

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

COMMUNION WITH CHRIST.—A BAPTIZING SERMON.

A Sermon

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, APRIL 1ST, 1900,

DELIVERED BY

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“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”—Amos iii. 3.

THE expression “walking together” is often used in Scripture as a figure for communion. “Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” Communion, if it be thorough and entire, implies *activity*. It is not merely contemplation, it is action; and hence, inasmuch as walking is an active exercise, and walking with a man is communion with him, *active* communion with him, we see how walking comes to be the picture of true communion with Christ. An old Puritan said, “It doth not say that Enoch returned to God, and then left him, but he ‘walked with God.’” All his journey through, he had God for his companion, and lived in perpetual fellowship with his Maker.

There is also another idea contained in the term “walking together.” It is not only activity, but *continuance*. So, true communion with Christ is not a mere spasm, not just an excitement of ecstasy; but if it be the work of the Holy Spirit, and if it be enjoyed by the healthful soul, it will be a continual thing.

It implies also *progress*; for, in walking together, we do not lift up our feet, and put them down in the same place, but we proceed nearer to our journey's end; and he that hath true communion with Christ is making progress. It is true that Christ can go no further towards excellence, for he hath already attained perfection; but the nearer we get to that perfection, the more fellowship we have with Jesus; and unless we progress, unless we seek to be more child-like in faith, more instructed in knowledge, and more diligent in service, unless we seek to have more zeal and fervency, we shall find that, in so standing still, we lose the presence of the Master; for it is only by following on with the Lord that we continue to walk with him. It will, therefore, very readily strike you how walking with a person is an excellent figure for communion with him; and how

the term "walking with God" is the best expression for fellowship with God. Hence, our text implies, by its very form, that two cannot walk together except they be agreed; and it teaches us, therefore, that unless we be agreed with Christ, we cannot attain to the sweet state of communion with him.

We shall, first, notice *the agreement* here mentioned; we shall, secondly, try to notice *the necessity for this agreement*; and then, thirdly, we shall ask all Christians to *seek after this agreement with Christ* that they may have full communion with him.

I am not addressing myself so much to the world without as to the church within. When we are preaching the gospel of salvation, we preach that to the world; but communion is like the holy of holies. Salvation itself seems to be but as the court of the priests, but communion is the innermost place, that which is within the veil, and into that none but the Christian can be allowed to enter.

I. First, then, Christian, we shall endeavour to show thee **WHAT IS THE AGREEMENT** which must subsist between thy Lord and thyself before thou canst walk with him. We will do this in a very simple way. We shall keep to the figure, and we shall see that there are certain things necessary to enable one person to walk with another.

First, then, it is quite certain that, if we would walk with Christ, *we must walk in the same path*. Two men cannot walk together if one turns his head in one direction, and another turns his head the opposite way. If one should turn to the right, and the other to the left, they cannot walk together, although they may arrive at the same end by devious roads; but they cannot walk together unless they walk along the same road. It is true that they can have a little conversation even if they are some yards apart; but if one walks on one side of the road, and the other on the other, we should think that their communion was rather distant, and their love rather chill. But, the nearer they walk in precisely the same road, the more are they enabled to hold fellowship with one another.

Now, child of God, albeit thou canst not be saved by thy good works, and thy salvation does not depend upon thy works, remember that thy communion doth. It is impossible for thee to have fellowship with Christ except as thou art obedient unto his commands. Let a Christian err, and he will be pierced with many sorrows. Let the child of God forsake the way of God, let him, as alas! we oftentimes do, go down by the stile to By-path Meadow, and he will not have his Master go down By-path Meadow with him. If we will be self-willed, and choose our own path, we must go our own path alone. If, for some seeming pleasure, or some fancied gain, instead of following the fiery-cloudy pillar, we follow the will-o'-the-wisp of our own desires, we shall have to go alone, and in the dark, too. Christ will go with us anywhere where duty calls us. If duty should call us into the burning fiery furnace, the Son of man will be there; if it should lead us into the lions' den, he will be there to shut the lions' mouths. He would not have gone there with Daniel if he had sought, by neglect of duty, to avoid the threatened destruction. Although the Lord would go with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego even into the heat of the burning fiery furnace, yet,

if they had bowed down to the image, he would not have gone with them. "If ye walk contrary to me," saith the Lord, "I will walk contrary to you."

