest, I will never pause till he saith unto my soul 'I am thy salvation.'" Now I did solemnly ask of God that he would this morning excite in some sinner a desire to pray, and that if there were one here who had been praying and who was tempted to leave off, the Word might be blessed by God the Holy Spirit to make him more incessant in his prayer. O may he grant my petition.

Remember, that the only way in which this praying and this waiting will come to an end, is by looking alone to Jesus Christ. If you turn that eye of yours away from yourself and your feelings and your prayers to Jesus Christ's finished work, and trust him, you will find peace directly. There is peace to the soul that looks alone to Jesus. While I have been exhorting you to pray, and I meant to do it earnestly, more earnestly than I have been able to do it, I did not wish you to put praying in the place of believing. If thou canst not as yet understand Christ so as to rest on him, if thou canst not as yet cast thyself on him, then pray for more enlightenment, pray to be led to faith, pray that faith may be given thee; but O may God give thee the power and the will now, even now, to exert a living faith upon the crucified Saviour, for there is "life in a look at the crucified One." Praying will ultimately bring you to that point, but I pray God to bring you to it now through his mighty Spirit, and so like Bartimæus, may we receive our sight and follow Jesus in the way, and to Jesus be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Mark ix. 23—52.