Here I must guard what I have said, lest I should be misunderstood. I do not mean that Christ forsakes his people so as to destroy them; but he forsakes them so as to take away their communion with himself. For again I repeat that, although salvation doth not depend upon good works, communion hath this dependence, and cannot be enjoyed between Christ and the soul that is full of sin. A man may have much sin about him, and yet be a saved man; and much of frailty and imperfection cleaveth to us all. But if we are living in sin, if we are in any way whatever breaking the commands of God, to the extent of our sin there will be just that extent of separation between our souls and Christ. Sin may not kill us, but it will make us sick; it will take Christ's right hand from under our heads. Take care, therefore, Christian, that thou walkest in the steps of thy Master; strive to be obedient to his law; righteously, soberly, and godly do thou live in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Be thou like Caleb, who followed the Lord fully. Endeavour in every way to learn his will, and then to do it; in all thy Lord's appointed ways pursue thy journey. Remember all his ordinances, and perform his every precept; resign thyself to his every dispensation; be thou not as the horse or mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle lest they come nigh unto thee; but be thou guided by the Lord's own eye, run thou in the way of his commandments, and thou shalt find them a delightful road. This is the first point; those who walk together must go the same way.

Further, in going the same way, *they must go with the same motive.* Two persons may be going the same way, but suppose they are going for very opposite ends. There is a lawyer walking side by side with the man whom he is going to fleece. Let the poor man know that he is to be robbed at the end of his journey, and there will not be any communion between the two travellers. Suppose two men are going together, and one is about to bring an action against the other, there will not be any communion between them. Suppose they are going to fight with each other, there will not be any communion between them. Suppose the two are going to the same election, intending to vote for opposite candidates, they will not be likely to hold very sweet conversation with one another, albeit they may go in the same way. So, it is needful that we should not only go in the same road, but with the same motive.

Perhaps you ask, "Is it possible that we can go with Christ in the same road, and yet not with the same motive?" Certainly, it is. You see a man who appears to be quite as holy as a Christian; he seems to be as obedient to the Lord as the man who really follows the Master. As for ceremonies, he is the very first to observe them; as for the duties of morality, he attends to them most scrupulously; but ask him why he does all this, and he says it is because he desires to save his soul by it. Immediately, he and Christ are at arms' length; Christ calls such an one an anti-Christ,

and they are sworn enemies. You are trying to save yourself, are you? Then you are to be a saviour, while Christ is a Saviour; then you and he are at enmity; but if you are travelling on this road to be saved by grace, desiring to show forth your thanks with your lips, and in your life, then you do not wish to rob Christ's kingly or priestly office of any of its dignity; you do not desire to set yourself up as another king in Zion. But if you are walking in this road with a motive contrary to Christ, you cannot hold any communion with him.

There is very blessed communion with Christ to be enjoyed in the Lord's supper; but if anyone comes to the Lord's table merely with the thought that it may do him good, and save his soul, there is no communion with Christ for him, because that is not Christ's object; and it is the same with baptism. That ordinance is a blessed means of communion with Christ in his death and burial; but if anyone desires to be baptized, supposing that the observance of the ordinance will save his soul, then there is no communion. If anyone attaches more to the act than that Christ has commanded it, and, therefore, it is our duty to fulfil it,—the moment a man supposes any efficacy in the water, and in the body being buried therein, then the communion ceases; for unless we come to anything with Christ's motive, or with a motive which is congenial to Christ's heart, we are not capable of walking with him. Two cannot walk together except they be agreed, not only in the way they walk, but also in the object with which they walk in that way.

Once again, two persons may walk the same road, and they may walk with the same purpose, *and yet they may not be able to speak to each other, unless they travel the same pace.* If one person shall travel home very swiftly to-night, and another, who lives in the same house, goes creeping home very slowly, perhaps they will go down the same streets, yet they will say nothing to one another, because one will be at home long before the other. So, we must agree in the pace at which we travel. Why is it that many Christians hold no fellowship with Jesus? It is because they travel to heaven so slowly, that the Lord Jesus leaves them behind. They are so lukewarm, so cold, so indifferent, they have so little zeal, so little love, they have so little true desire to glorify God, that the swift heart of Jesus cannot be restrained to tarry with them.

"Oh!" saith one, "I travel as fast as I can, but I am only a poor feeble creature; I often creep when I see others run; and when I run, I often see others flying." Belôved, Christ does not measure your walking by the speed at which you go. If your desire be slack, then the Lord Jesus will leave you, and travel on before you; and you will probably find the whip of affliction behind you, goading your soul to travel more swiftly. John Bunyan has a good picture. He says, "If you send a serving-man for medicines, and he goes as fast as he can, perhaps he rides on a sorry jade of a horse, and he cannot make it go fast; but the master does not measure the pace by the rate at which the horse goes, but by the rate at which the servant wishes the horse to go, and he says, 'That man would go fast if he could; if you put him on a horse that had some mettle

in him, he would be back, and bring the medicines.' " So is it with our poor flesh and blood. It is an ill pace at which we can ever go with such a sorry thing to ride on; but the Lord Jesus measures our pace, not by the actual distance traversed, but by our desires. When he sees us kicking and spurring, as it were, in prayer, pulling at the rein, and toiling to make our poor flesh and blood rise to something like devotion and zeal, then he accepts the will for the deed, and Christ stops to keep company even with us who are such poor disciples. But let our desires be cold, let us become lazy, let us do little or nothing for Christ, what wonder if the Lord Jesus says, " This man observeth not my words, and keepeth not my sayings; I will not sup with him, and he shall not sup with me. I will give him enough comfort to keep him alive; I will give him enough spiritual food to keep his soul from actually starving, but I will put him on poor diet until he turns to me with full purpose of heart, and then I will take him to my bosom, and show him my love " ?

There is one thing more. You can suppose two persons travelling on the same road, with the same intentions, and at the same pace; yet they do not walk together, so as to hold any fellowship with each other, *because they do not like each other*. Where there is no love (and that, perhaps, is the fullest meaning of the text), there can be no communion. Unless two be agreed in heart, they cannot walk together. You know some of our very excellent Hyper-Calvinistic friends. Now, suppose one of them meets an Arminian, you cannot suppose for one instant that there could be any conversation between them, except it were some jangling, and abuse of each other. Suppose some good strict Baptist brother speaks to us, who have more enlarged principles. He smites us with his heavy weapons, and cuts us down for the great sin of loving all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and welcoming to the Lord's table all whom we believe the Lord has received. But, so far as communion is concerned, our brother would be obliged to go on the other side of the road; there must be, he thinks, a little distinction and a little difference kept up, for the honour of his own views. And we know that there are some brethren, who have a peculiar obnoxiousness of temper; they seem to be covered with bristles and sharp quills, to prick and annoy any and every person who happens to come in their way. You cannot commune with them; it is impossible for you to walk in the same road with them, for you would feel it better to hold your peace all the way, because they would be sure to misunderstand what you said. There must be an agreement in heart, an agreement in opinion, or otherwise two cannot walk together.

O believer, hast thou agreement of heart with the Lord Jesus? Say, dost thou love Christ, and dost thou think a great deal of him? Dost thou ever seek to magnify him, and speak well of his name? Dost thou think him the chief amongst ten thousand, and altogether lovely? And dost thou feel that he also has a good opinion of thee? Hath he said to thee, " Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee " ? Has he spoken soft words to thine heart, which have caused thee to think that his bowels of compassion have

yearned over thee? Ah, then, communion is easy with thee and thy Lord; for your two souls are bound up in the same bundle of life; therefore, it is possible for thee and Christ to walk together. Art thou and he of the same opinion? Are Christ's words thy doctrine? Hast thou been taught to give up all divinity except that which came from Jesus? Canst thou say of him, "He is my only Rabbi, my only Teacher in the law and the gospel; at his feet, with Mary, I could sit and receive his words, and believe all that he has uttered to be the very truth of God"? If so, believer, communion between thee and Christ is easy; for, when two agree in thought, and intention, and way, and affection, then they can walk together.

I have taken so much time for this first point that the other two must be very briefly hinted at.

II. The second point was to be, **THE NECESSITY FOR THIS AGREEMENT.**

First, Christ will not walk with us, unless we are agreed with him, *because, if he did so, it would be a slur upon his own honour*; nay, more than that, it would be a denial of his own nature. Should Christ come into concord with Belial? Should he make himself free and communicative with those who indulge the lusts of the flesh, and who disobey his commands? It would look ill if the king's son should walk arm in arm with traitors. We should not think it any good sign if we saw the highest in the land herding with the lowest. Christ keeps good company; and if we do not have our hearts purified by the Holy Spirit, he will not come to us at all. He will not abide even with his own children so long as they harbour sin. Invite the devil into the front parlour of your heart, and Christ will not come too. No, it would be a derogation of his own dignity, an insult to his own character to do so. Give your heart up to the indulgence of some ambitious desire, and you cannot give the Saviour the insult of inviting him to come to you. In our own houses, we do not invite two persons who are at enmity; and is it likely that Christ will come where sin is reigning, or pampered, or indulged? No, brethren; he knows there is sin in the best human heart; but, as long as it is kept down, and as long as he sees that our desires are to overturn it, he will come there; but when he sees sin petted and fed in the place which ought to his own palace, when he sees self-righteousness and self-security harboured there, he says, "I will not return until they have repented of their sin."

There is another reason why you cannot commune with Christ unless you are in agreement with him, and that is *because you yourselves are incapable of it*. Unless your soul be in agreement with Christ, unless in motive, and aim, and will, you are, as far as possible, like your Master, you cannot rise to the dignity of fellowship with him. Fellowship with Christ is a high privilege; no man can attain to it, as long as he indulges evil purposes, or low desires. The heart must be assimilated to the likeness of Christ, it must be cleansed and renewed by the Holy Spirit, or else it loses its wings, and is unable to mount to the high places of the earth, where Christ doth show to his people his love.

There is another reason why Christ will not commune with us

unless we are agreed with him, namely, *for our own good*. Christ cannot and will not hold sweet fellowship with his people unless they are in harmony with him. If Christians swerve from Christ's path, and backslide from his ways, and Christ were still to indulge them with love feasts, they would not realize their sin, and would still continue in it. Let a father indulge the erring child with all the usual display of his affection; let him put away the rod, let him never use a harsh word at all, but treat the sinning one with the same love as another who is dutiful and obedient, how is it to be expected that the child would ever forsake its faults? If Christ should give the same love, the same enjoyments, in sin and after sin, as he does in duty and after duty, his people would scarcely recognize their sins, and they would continue in them; but just as the Lord is pleased to make pain the tell-tale of disease, so that a headache becomes an indication of something wrong within the system, so does he make the absence of his own fellowship the tell-tale by which we may know that there is something within our soul that is hostile to him, something that must be driven away before the sacred Dove will come, with wings of comfort, to dwell in our hearts. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" No; that is impossible.

III. Now, thirdly, I want to urge all Christians to SEEK AFTER THIS AGREEMENT WITH CHRIST.

Beloved brethren and sisters, in order that you may agree with Christ, I have first to remind you that *the perpetual indwelling of the Holy Spirit must be with you*. Unless the same Spirit that dwells in Christ shall dwell in you, your agreement can never rise to such a height as to admit of any depth or nearness of union. Take care continually to seek the unction from on high, the indwelling of the Holy One of Israel. In the measure in which your heart has been endued by the divine influence and baptized by the holy fire of the Spirit, in that proportion will your soul be in agreement with Christ, and your union be true, and close, and lasting. Take care of that.

And then, next, under that divine influence, *look well to all your motives*. Seek not to have any aim to get honour to thyself, or honour to thy fellow-men. Take care that, in all thou doest, thou doest it with a single eye to thy Master's honour; for, unless thine eye is single, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If thou wilt win the sunlight of thy Master's face, thou must seek his glory, and his glory alone.

Then, if thou wouldst have union with Christ, take care, in the next place, *that thou doest all in dependence upon him*; for if, in the affairs of thy soul, thou settest up in business for thyself, Christ will be at enmity with thee. Seek not only to turn thine eye to him for direction, but also for support; and look to him in thy prayers, in thy preachings, in thy hearings, and in everything, for so shall Christ and thy soul be agreed, and thou shalt have fellowship with him.

And, lastly, *be continually panting after more holiness*. Never be content with what thou art; seek to grow, seek to be more and

more like Christ; and then, when that desire for holiness is strongest, thou wilt have the same desire that Christ has; for his desire is that thou shouldst be holy, even as he is holy; and his command is, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." And when your desires are Christ's desires, then shall it be possible for you to walk with Christ, but not till then.

I do long to have a church in complete agreement with the Lord Jesus Christ, for that would be a church against which the gates of hell could never prevail. If a church be merely founded by a man, the man will die, and the church shall perish. If a doctrine be only taught by a man, and you receive it on his authority, his authority shall pass away as all earthly things must; but, if it be of God, woe unto them that fight against it, for they can never prevail against him! Woe unto him that dashes himself against this stone, for he shall be broken in pieces; but if it be rolled upon him, it shall grind him to powder! Let us know that any church is a Church of God in her doctrines, and in her ordinances, and in her prayer and praise, and we may know that she shall be like the stone we read of in Daniel, "cut out of the mountain without hands;" none shall be able to break her, but she shall break all opposers in pieces, and she shall fill the earth.

Now there are some friends who are about to walk with Christ into this pool of baptism. Can two walk here except they be agreed? You may walk into this pool, but you cannot bring Christ with you except you are agreed with him. If you come without agreement with Christ, you will make a slip of it in your life, or else go back, and walk no more with him, and be offended with him. Remember, brethren and sisters, unless your two hearts are agreed, unless Christ and your heart be made one, you will fall out with one another before long; Christ will not long be at peace with you, nor will you be at peace with Christ. Your profession will be short-lived, after all, unless it be a true and real one, the expression of the inner heart. I pray that your profession to-night may be a sincere one, that you may testify to the world a true, saving, and entire agreement with your Lord and Master; and if any of you be not agreed with Christ, I beseech you, though you have come so far, come no farther. Go not into this pool till you are thoroughly agreed with Christ. I charge you, in the name of the living God, as you shall have to stand before his bar at last, play not the hypocrite. Be sincere; for, if you give yourselves not wholly to Christ, you are doing like those who come unworthily to the Lord's table, and who eat and drink condemnation to their own souls, for he that is plunged into the baptismal pool, as a hypocrite, is immersed into his own damnation. But, O, ye humble followers of Jesus, you have testified to us your fellowship in the faith! Be not afraid now to confess it before men, and may God own all your names at last amongst the followers of the Lamb, for his dear Son's sake! Amen.

Exposition by C. H. Spurgeon.*

JOHN IX.

Verses 1, 2. *And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind ?*

The procedure of these disciples is very much like that of many people in these days ; they are much more ready to ask questions about sufferers than they are to sympathize with them. If the hearts of the disciples had been in a right condition when they saw this blind man, they would have said, "Lord, cannot this poor man's eyes be opened?" But, instead of talking like that, they were full of idle curiosity, which prompted them to raise metaphysical difficulties, and to ask foolish questions. So they wanted to know how it was that the man came to be born blind. Was it in consequence of some sin on the part of his parents, or through some sin of his own in a previous state of existence, (for some of them seem to have had even that foolish notion,) or was it because of some sin of his, which God foresaw that he would commit, and therefore laid this affliction upon him from the hour of his birth ?

3. *Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents : but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*

That is to say, this blindness was not the result of special sin in any individual, but God intended that his works of mercy and of grace should be manifested through his affliction. It is a cruel thing when every form of malady or disease is traced to some fault in the person who has to suffer from it. This is infamous ; I had almost said infernal ; for Satan himself could hardly devise a more false and wicked thing than to say that, because a man is a special sufferer, therefore he must have been a special sinner. It is not so ; for, often, some of God's truest children—some of those who live nearest to him—are those who keep the night watches through pain, or they are bedridden from year to year, or are deprived of some of their limbs, or in some other way are full of suffering. This is in order that, in their case also, the works of God should be manifest in them as they were in this poor blind man.

4. *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day :*

"I have no time to go into these questions with you, merely to satisfy your curiosity. 'While it is day,' I must go on with the work which I was sent into the world to do."

4—7. *The night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*

There was no long discourse to be delivered while this poor man was waiting to see what would happen to him. Our Lord spoke just a few words to his disciples, and then went at once to the miracle he intended to perform.

"When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the

* Regular readers of the Sermons will probably notice that this Exposition was given by MR. SPURGEON before he delivered the discourse published last week under the title, "A Pressed Man Yielding to Christ" (No. 2,667). It was too long to be issued then, so it is appended to this shorter Sermon for which no Exposition had been preserved.

spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay." Our Saviour sometimes works without means, at other times by means, and occasionally he uses means which at first sight appear not to be the best to produce the designed result. To put clay on a blind man's eyes, does not seem a very likely operation for giving him sight. And, oh! dear friends, when God uses us as his instruments, and makes us to be like this clay upon the poor blind man's eyes, I am sure that there is much about us that might make us feel as if we should rather hinder than help; and when we do the best we can, what is there in us that is of any value? I think I once saw the pen with which Milton was said to have written part of *Paradise Lost*. Poor pen! It could not remember the great poet, could it? Yet, he had used it to noble purpose. As I looked at it, I did not think of ascribing a single stanza of that matchless poem to the pen with which Milton wrote. So, beloved, we are the pens that the Lord uses when he means to write his messages of grace upon the hearts of saints and sinners; but we are such poor pens, such feeble instruments to be held in his hand, that we wonder he can ever make use of us.

This blind man did exactly as he was bidden to do. What a blessing it was for him that he received the clay on his eyes, and simply went and washed it off again as the Saviour bade him! That was all he had to do, and then he came back seeing clearly. Oh, if sinners were only attentive to gospel directions, and then were obedient to them, without adding to them or taking from them, how many more blind eyes would be very speedily opened, and how greatly would Christ be glorified!

8, 9. *The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.*

With that downright simplicity and shrewdness which marked his whole character, the man said, "I am he." He did not go beating about the bush at all, but he straightway acknowledged that he was the man of whom they were speaking.

10, 11. *Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight.*

I admire the brevity of his statement, the boldness of it, and the simple *naïveté* of it. The way in which he told the story did not embellish it in the least degree; in fact, it could not have been embellished without spoiling it. And when you, dear friends, are giving an account of your own conversion, describing the way in which salvation became yours, tell it as simply and plainly as ever you can. It will never be so well adorned as when it appears in its own naked simplicity and beauty. I commend this man's example to all of you who have to give your testimony before you are admitted as members of the church; when speaking of your conversion, put the narrative in as plain and simple a form as this man adopted.

12—14. *Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not, They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.*

Therefore, this act of Christ would be something horrible in the eyes of the Pharisees. They would make out that Christ, when he made the clay, had turned brickmaker on the Sabbath day, thus violating the traditions of the fathers, just as, on another occasion, they said that he allowed his disciples to go threshing on the Sabbath, when they gathered ears of corn in the field, rubbed them between their hands, and ate the grain because they were hungry. The Rabbis regarded that as an act of threshing, and a very

serious violation of the law ; and now that Jesus had himself made clay, and opened a man's eyes with it, they held up their hands in holy horror,—nay, in impious horror,—that Christ should do such a thing on the Sabbath.

15. *Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.*

He makes his story shorter as he goes on telling it. These people were unworthy of the words he spoke to them, and therefore he gave them as few as possible.

16, 17. *Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles ? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes ? He said, He is a prophet.*

That was as much as he then knew. By thoughtful consideration, he had come as far as to know that Jesus must be a prophet.

18—21. *But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind ? how then doth he now see ? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind : but by what means he now seeth, we know not ; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not : he is of age ; ask him : he shall speak for himself.*

They also were shrewd. They did not wish to get themselves into trouble, and therefore they said as little as they could, and referred the Pharisees to their son, who was quite able to answer them.

22—24. *These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews : for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age ; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise : we know that this man is a sinner.*

They thought that they could smooth the man over, so that he would say no more. "We know—we who know everything, we who are the rulers and teachers of the people,—we know that this man is a sinner." That might have closed the mouths of many men ; but, on that occasion, they had before them a person who could not easily be made to believe all they chose to say,—a sharp, shrewd man, who had keener eyes in his head, even when he was blind, than they had while they could see.

25. *He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not : one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*

"About that point, I am perfectly certain, whatever question there may be concerning anything else."

26—28. *Then said they to him again, What did he to thee ? how opened he thine eyes ? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear : wherefore would ye hear it again ? will ye also be his disciples ? Then they reviled him,—*

As they could not answer him, they reviled him. It is the old plan which is still followed by certain lawyers, "No case ; therefore abuse the plaintiff." "They reviled him,"—

28, 29. *And said, Thou art his disciple ; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses : as for this—*

They did not say "fellow," because they meant something worse than that, something which they could not express : "As for this ——"

29, 30. *We know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.*

They were the gentlemen who said, "We know," and they wanted, a little while before, to silence him by parading their superior knowledge; so now he turns upon them, and says, "Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes."

31. *Now we know that God heareth not sinners :*

He meant men who are living in known sin, impostors and deceivers. Of course, God would not hear sinners of that stamp.

31—33. *But if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.*

This was bravely spoken. The man did not, at that time, know the Godhead of the Saviour, but he felt that he must have come from God, that he was one of God's servants, or messengers, or prophets, therefore he avowed what he knew. Dear friends, always act up to the light you have enjoyed. If you have starlight, thank God for it, and own it before men, for then he will give you moonlight; and if you have moonlight, walk by it, thank God for it, and own it, and he will give you sunlight; and when you have sunlight, walk in it, and so, one of these days, you will come to that light which is as the light of seven days, the light of God himself.

34. *They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us ?*

Their dignity was touched; their superlative wisdom lifted them so much above this poor man that they said, with the utmost disdain, "Dost thou teach us?"

34, 35. *And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out ;*

Oh! if there are any of you who are suffering persecution for Christ's sake, who have been cast out of any company because of what he has done for you, I do not think you need any sweeter comfort than this one line: "Jesus heard that they had cast him out ;"

35—37. *And when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God ? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him ? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.*

I scarcely remember that, up to this time, the Lord Jesus had given such a manifestation of himself to anyone except to the Samaritan woman at the well. When she mentioned the Messiah, he said to her, "I that speak unto thee am he;" and here he reveals himself to this man as the Son of God, which was somewhat more than that woman probably meant by the term "Messias."

38. *And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.*

Which proves that the man was not a Unitarian. "He worshipped him" who had opened his eyes, and we also will worship him for ever and ever, blessed be his holy name!

39—41. *And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.*

It would have been better for them if they had known their blindness, and applied to him who could give them sight, and forgive their sin.